

<b>Committee</b>	UHI North, West and Hebrides F&GP Board
<b>Subject</b>	Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plans Update (previously known as Estates Strategy)
<b>Action requested</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> For information only <input type="checkbox"/> For discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For recommendation <input type="checkbox"/> For endorsement <input type="checkbox"/> For approval
<b>Summary of the paper</b>	The purpose of this paper is to provide F&GP with an update our Infrastructure Strategy and delivery plans and report on status of centre planned projects ( <i>see appendix 1 and 2 for further detail</i> )
<b>Resource implications</b>	Staff time to support the strategy and input from curriculum, estates, ICT, facilities staff time
<b>Risk implications</b>	Ensuring adequate funding and alignment with SFC and UHI for forward infrastructure planning
<b>Date paper prepared</b>	Revised: 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2023 following email correspondence with the Chair
<b>Date of Board / Committee meeting</b>	F&GP 20/03/24
<b>Author</b>	Debbie Miller, Interim VP Operations
<b>Link with strategy</b> Please highlight how the paper links to the Strategic Plan	Revised Infrastructure Strategy is currently under development following the appointment of the new Head of Infrastructure at UHI NWH.
<b>Island communities</b>	The rural and islands college merger may have an impact on the Western Isles and islands covered by West Highland College that is different to other communities. As part of the merger process, the University will undertake an Island Communities Impact Assessment.
<b>Status</b> (e.g., confidential, non-confidential)	Non confidential
<b>Freedom of information</b>	Yes
<b>Consultation</b> How has consultation with partners been conducted?	Consultation with executive, estates and facilities teams

## **Executive Summary**

This executive summary provides an overview of the progress made with the Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plans since an Estates Strategy was reported to the board in April 2023. In July 2023 the proposal for engaging a strategic estates consultant for 12 months was removed due to budget reduction in the phase 3 merger funding. This has caused us a setback as without resource we could not move forward as originally planned, nor could we finalise the overarching strategy and the delivery plan which will support the strategy.

Between August 2023 and January 2024, as time allowed, a site visit was made to all campuses in West and Hebrides by the VP Operations to gain an understanding from the staff locally how the campuses were being utilised. An overview of the visits has been fed back to the Executive Leadership Team. One of the outcomes from the feedback was the agreement to advertise internally for a new Head of Infrastructure who would take the lead on Estates, Facilities and ICT for the College and provide support for a revision of our strategy along with an updated delivery plan for each campus.

The Head of Infrastructure took up post at the very end of February and is currently reviewing and refreshing the college draft strategy. Additionally, with help from various departments we are slowly gathering some of the data required to help inform future decisions on our campuses. As noted in the main body of the report the work being supported through the SFC will be crucial to this.

### **Significant Developments:**

**External Factors:** Involvement in the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) led Infrastructure Delivery Group has positively impacted the college's ability to shape the new College Infrastructure Delivery Plan, aligning with national strategies and mitigating the loss of funding from the merger budget.

**Internal Factors:** Appointment of a new Head of Infrastructure and ongoing revisions to the Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan have been prioritised. An update will be provided on the development of the draft Infrastructure Strategy at the F&GP Committee in May with a view to sharing the update with the board in June 2024.

**Conclusion:** Despite challenges, the college has made some progress, reflecting the resources available in infrastructure planning and strategy, leveraging support from external bodies like the SFC and internal restructuring. Realistic timelines and resource allocation have been established to navigate forthcoming transitions and advance the college's strategic objectives in this critical area.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The committee is requested to take note of the following:

- 1) The advancements made towards a revised Infrastructure Strategy, formerly known as the Estates Strategy, which now encompasses Estates and Digital Infrastructure, along with associated Delivery Plans.
- 2) The progress achieved on ongoing learning centre projects since the previous report (refer to Appendix 2).

## Infrastructure Strategy and Planning Update

### Background

During the college merger, a draft estates strategy was formulated and led by a colleague from the former West Highland College. This draft, alongside several others, was presented to the transition board in April 2023. Subsequently, it was agreed that a final version of the estate's strategy would be reported back to the board with regular progress updates, marking this action as ongoing. While the final strategy is yet to be presented, numerous project developments and interventions have been ongoing since April 2023. Below is a summary of the progress reported directly to the board of management or relevant subcommittee. These include:

July 2023	Proposal to support a land purchase at Mallaig using legacy WHC funds. <b>Outcome:</b> Funds were not available
July 2023	Proposal to engage a strategic estates consultant for 12 months removed from Phase 3 Merger funding. <b>Outcome:</b> Strategic Estates review would need to be supported internally with existing staff thereby slowing progress
July 2023	Proposal to apply for Shared Prosperity Funding for development of Fort William campus. <b>Outcome:</b> Approved to continue with bid
August 2023	Proposal for support for the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Islands Centre for Net Zero,</li> <li>Creed Hydrogen Skills and Innovation Centre Project</li> <li>Scottish Central Government Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme</li> </ul> <b>Outcome:</b> All recommended to board for approval
Sept 2023	Proposal to continue with bid for Fort William campus with removal of UHI funding. <b>Outcome:</b> Unsuccessful bid
November 2023	Proposal for F&GP to note progress on various estates related projects. <b>Outcome:</b> F&GP noted the progress

### Significant Developments

#### External Factors: Scottish Funding Council College Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan

In July 2023 the Vice Principal Operations who has overall responsibility for Infrastructure, was invited to join an SFC led, Infrastructure Delivery Group as a College representative to help shape a new College Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The purpose of the plan is to bring a collective approach between the SFC, and colleges given the tight financial constraints we are all encountering. This development is particularly advantageous for UHI North West and Hebrides, given the loss of funding from the merger budget for a strategic estates resource.

To date the group have supported the development and subsequent publication of the new College Infrastructure Strategy, Nov 2023 and is now shared with F&GP Committee in the link below.

*Further reading available at:*

[College Infrastructure Strategy: The approach to delivering Scotland's College Infrastructure Plan - Scottish Funding Council \(sfc.ac.uk\)](https://www.sfc.ac.uk/College-Infrastructure-Strategy)

The SFC strategy has been developed following clear principles including:

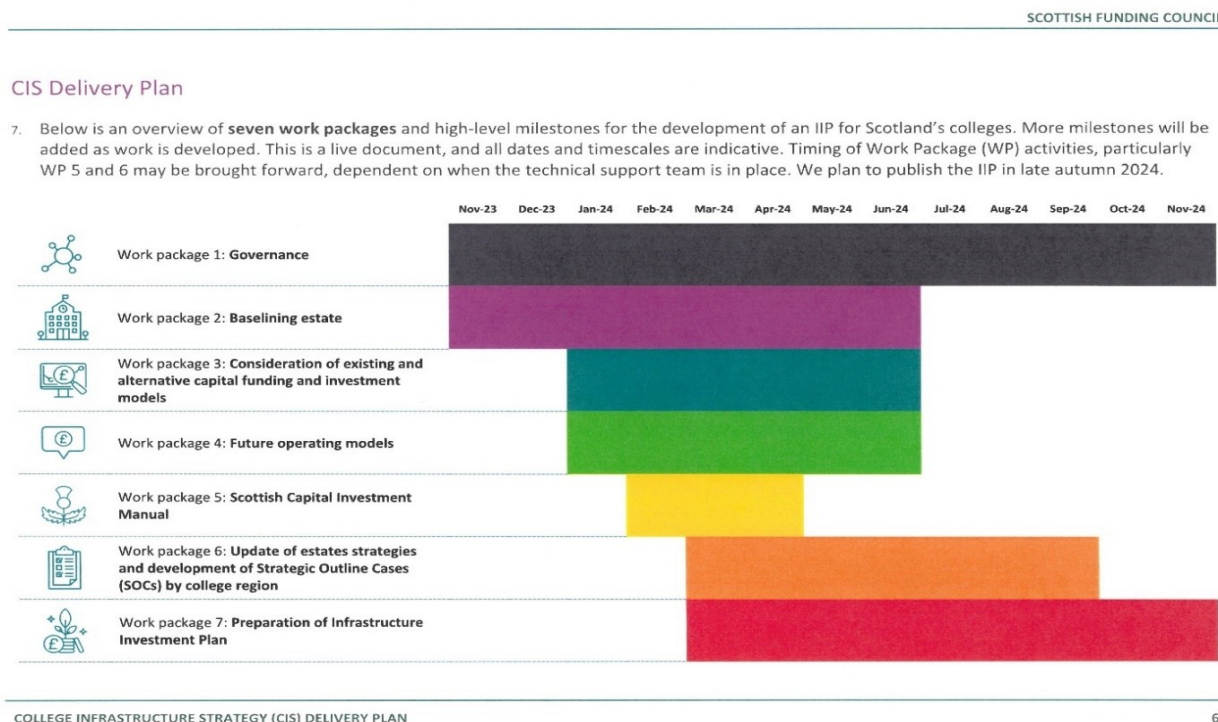
- Deliver positive student experience and outcomes.
- Provide equal access to suitable college infrastructure across Scotland, including use of digital.
- Enable colleges to deliver their strategic plans.
- Ensure that future capital investment responds to future needs, including digital delivery and does not only replace like for like.
- Provide flexibility of funding to support a range of types and scale of capital projects.
- Demonstrate collaboration, such as with other colleges, schools, universities, Local Authorities, health care providers and local businesses.
- Provide a clear, transparent, evidence-based decision-making process

Furthermore, alongside the strategy, we have been collaboratively developing an associated delivery plan to complement its objectives. Several work packages have been established to support the execution of this delivery plan. However, it is important to highlight that due to staffing changes at the SFC, there has been significant delay in the timelines of these work packages. Particularly, work package 2 is currently five months behind the original schedule. While this situation is not ideal, it is imperative that we collaborate with the SFC and the appointed consultant to ensure we can maximise available resource.

The data gathering and sense-checking, which constitute a crucial aspect of work package 2, will play a pivotal role in informing future investment plans. This includes both SFC core grant funding for capital works and backlog maintenance within the college.

There is no mitigation to bring this timeline back to that originally planned due to a lack of resource and therefore the **work package deadline has been extended to April 2025**. (further reading at: [College Infrastructure Strategy \(CIS\) Delivery Plan \(sfc.ac.uk\)](https://www.sfc.ac.uk/College-Infrastructure-Strategy)), which provides extensive detail on each of the planned work packages.

To summarise the timeline and work packages associated with the College Infrastructure Strategy Delivery Plan are represented in the diagram below, (*albeit work package 2 timeline needs to be updated*):



Work package 2 is invaluable to supporting the rest of the delivery plan and thereby our own infrastructure strategy and delivery plans. Work package 2 will deliver through consultancy support, an up-to-date baseline for college infrastructure across Scotland's colleges.

This will include the scope, scale and Estate Managers' assessment and opinion of the condition of physical and digital infrastructure of our learning centres, where they are located, age, tenure, how they are used and what they are used for and linked to the curriculum as well as health and safety, environmental performance, maintenance costs, risk, accessibility and investment plans. The planned commencement date for this work package is 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and will require significant effort from UHI NWH current estates, ICT and facilities teams to support internally.

### Internal Factors: UHI North West and Hebrides

Since the last meeting, internal progress has included the appointment of our new Head of Infrastructure, who has assumed immediate line management responsibilities for the current Estates, Facilities, and ICT staff. Additionally, he has been assigned the task of revising the Infrastructure Strategy to provide a more comprehensive approach and a more operational-level Delivery Plan for the entire college estate.

An update on the revised draft Infrastructure Strategy is scheduled to be shared with the F&GP committee in May 2024. Simultaneously, the draft delivery plan will be made available once the SFC work package 2 completes and we have gathered all relevant data required for decision making.

Our colleagues in the curriculum department have recently finalised the Curriculum Delivery Plan for the academic year 2024/2025. It's important to note that there are no immediate impacts on our learning centres from this revised plan. The recent curriculum review serves to strengthen and streamline our curriculum offerings. It aims to broaden access to learning, ensure the sustainability of practical on-campus delivery, and uphold provision across all subject areas.

The ongoing work on the current Curriculum Strategy and delivery plans will play a crucial role in informing our Infrastructure Strategy and any decisions regarding investment or divestment as we progress within the college.

Additionally, the ongoing work within Organisational Development, (part of the People Strategy), which is in progress, should not have any immediate impact on our learning centres. However, we will review this again once the structure is complete and will be reflected in the data, we collect on each learning centre.

While we will continue to collaborate with the SFC to ensure alignment with national planning and capitalize on opportunities for the college, internally, we remain committed to our own developmental endeavours, as outlined below:

- Revision of Infrastructure Strategy – draft available June 2024
- Revision of Delivery Plan by Learning Centre– ongoing with regular updates to committee of the high-level detail and will be appended to the strategy – **April 2025 in line with SFC and see [Appendix 1](#) for detail of data to be collected.**
- Specific Learning Centre project updates ongoing – see [Appendix 2](#)

## **Conclusion**

The substantial resource backing provided by a college-wide approach to infrastructure has positioned the college favourably to advance our strategic and delivery plans. When we faced a budgetary setback due to the loss of funding for a strategic estate's advisor during the phase 3 merger, we had to reassess and reorganise several aspects of our work.

Now, with support from both the SFC and the recent appointment of our Head of Infrastructure, we are once again progressing in this area. Despite anticipated challenges in finalising our college structure in the coming weeks, we have carefully planned our resources with realistic timelines to drive forward this critical area of development within the college. During the development of our plans, we will continue to monitor the planned spend on both capital and backlog maintenance budgets across all our centres to ensure it is being used to best effect and to support long term developments where possible.

Debbie Miller

Vice Principal Operations

16<sup>th</sup> March 2023



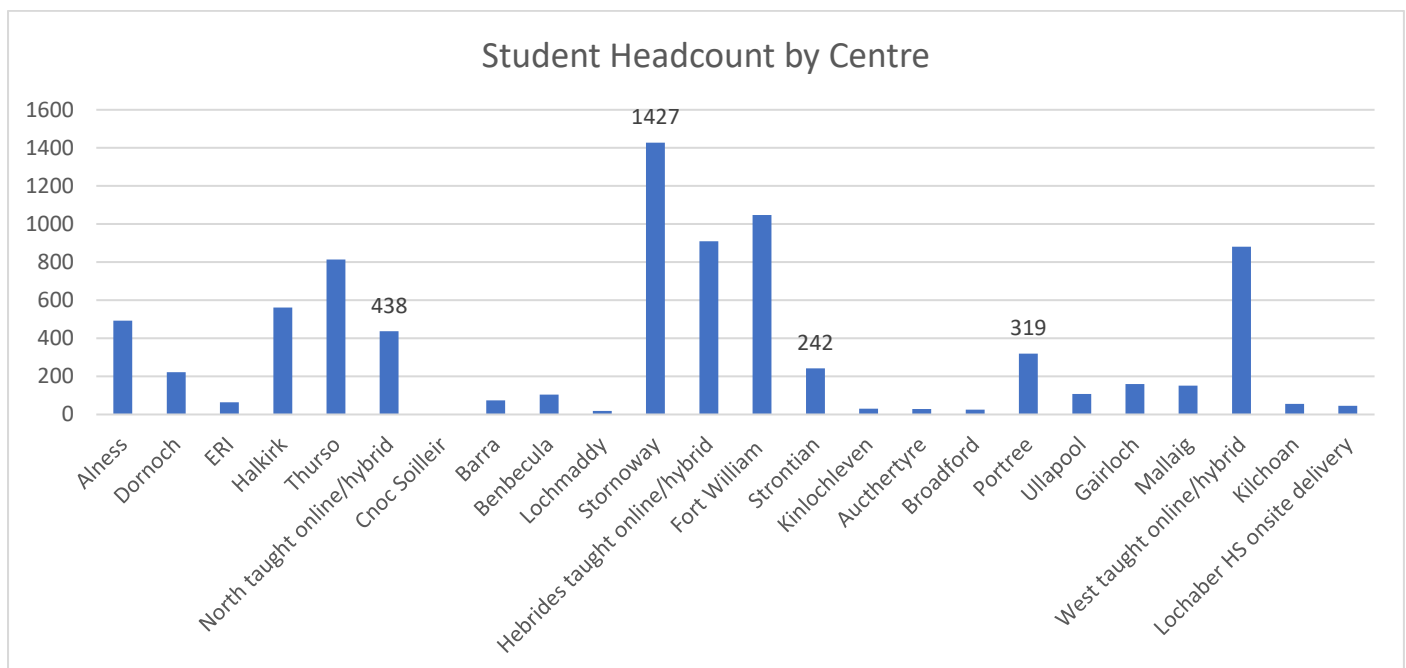
## Appendix 1

### Learning Centre Data to be gathered to compliment the SFC Work package 2 data

- a review of 22/23 enrolments and staff usage, i.e. the last available full year
- a review of running costs and associated income for each learning centre
- where a learning centre may be showing a significant loss or low footfall we will put a remedial action plan in place, based on **agreed criteria** (tbc) and where it can be justified with agreed timescales for improvement i.e. as we are doing for the Ardnamurchan Peninsula
- if after remedial action we see no improvement in a particular learning centre we will make recommendations to ELT and on to the board for approval
- criteria for each centre will be based on historical enrolment data, any changes in curriculum delivery which have an impact, along with financial justifications and any future planning.

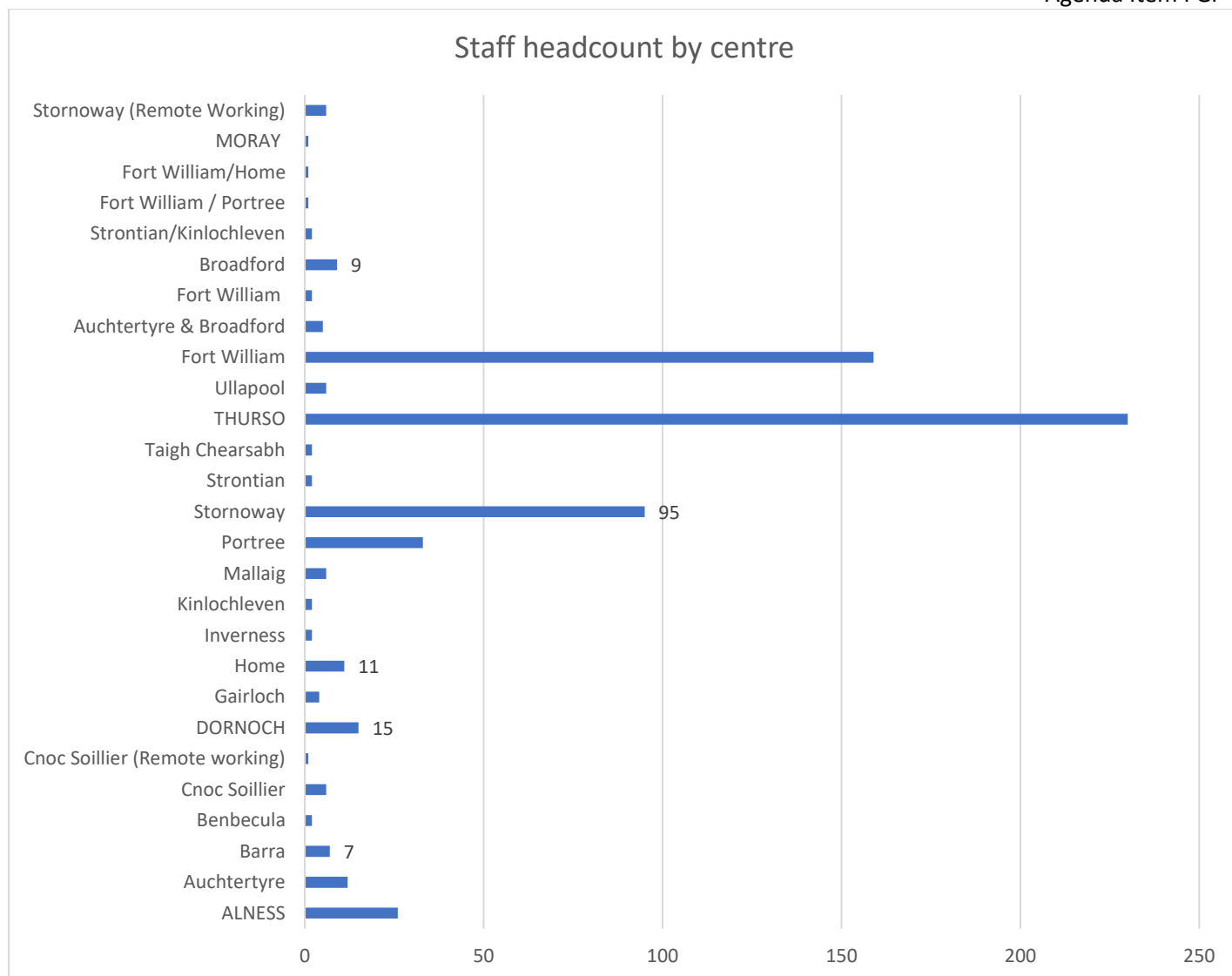
### Utilisation of each learning centre –

The following charts show the data gathered to date in terms of student and staff headcount by learning centre. The next stage will be to break this down into more accurate utilisation as part of the data to be gathered for the work with the SFC. The financial data for each centre is likely to be available by May 2024.



Student data taken from SITS 22/23, i.e. last full academic year data available from each of the three legacy colleges, this does not include short course data and tenants which will be added once available.





**Staff data taken from that gathered as part of the restructure process from HR systems, provided via UHI colleagues.**

## **Appendix 2**

### **Learning Centre Project Updates**

**Stornoway Campus Redevelopment Project** There are no significant issues to report on this project currently and the project remains on time and on budget.

#### **Stornoway Roof**

Separately from the redevelopment project we have an ongoing issue with the roof on parts of the Stornoway campus. A quote was received for what can be described as a trial-and-error approach which would not be suitable, and we wanted more confidence in any proposed solution.

Further options have been requested which should cover all aspects of the roof in which leaks have occurred and a final quote is expected week commencing 18th March. We have set aside a considerable amount of budget, approx. £150k, within the overall Estates budget to support this work.

**Mallaig Campus** - Currently awaiting stage 2 approval of the Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme. That's the final approval stage for investment. Also noted when reviewing this that the other sources of funding totalling about 50% of the project cost were not yet confirmed.

**Fort William Campus** - This project had stalled but is now being returned to and is at a very early stage of discussions. Further discussion with ELT required as to how to refresh the business case and dedicate resource to take forward.

**Dornoch Campus** - Roof works have been completed. When working on the roof, the project was extended after further issues were discovered. It was also discovered that the chimney was in an unsafe state and so the contractors were asked to take that down and make safe. We were expecting to be asked to reinstate the chimney (being within the Dornoch Conservation Area) but the Highland Council came back today that we could slate over instead. This will be scheduled in future works.

**An Cotan** - Works are largely completed. The first tenants are moving in, expected early April, and there are on-going discussions with a few other interested parties who wish to take up tenancy.