

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Chair – Shona MacDougall

Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 5pm 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

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

Doug Rattray, Head of Infrastructure and Estates

Ellen Campbell, Board Secretary

Hannah Ritchie-Muir, Vice Principal Academic

Joe MacPhee, Head of Strategic Projects

Julie Fraser, Procurement Manager

1. QUORUM & APOLOGIES

Apologies: Alex Macdonald, Debbie Miller, Vice Principal Strategic Developments

**The meeting was quorate.**

2. Declarations of interest

**No declarations of interest were made.**

3. Minutes from previous meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025

**Approved** (page 5 typo of next instead of nest)

4. Action Tracker

Financial implications only re organisational structure review to F&GP. Main report on Org structure to HR Committee.

The review of the financial policies as commenced and ongoing – deferred until next cycle of F&GP, February 2026.

Annual review of financial regulations, overdue, further deferred until next cycle of F&GP - February 2026.

Both above items discussed between Chair and CFO and actions agreed.

## **Reviewed**

### 5. Annual Procurement report 2024/25 - Julie Fraser (JF) / Derek Bond (CFO)

The CFO introduced the template format that had been adopted by NWH to present this first annual report. The CFO also advised Committee of the intention to bring back a six monthly/mid-year report to F&GP Committee in February 2026 in reflection in some of the findings within this report. JF explained that there had been a non-pay spend of £5.2m. It had been identified that almost £4m of this figure was non-compliant. The procurement team had put measures in place and had made significant inroads from last year's figures. An internal audit earlier this year had hi-lighted a weak assurance and the requirement to address this area. An administrator was required and had recently commenced employment. This report would be updated bi-annually. Further measures were being put in place to reduce noncompliance spending. Utilities and other contractors had been identified to bring the non-compliance percentage down.

The Chair commented that the credit card spends had also been reduced significantly but remained a high area of spend. JF advised that there was almost 90% compliance within NWH in using PECOS to raise purchase orders to allow payment of invoices. The credit card spend was attributed to mainly travel and subsistence usage.

The emissions figures within the report had come from the e-solutions team. JF offered to bring any questions in this area back to committee if required.

Contractors were issued with a living wage questionnaire for all tender exercises – NWH were a living wage accredited employer.

The Chair thanked JF for her informative and well-presented report, requesting that KPIs be included comparing this year v next year, cautions and actions put in place.

The mid-year report will come back to this committee at the end of February 2026 including the KPIs as requested – in a higher level and summarised format.

## **Endorsed**

**Action:** The mid-year/ 6-month report will come back to this committee at the end of February 2026 including the KPIs as requested by the Chair and committee.

### 6. Confidential item – Withheld

### 7. Financial report – Update for NWH 2024/25 accounts – CFO (Verbal update)

The CFO advised that there had been a meeting with the auditors earlier today. There had been a lot of substantive work progressed to date. The CFO was reasonably confident that the audit field work would be completed by Christmas 2025, with a view to having these available for sign off in January/ February 2026.

## **Noted**

### 8. Confidential item – Withheld

### 9. Principal's report

#### 9.1 Anchor institution update

There was a possibility of risk of reputational damage if NWH did not deliver to their communities. The college mission, linked to estates and curriculum delivery strategies was built around delivering to the communities that NWH serve. A progress report on the anchor institution would come to the F&GP committee meeting for the end of February 2026. It was suggested that Kinlochbervie high school may be an option for a presence for NWH in the Northwest corner of Scotland.

**Noted**

10. Confidential item – Withheld

**Noted**

11. Confidential item – Withheld

**Noted**

12. Estates Capital Works plan – Doug Rattray (DR)

The reason given for request for extra funding of £41k for the E block roof, was that the £80k initially requested had been exclusive of VAT, having now gone with another contractor, the estimate given is £101k +VAT , the initial contractor no longer has the capacity to do the works.

There had been various survey and costings done for the Stornoway boiler replacement, an early draft of this report containing emissions, etc will come back to next F&GP. Consideration was being given to a hybrid hydrogen / oil model. There may be CNES / other funding.

**Approved**

13. NWH Donation – Joe MacPhee for Debbie Miller

A £150k donation had been received by NWH and this report detailed how NWH intend to use the funding, noting that it was hugely important to NWH in shaping the curriculum. Every effort would be made to generate income from the forward plans.

The committee welcomed the donation.

**Endorsed**

14. Confidential item – withheld

15. Health and Safety report

**Noted**

16. A.O.B.

**Meeting closed 1837**