



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
held on Wednesday 30th August 2023 at 4.15 pm over Microsoft Teams

Present	Chris Alliston, Committee Chair Lydia Rohmer, Principal Designate Neil Hope, Board Vice Chair Ian MacEachern, Independent Member
In attendance	Vicky Ferguson, Director of Human Resources Fiona Sinclair, Board Secretary and Governance Professional

Meeting minutes

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence

The Committee Chair welcomed members to the inaugural meeting of the Committee. Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Derek Lewis and Fiona Kolontari.

2. Declaration of interests or connections

Members were invited to declare an interest, either financial or non-financial in any item on the Agenda and were reminded that they should declare an interest as early as possible during the meeting. Members were also invited to declare a connection which did not amount to an interest in any item on the Agenda where in the interests of transparency they considered it appropriate to do so. The Committee was reminded that the Register of Board Members' Interests had been 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. Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference

There had been circulated report HR0923/3 by the Board Governance Professional inviting the Committee to review and agree terms of reference for the Human Resources Committee.

The Committee agreed the draft Terms of Reference, noting that they would be subject to Board approval, and annual review by the Committee. The Committee further agreed that the Terms of Reference would be circulated with the Agenda for each future meeting of the Committee.

Action – Governance Professional to circulate the draft Terms of Reference with the agenda for each Committee meeting.

The HR Director's report HR0823/04 was noted by the Committee, and the following items of business, Items 4 to 11, were discussed as follows:

4. People and Culture Strategy

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Agenda Item HR1123/3.1

There had been circulated for discussion, a copy of the updated draft People and Culture Strategy, report 4.4. The HR Manager explained that some staff were unsettled due to the uncertainty around merger, and said that while concerns were being addressed as they arise, it was very important to have visible leadership at each of the campuses. Staff surveys to assess the mood of staff would be conducted following the curriculum review. In the meantime, it was important to have a clear communication channel for concerned staff to express their concerns.

In response to a question, the Principal explained that the Merger Integration Plan for the current year formed the operating plan for the People Strategy. Currently, the main objective of the HR Director was to support the restructuring process. The Principal explained that it was important that the People and Culture Strategy was underwritten by a sound Quality Management System for the whole college. Investors in People Gold had been awarded to UHI West Highland but had lapsed upon merger. IIP Gold and other Quality Management systems had been considered for UHI North, West and Hebrides but no one system appeared to exactly meet the organisation's needs.

Members agreed that there was a requirement to engender a single culture across the whole of the merged college, taking the view that it was important to capture the intention to develop the single culture in the People and Culture strategy. The Committee agreed to make the following alterations to the Strategy:

1. To change Strategic Aim One – Culture, by adding the words “one-college” so that Aim One reads, “Developing a one-college culture that brings our values to life, in which every”.
2. To add the following additional bullet point to Strategic Aim Six – Leadership,
 - “Ensuring visible and authentic leadership demonstrating the values of the organisation”
3. To delete the reference to “GDPR breaches” from the success criteria in Strategic Aim Two.

Action – HR Director to amend the Strategy as agreed by the Committee

5. Update from RICM Shadow Local Joint Consultative Committee

The HR Manager explained that the College had a good working relationship with the unions, that Written Statements of Employment Particulars for both Lecturers and Support Staff had been agreed, and that Local Recognition and Procedures Agreements had been agreed for issue to both EIS and Unison. Currently, as host college, North Highland policies and contracts were given to new starts. Over fifteen policies had yet to be agreed. Much of the agreement with unions would be based on ACAS agreements. As there were only a few union representatives and not a high number of union members, the idea of forming a staff consultation group, as there had been at West Highland had been considered, but this would not happen immediately. The next Shadow LJCC meeting was to take place on 31st August.

6. National Bargaining Update

The HR Manager gave a verbal update on the report, explaining that Unison had written to their members intimating that as merger, according to their legal advice, had created a new legal entity, Unison did not have a lawful mandate to take strike action at the “new” entity of UHI North, West and Hebrides. As a result, as support staff would not be on strike, no learning centres would require to close due to strike action. EIS FELA, on the other hand, had announced a timetable of strike action, with two colleges going on strike on each strike day. The UHI North, West and Hebrides strike days were to be 7th and 15th September. 15th September was to be Graduation Day for the former students of UHI North Highland. The Graduation would go ahead as planned, as only teaching staff would be on strike, and the Graduation could proceed without them. It was to be hoped that the picket lines would be confined to the learning centres, and that there would be no picket line at the Graduation venue. There seemed to be no prospect of an early resolution to the industrial dispute. It was noted that there

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were believed to be 98 EIS FELA members employed at UHI North, West and Hebrides, with the biggest concentration of these employed at the Stornoway and Thurso campuses.

7. Agree Key Performance Indicators, and other information to be provided routinely to Committee

It was noted that data would routinely be provided on staff turnover and the reason for leaving, and on attendance management in both short and long-term absences as outlined in the report. VSS acceptance figures would be added to the report. The Principal explained that there were plans to be able to provide better curriculum data. The Committee agreed to keep the data focused in the first year of the new college.

8 Confidential item

Withheld

9. Trans inclusion statement suggested by UHI North Highland Human Resources Committee

The Committee noted that the UHI North Highland Human Resources Committee had referred a suggestion that UHI North, West and Hebrides adopt a Trans-inclusion Statement. Noting that the matters raised in the statement were covered elsewhere in UHI North, West and Hebrides policies, the Committee agreed to take no action.

10. Safeguarding Policy and Social Media Compliancy Policy

The Committee noted that the Committee have been allocated ownership of the Safeguarding Policy, and Social Media Compliancy Policy which were approved by the Board on 1st August. These policies had been circulated with the agenda, and would come before the Committee for review in three years' time.

11. HR and Payroll System

The Committee noted that three systems were currently in operation. Two of the merging partner colleges used Cascade systems while a third uses CHRIS. The HR Manager explained that using three different systems made it difficult for staff to work as one merged team. There were proposals to transfer the Outer Hebrides staff on to the West Highland Cascade system, and there would be cost implications in transferring the North Highland information on to the same system. The Principal suggested that putting all the data into one place at this stage would be of assistance for Performance Management, and would be of assistance if and when a new HR and Payroll system were to be introduced for the merged college as part of the UHI 2024 programme. The Committee noted the operational nature of this matter while agreeing that transferring all staff information to the West Highland Cascade system would seem to be the most appropriate way forward.

The Meeting closed at 5.14 pm

Chair

ACTION SHEET FOLLOWING HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING ON 30TH AUGUST 2023

Date, Action and Responsible Person	Current Status
30 August 2023 – 3. Terms of Reference - Governance Professional to circulate the draft Terms of Reference with the agenda for each Committee meeting – Governance Professional	DONE
30 August 2023 – 4. People and Culture Strategy - HR Director to amend the Strategy as agreed by the Committee – HR Director	ONGOING / STRATEGY YET TO BE FINALISED AND APPROVED BY BOARD