

MINUTES of the BOARD OF MANAGEMENT held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 13 December 2022

PRESENT: Chris O'Neil, William Campbell, Donald MacKenzie, Mark Sheridan, Russell Edwards, Kelly MacKenzie, James Millar, Michael Beveridge, Dee Bird, Rojan Kumar Subramani, Arvinder Kainth, Amy Goodbrand, Tina Stones, Sally Blyth, Stephen Sheridan & Matthew Millward

CHAIR: Mark Sheridan

APOLOGIES: Innis Montgomery & Gillian Galloway

IN ATTENDANCE: Vice Principal – Finance and Audit
Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality
Vice Principal – Academic and Research
Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations
Tertiary Education Leaders
Estates and Campus Services Manager
Information Systems Manager
Governance Officer

The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interest, statements of connections or transparency statements were noted.

Confidential Closed Session – Board Creative Space

A confidential closed session took place, providing the Board with creative space to discuss the Sector Development Plans (Note of Session: CSN-122022).

1. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal took the Board through his report which further reinforced the discussions coming out of the Sector Development Plans.

Tina Stones left the meeting.

The Principal provided the Board with a verbal update on:

- Senior Phase Offer - the Board noted the confidential update on the plans to expand and further develop our senior phase offering. The Board noted that further discussions with the Highland Council are to take place and welcomed

the prospect of providing senior phase pupils with an introduction to the college.

- Recruitment and Conversion Numbers – the Board welcomed the success of our recovery plan noting the background to it. The Board was advised that we are currently meeting between 90-92% of our targets. The Board noted that our numbers have seen an increase as a result of our open days, targeted conversion, increased digital presence and the addition of an October recruitment cycle.

Dee Bird left the meeting

Tina Stones joined the meeting

- Impact and challenges of additional student support requirements - the Board was advised that it was difficult to quantify the impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The Board was provided with an update on the strategies which have been put in place to provide support to students. The Board noted that we are expected to spend circa £185,000 on providing food to students. The Board was advised that additional funding for this has been identified and will be applied for.

The Tertiary Education Leaders left the meeting.

Dee Bird joined the meeting.

2. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

a.) Meeting of the Board of Management held on 25 October 2022

Decision: The minutes of the Board of Management Meeting held on 25 October 2022 were **AGREED** as a correct record and were **APPROVED**.

b.) Confidential Note of Closed Session (CSN102022) held on 25 October 2022

Decision: The Confidential Note of the Closed Session (CSN102022) of the Board of Management Meeting held on 25 October 2022 was **AGREED** as a correct record and was **APPROVED**.

c.) Confidential Note of Discussion (CN-01-102022) held on 25 October 2022

Decision: The Confidential Note of Discussion (CN-01-102022) of the Board of Management Meeting held on 25 October 2022 was **AGREED** as a correct record and was **APPROVED**.

3. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

- **Partnership Agreement** – The Board noted that updates to the Partnership Agreement have ceased whilst the work streams from UHI 24 are completed.

- **Business Solutions Team Presentation** – The Board was advised that it has been agreed by the Chair and Principal that the Business Solutions Team will be asked to present to the February 2023 meeting.
- **Procurement Strategy** – The Vice Principal – Finance and Audit advised that he is liaising with the Head of Procurement, UHI Shared Service who advised that a draft of the procurement strategy can be provided to the Board. The Board noted that additional information on the Shared Finance Service will still require to be added to the draft version.
Action: A copy of the draft procurement strategy will be available for the February Board meeting.
- **Finance Training** – The Governance Officer advised that finance training for Board members would form part of the Board Development and Training Plan which is currently being drafted.
- **Code of Conduct** – The Governance Officer advised that all members have returned their signed acceptance of the Code of Conduct.
Decision: It was **AGREED** that this item can be removed from the list.
- **Partnership Working** – The Principal advised that he and the Chair were to visit with partner agencies in Mid-January. A further update will be provided to the Board in February 2023.

4. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

a.) Professional Development Policy

The Board welcomed this transparent policy and discussed the requirement for registration with the GTCS, noting that this was a national decision.

Decision: The Professional Development Policy was **APPROVED**.

b.) UHI Safeguarding Policy

The Board noted the importance of this policy and welcomed both the additional information added and the alignment in respect of HISA.

Decision: The UHI Safeguarding Policy was **APPROVED**.

c.) Public Interest Disclosure Policy

The Board noted that the Governance Officer and the Information Development Manager had undertaken an overhaul of this policy. The Board noted the importance of this policy and was advised that as a final part of our approval process our solicitors were reviewing the procedure to ensure that it is robust.

Decision: The Public Interest Disclosure Policy was **APPROVED**.

d.) National Menopause Policy

The Board welcomed this transparent policy which provided clear roles and responsibilities and noted that this was a major piece of legislation.

Decision: The National Menopause Policy was **APPROVED**.

5. STUDENT ACTIVITY 2022/23

The Information Systems Manager joined the meeting.

The Information Systems Manager spoke to her report and provided the Board with an update in respect of:

- FE Credits - the Board noted our strong position at 87.3% of our target. The Board was advised that continued enrolment is expected through our January recruitment and our Modern Apprenticeship block intakes.
- HE Credits - the Board noted that these are sitting at 82% of our target. The Board was advised that evidence from our early statistical return shows that this may grow towards 90% by the end of the Academic Year.
- Early Withdrawals – the Board noted that our early withdrawal rates have significantly reduced and are currently at 5.4%.
- January Recruitment - it was highlighted that open evenings had delivered a significant increase in the number of applications being received and the Board noted that work is being undertaken to turn these applications into enrolments.

The Board welcomed the contents of this report.

The Information Systems Manager left the meeting.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

The Estates and Campus Services Manager spoke to this report highlighting:

- That there had been no RIDDOR reportable incidents for the year 2021-22.
- That he and the Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations were undertaking the role of Health and Safety until a new manager is appointed. The Board noted that both are qualified to undertake this role. The Board was advised that we are due to go out to advert for a Health and Safety and Sustainability Manager.
- That the HASMAP system is now in place, with colleagues able to use the system.
- Statistics for completion of mandatory training. The Board noted that a new module is ready to be launched in the New Year. The Board welcomed the increased completion rates.
- The low level of reportable incidents, however it was highlighted to the Board that it is felt that we should be generating more near miss incidents rather than incidents. The Board was advised that items which are reported through Unidesk will now be included within our statistics to provide us with a better overview in respect of near misses. The Board welcomed this and

highlighted that the ethos and behavioural culture of reporting near misses and what constitutes a near miss should be highlighted to staff along with how to raise a near miss incident.

- That the HASMAP Auditing system is aiding with departments taking ownership of Health and Safety.

The Estates and Campus Services Manager advised that we have identified 3 areas where additional work is required:

1. First Aid Provision – ensuring that staff and students have clear access to first aiders on campus.
2. Fire Evacuation – evacuation processes to be reviewed and renewed.
3. Near Miss Reporting – work to be undertaken to ensure that this is being captured so that we have a fuller picture of how we are performing.

The Board welcomed this clear summary and enquired whether all staff have access to the reporting mechanisms and whether reports can be anonymous. The Board was advised that all staff have access to our AssessNet System and that reports are not anonymous as we may require to be able to request further information from reporters.

The Estates and Campus Services Manager left the meeting.

7. FINANCIAL POSITION UPDATE

The Vice Principal – Audit and Finance spoke to his report.

The Board noted that our budgets are currently based on an estimated 3% wage increase and that this national issue remains a concern. The Board was advised that FTE trend analysis, in respect of the decline of HE numbers, has been undertaken by the Finance Team.

The Vice Principal – Audit and Finance provided the Board with an explanation of our NPD Model and advised that he is currently liaising with SFC over this.

In respect of capital, the Board was advised that the Vice Principal – Audit and Finance is looking at the Arm's Length Foundation (ALF) monies and how this could be used to support capital projects. The Principal provided the Board with an explanation of the ALF and the risks which have been identified. Following discussion, it was noted that any decision to close the fund would require support from the Board.

8. CONFIDENTIAL SESSION – UHI 24 – REVITALISATION PROGRAMME

A confidential discussion took place which provided the Board with space to discuss the UHI 24 Revitalisation Programme (Note of Session: CN-01-122022)

9. UPDATE ON SHORT LIFE WORKING GROUP

The Chair of the Short Life Working Group provided the Board with a verbal update highlighting that the group had met in November with all in full agreement

around the progress made and the improved partnership working between halls staff, Executive Office and ourselves.

The Board was advised that there remain actions in relation to training which are due to be completed by Executive Office in January 2023. Following this, the work of the group will have been completed. The Board welcomed the work which the group has undertaken and noted that arrangements for monitoring the halls have been implemented.

The Board was advised that following the remaining actions being completed the finalised Action Plan will be circulated to the group and a recommendation to the Board that the group be ceased will come to the February 2023 Board of Management meeting.

The Board thanked both the current chair of the group, the previous chair, the Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality and her team for the work they have undertaken in respect of the Halls.

10. REVIEW OF EXTERNAL EFFECTIVENESS PLAN

The Governance Officer spoke to her report and provided the Board with the background to the External Effectiveness Plan. The Board noted that a further review of the actions has been undertaken and the following actions were highlighted to them:

Action 1 – The Board noted that all updates to the Terms of References were approved in March 2022.

Decision: It was **AGREED** that this item be marked as completed.

Action 2 – The Board noted that the Governance Officer has identified a provider of bespoke Effective Audit Committee Training and will liaise with them over this.

Decision: It was **AGREED** that this item will remain as partially completed.

Action 5 – The Board was advised that a Board Development and Training Plan is being developed. This will be brought to the Board of Management meeting on 28 March 2023.

Decision: It was **AGREED** that this item will remain as partially completed.

Action 6 – The Governance Officer advised that the Assigned Colleges Officer for UHI has began the development of an induction process for Governance Officers. It was noted that we will use this process when ready and adapt as required.

The Board was advised that mentoring is provided to the Governance Officer through the Good Governance Steering Group and throughout the UHI Partnership Governance Network. The Board was advised that a Microsoft Teams site for UHI Governance Officers has been developed and advice and ideas are shared here.

The Board noted that in respect of the Chair, they are subject to the same induction process as all other members with additional support available from the Chair of Court, UHI, other partnership chairs and from the Principal.

Decision: It was **AGREED** that this item will remain as partially completed until the induction process for the Governance Officer is agreed.

Action 8 – The Board noted that the Principal and Chair are continuing to work with Executive Office and partners in respect of UHI 24.

Decision: It was **AGREED** that this item will remain as partially completed.

Action 10 – The Governance Officer provided the Board with the timeline for the recent remuneration exercise completed in respect of the Principal, EMT, Directors of Research, Research Staff and Tertiary Education Leaders.

Decision: It was **AGREED** that this action could be marked as completed.

The Board noted that the plan would be updated to reflect the above decisions and the updated version will be made available on our website.

Action: A further review of the plan will be carried out in June 2023.

11. DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF BOARD COMMITTEES (CONFIDENTIAL)

The Board noted the contents of the following Committee Meetings:

- Chairs Committee held on 03 November 2022
- Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18 November 2022
- HR Committee held on 24 November 2022
- LT&R Committee held on 06 December 2022

12. UHI UPDATES

The Board noted the contents of the following minutes of meetings:

- University Court held on 15 June 2022
- University Court held on 21 September 2022

13. AOCB

The Board noted that this would be the last meeting attended by the Vice Principal – Academic and Research and they took this opportunity to thank her for all her years of hard work.

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 07 February 2023 at 4.30 p.m.

Signed: 

Date: 07 February 2023