



**MINUTES of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 06 March 2025.**

**PRESENT:** Donald MacKenzie, Victoria Erasmus, Rojan Kumar Subramani, Pauline Tuthill, Chris O'Neil & Jane Davidson

**APOLOGIES:** Pauline Tuthill

**CHAIR:** Donald MacKenzie

**ATTENDING:** Vice Principal – Curriculum, Operations and External Relations  
Director of Finance and Estates  
Operations and Commercial Manager  
Estates & Campus Services Manager  
Health, Safety & Sustainability Manager  
Information Development Manager  
Management Information Systems Manager  
Governance Officer

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Governance Officer confirmed that this meeting was quorate.

There were no declarations of interests, statements of connections or transparency statements noted.

**1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

**a. Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 03 February 2025**

**Decision:** The Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 03 February 2025 were **AGREED** as a correct record and were **APPROVED**.

## 2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

- **UHI Research funding - ONGOING** - Regional funded research and its redistribution to be looked at across UHI.
- **Final Report 2023/24 Audit by Deloitte Recommendation 1 – ONGOING** – It is recommended that a fixed asset register is created and maintained going forward.
- **Final Report 2023/24 Audit by Deloitte Recommendation 2 – ONGOING** - It is recommended that floor plans are maintained annually and provided to the College's external valuer ahead of each valuation per the rolling valuation cycle.
- **Final Report 2023/24 Audit by Deloitte Recommendation 3 – ONGOING** - It is recommended that the College seek to source a copy of the original NPD service concession agreement and retain this going forwards.
- **Final Report 2023/24 Audit by Deloitte Recommendation 4 – ONGOING** - It is recommended that the College looks to source original grant income documentation from the relevant party and moving forward, we would suggest that they retain any relevant documentation.

## 3. MID-YEAR FORECAST RETURN – to follow

The Director of Finance and Estates informed the Committee that the return was received the previous day; the completion deadline is end of March 2025, and once completed the report will be shared with the Committee.

## 4. CAPITAL & REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

The Director of Finance and Estates spoke to his report which provided the Committee with an update on the current forecast position at January 2025, in terms of the revenue budget monitoring for the 12 months ended 31 July 2025.

The management accounts position is currently forecasting an operational deficit of £0.967 million, compared to the original budget deficit of £0.750 million and the previous November 2024 forecast deficit of £1.132 million. However, if the employers' national insurance cost increase, which is due to be paid from April 2025 is included, the forecast deficit will increase to £1.067 million. The college is forecasting that it will exceed its FE Credit target for 2024/25, with the actual number of credits at February 2025 currently being 26,760, compared to the target of 26,442. This is expected to increase further; however, any over-performance has not increased our teaching costs. In terms of the HE UGT fte number for 2024/25, the current actual at February 2025 is 1,352 fte, compared to the target of 1,319 fte.

The Committee welcomed the report and discussion about current and proposed delivery and funding models took place. Concerns were raised in regard to insufficient data about proposed models and all agreed that transition period will be of immense importance.

The Chair thanked the Director of Finance and Estates for his detailed report.

## **5. FE & HE FEES 2025/26**

The Director of Finance and Estates spoke to his report which provided the Committee with draft FE and HE fees for 2025/26. The Committee was informed that currently, each academic partner sets its own FE fees, which means that colleges within UHI currently charge different amounts for the same course. In terms of the proposed FE tuition fees for 2024/25, at present, the current inflation rate is 3%. Therefore, the proposal is to increase FE fees by 3% for 2025/26. In terms of HE tuition fees, as stated above, these are set and approved by UHI on an annual basis. However, one of the major issues regarding HE tuition fees is that HE fees for Undergraduate Degrees and HNs are set by SFC/ SG, and have not changed since 2009/10, 15 years ago. Assuming an average increase of 2% pa over the last 15 years, and the current number of HE student fte's for 2024/25, the college is losing out on almost £700,000 of tuition fee funding from SAAS/ SFC.

The Committee welcomed the update, and the Chair thanked the Director of Finance and Estates for his detailed report.

*Jane Davidson left the meeting.*

## **6. EXTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS 2023/24 (CONFIDENTIAL)**

The Director of Finance and Estates spoke to his CONFIDENTIAL report (CN-01-032025) which provided the Committee with External Audit Recommendations 2023/24.

The Chair decided that the next item discussed will be item 13 6 Monthly GDPR Report.

*Jane Davidson re-joined the meeting.*

## **13. 6 MONTHLY GDPR REPORT**

*The Information Development Manager joined the meeting.*

The Information Development Manager spoke to her report which provided the Committee with a general update on operational activity in relation to the UK GDPR. The purpose of the report is to raise awareness of current activities that have legal implications under data protection law and/or or carry a potential risk (data security, information risk, financial or reputational risk). Also, to demonstrate the breadth of impact of data protection legislation across the organisation.

The report highlighted the following areas: HR and Payroll systems within the procurement activities, UHI Transformation Project Work, CCTV activity and a summary of risks associated.

The Committee welcomed the report and positively commented on the summary of risks included. The Principal added that UHI Inverness received feedback from UHI that stated the college is blocking progress of some projects. The Principal asked the Chair of the Board to clarify this statement with UHI Court to explain UHI Inverness is being compliant and challenging but not blocking.

The Committee agreed with the Principal and asked for the clarification to be formal and written.

The Chair thanked the Information Development Manager for her detailed report.

*The Information Development Manager left the meeting.*

The Chair decided that the next item discussed will be item 07 Subsidiary Company Proposal (CONFIDENTIAL).

## **7. SUBSIDIARY COMPANY PROPOSAL (CONFIDENTIAL)**

The Vice Principal – Curriculum, Operations and External Relations reported that this agenda item has been combined with agenda item 10 Operations And External Relations Report (Confidential) and will be discussed in due course.

## **8. HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE (CONFIDENTIAL)**

*The Health, Safety and Sustainability Manager joined the meeting.*

The Health, Safety and Sustainability Manager spoke to his CONFIDENTIAL report (CN-02-032025).

*The Health, Safety and Sustainability Manager left the meeting.*

## **9. STUDENT RECRUITMENT**

*The Management Information Systems Manager joined the meeting.*

The Management Information Systems Manager spoke to her report which provided the Committee with an update on student enrolments and withdrawals for 2024/25, and the status of current recruitment for 2025/26.

The 2024/25 FE Credits target for UHI Inverness of 26,442 have been exceeded with actual credits as at 26th February 2025 at 26,784. The 2024/25 UHI Academic Partnership target for funded Scottish or EU HE undergraduate students is 1,319 and the budgeted target is 1,394. To date, UHI Inverness has exceeded the APC target and has achieved 96.9% of the budgeted target. Early

withdrawals have decreased for FE and HE full time students in 2024/25 but increased for part time students. Further withdrawals are marginally higher for FE students in comparison to the same point last year. Recruitment for 2025/26 is underway with all FE and Senior Phase applications open for application and the first UCAS Deadline for 'on-time' applications received by 29th January 2025 to receive an offer or invite to interview by 31st March 2025. HE active applications are lower than last year, but acceptances are greater at the same time.

The Vice Principal – Curriculum, Operations and External Relations added that last figures showed that number of acceptances is higher than in other 9 years.

The Committee welcomed the report and positively commented on high acceptances level so early into the application process. Discussion about dropping appetite for online courses, drop in 1<sup>st</sup> years degrees but also increased interest in HNC courses took place.

The Chair thanked the Management Information Systems Manager for her interesting and detailed report.

*The Management Information Systems Manager left the meeting.*

## **10. OPERATIONS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS REPORT (CONFIDENTIAL)**

The Vice Principal – Curriculum, Operations and External Relations confirmed that this agenda item will incorporate agenda item 7 Subsidiary Company Proposal (CONFIDENTIAL).

The Vice Principal – Curriculum, Operations and External Relations spoke to her CONFIDENTIAL report (CN-03-032025).

## **11. KPI MATRIX**

The Operations and Commercial Manager spoke to his report which provided the Committee with year-to-date performance measures as at period 6, 31st January 2025 and presented performance for each measure against the respective targets profiled for the period. Thirty-one measures are in scope year to date. Fifteen are satisfactory (Green), seven are unsatisfactory (Red), and

six are marginal (Amber). Three HR measures are to be confirmed. The Operations and Commercial Manager confirmed that measures missing from the KPI Matrix update presented to the Board in February 2025 had been included in this report.

The Chair thanked the Operations and Commercial Manager for his detailed report.

*The Operations and Commercial Manager & Rojan Kumar Subramani left the meeting.*

## **12. CAMPUS REPORT**

The Estates & Campus Manager spoke to his report which provided the Committee with an update carbon management plan, waste management and capital projects, together with reporting on aspects of soft FM and hard FM performance.

The Committee welcomed the update and positively commented on the progress of the carbon management plan and the Harbour Road Sustainable Construction Centre lease.

The Chair thanked the Estates & Campus Manager for his detailed report.

## **14. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT**

The Governance Officer spoke to her report which provided the Committee with an update in regard to all FOI requests received in 2024. As a public authority, UHI Inverness is required to comply with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 which gives everyone the right to ask for any information which we hold.

Following items had been highlighted:

- Information requests – 36 requests received
- Format of requests – in email format
- Source of request – not disclosed, staff/researchers/students from other institutions and trade unions being the top three
- Type of requests – student issues, staff issues and estates and buildings being the top three

- Response time – average response time for 2024 being 9 days
- Responses – included full and partial disclosures; in 8 instances the information was fully withheld based on exemptions applied
- Reviews by Information Commissioner – none in 2024
- Environmental Requests – 2 in 2024

The Chair thanked Governance Officer for her detailed report.

## **15. COMMITTEE EVALUATION**

The Governance Officer spoke to her report which provided the FGP Committee with an update on the completed committee evaluation process for 2023/24. The combined report will be presented to the Board on 25th March 2025.

The Chair thanked the Governance Officer for her report and also thanked the Committee Members who had contributed to the process.

## **16. AOCB**

Nothing raised.

## **17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 12 June 2025 at 9.00 a.m.**

**Signed by the Chair:**



**Date: 06/03/2025**