

Finance & Resources Committee

Minutes

Meeting reference: F&R2024-25/04a

Date: Wednesday 25 June 2025

Location: Online

Members present: Elaine Piggot, Chair
Deirdre Joy, Board Member
Alistair Wylie, Interim Chair of Board
Catherine Etri, Interim Principal
Patrick O'Donnell, Staff Board Member
Xander McDade, Student Board Member

In attendance: Lynn Murray, Deputy Principal (Operations)
Fiona Cameron, Interim Director of Finance
Ian McCartney, Clerk to the Board

Apologies: Ian Robotham, Board Member
Phil McNaul, Financial Consultant

Chair: Elaine Piggot

Minute Taker: Ian McCartney

Quorum: 4

UHI Perth is a registered Scottish charity, number SC021209

We will act with integrity in everything we do

Student Centred + Innovative + Ambitious + Respectful + Inclusive + Collaborative

MINUTES

Item		Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting those Board Members new to the Committee, and noted apologies.</p>	
2.	<p>Additions to the Agenda</p> <p>There were no additions to the agenda.</p> <p>Chair requested that clarity be provided to Board re how the Budget and Cashflow link together, and the effect that historic liabilities will have on Cashflow.</p>	
3.	<p>Declaration of Conflict of Interest in any Agenda Item</p> <p>There were no declarations made.</p>	
4.	<p>Minutes of Meeting of Finance & Resources Committee, 26 May 2025</p> <p>The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
5.	<p>Matters Arising from previous minutes</p> <p>Chair noted that any items of Matters Arising would be dealt with within the respective Agenda Item.</p>	
6.1	<p>UHI Perth Management Accounts: Year to 30 April 2025 & Forecast to 31 July 2025</p> <p>Depute Principal (Operations) introduced Paper 2, noting that the forecast position as at 30 April 2025 shows an improvement of £0.4m on the forecast deficit for the year. Depute Principal (Operations) further noted that better income controls were in place across all cost centres.</p> <p>Depute Principal (Operations) advised that the cash position was forecast to exceed £1m following payment of June salaries.</p> <p>Chair queried the current position around cashflow projections. Depute Principal (Operations) advised that Finance Committee would be provided with a reconciliation between Budget and actual cash in future, however there is no cashflow available in the papers presented today as these are currently being reviewed by UHI. Depute Principal (Operations) noted that the current draft cashflow position showed a large deficit in July/August, however the annual</p>	

	<p>clawback was included in this forecast, and this was under review with SFC.</p> <p>Depute Principal (Operations) noted that UHI CFO had suggested deferring any clawback to October to reduce impact in July/August's cashflow, and conversations were ongoing with SFC around front-loading Grant income to assist in smoothing out cashflow issues.</p> <p>Depute Principal (Operations) further noted that consideration was also being given to seeking approval for deferment /restructuring of some payments over the summer, eg pension strain payments moving from annual to quarterly.</p> <p>Chair thanked Depute Principal (Operations) for the information provided, however reiterated the difficulty for Board members of not having both budget and cashflow information presented together, and the need for clarity of the impact of the cashflow position in assisting the budget position.</p> <p>Student Board Member queried when the spending controls referred to were actually implemented, as these had been discussed as long ago as October 2024. Depute Principal (Operations) advised that SLT had informed PLG to move to an essential spend only position and noted that comparing end April with end January showed that approx. £150k of non-staff costs had been reduced in the forecast position.</p> <p>Student Board Member noted, in learning from recent issues at Dundee University, that it cannot be assumed that staff/managers know there are spending limits without being explicit about these, accompanied by consistent messaging around collective responsibility, and used the example of job roles being advertised without reviews.</p> <p>Depute Principal (Operations) noted in response that budget holders were not receiving the required information from Finance, however there is a focus on ensuring that the correct resources are in place to support budget holders going forward.</p> <p>Interim Chair of Board noted that a meeting with EO had taken place around their comfort around the current financial position and the impact of financial reporting around signing off of accounts. Chair queried whether there would be any impact around Going Concern. Depute Principal (Operations) advised that there was a focus on getting to a position whereby SFC are not providing any funding up front before the Recovery Plan is in place, and the College has been up-front about this.</p> <p>Interim Principal provided a brief summary on issues surround in the AST Repair, noting this was still on hold which means at present there is no flexibility available in the provision of</p>	
--	---	--

	<p>qualifications for students that the College is contracted to deliver on. Student Board Member noted the SAAS deadlines and the impact on income re student numbers that this creates, notwithstanding any resultant legal costs that may be associated.</p> <p>Interim Chair of Board proposed composing a letter to UHI Principal following these matters being discussed at the next Board meeting to document the how and why of the issues moving forward. This approach was AGREED.</p> <p>Interim Director of Finance noted that Auditors will tend to seek assurances around Going Concern at the start of any audit process and for 18 months beyond the date of sign-off. With 3 years of deficits, Auditors would be unlikely to sign off Going Concern without some form of comfort provided by SFC. Chair agreed, and stressed the need to have full transparency on this issue to ensure Going Concern is achieved and documented. Interim Chair of Board suggested use of a Going Concern test approach as used by other organisations to allow discussions to be documented appropriately, and to provide clarity on what would be required within any letter of comfort.</p>	Interim Chair (Board)
6.2	<p>UHI Perth Budget update</p> <p>Depute Principal (Operations) presented Paper 3, which provided a revised draft budget for 2025/26, with main changes being presented within the table shown at paragraph 5, and described at paragraph 6.</p> <p>Depute Principal (Operations) highlighted the amendments generated by updated FFR assumptions and the additional costs around AST replacement provision. Depute Principal (Operations) noted that restructure costs had been absorbed within the Recovery Plan.</p> <p>Chair noted query received from Board Member in their absence as to whether ICT costs should also be considered under Capital Expenditure, not just Estates. Depute Principal (Operations) conceded this was a fair point, however noted that the Budget was to be considered as a starting point for the Recovery Plan, so this could be considered further down the line.</p> <p>Committee NOTED Paper 3. Depute Principal (Operations) advised that the full Budget should be finalised shortly, with an updated version ready to be issued to Board within the week.</p>	
7.1	<p>UHI Perth Recovery Plan</p> <p>Interim Principal presented Paper 4 for information, which provided an operational update on progress towards the final FRP.</p>	

	<p>Interim Principal noted the input made by UHI Perth staff at the recent Staff Conference, with the analysed data arising from staff responses incorporated into the process document in Paper 4.</p> <p>Interim Principal further noted that a Development Day had been held with Sector Managers, and that the process had now moved on to Stage 2, which was on schedule to be completed by end June. All information was available on the Committee Teams area.</p> <p>Board Members responded positively to the diversification of income streams and growth areas. Interim Principal noted that, while there were a number of areas that could result in quick expansion, particularly within International, there were still some barriers within UHI approval processes that could slow this down if not addressed.</p> <p>Interim Principal advised that Stage 3 proposals had been peer-reviewed and discussed at Budget Review Group. Student Board Member queried whether there had been an Equalities Assessment of proposals within this Stage. Interim Principal confirmed that all proposals would require to be fully justified.</p> <p>Interim Chair of Board noted that all proposals would need to be reviewed in terms of risk once FRP is approved, including International proposals.</p> <p>Student Board Member queried what criteria were likely to be used for Stage 3 peer review processes, such as a “heat map” exercise. Interim Principal advised that criteria had not been confirmed as yet. Interim Director of Finance further advised that processes have been commenced around sense-checking financials being put forward within a proforma template that includes a criterion around impact. Chair noted that, although dates were set in stone around the process, it made sense-checking deliverables was to be welcomed to ensure scrutiny and mitigation of risks, and that monitoring will be key to providing confidence and to allow interventions to be provided meaningfully.</p> <p>Committee NOTED Paper 4.</p>	
8.1	<p>National Recognition & Procedure Agreement update</p> <p>Committee NOTED Paper 5, which had been provided for information.</p> <p>Student Board Member queried progress around the formal recognition of GMB. Interim Principal advised that guidance from UHI had been sought in this matter, but not yet received. Committee requested that Interim Principal and Clerk look at potential alternative solutions to this issue.</p>	Interim Principal/ Clerk

9	Date & Time of Next Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday 29 September 2025 @ 5pm (rescheduled date) 	
10	Review of Meeting <p>Committee confirmed that the meeting had been conducted in line with its Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Key Messages were noted as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater understanding to be provided to Board around impact of cashflow on budget forecasts Budget update to provide starting point for FRP Comms with EO re cash situation to be discussed at Board FRP process – solid start, but clock is ticking Action required re GMB 	

Information recorded in College minutes are subject to release under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOI(S)A). Certain exemptions apply: financial information relating to procurement items still under tender, legal advice from College lawyers, items related to national security.

Notes taken to help record minutes are also subject to Freedom of Information requests, and should be destroyed as soon as minutes are approved.

Status of Minutes – Open ☒

An **open** item is one over which there would be no issues for the College in releasing the information to the public in response to a freedom of information request.

A **closed** item is one that contains information that could be withheld from release to the public because an exemption under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies.

The College may also be asked for information contained in minutes about living individuals, under the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018. It is important that fact, rather than opinion, is recorded.

Do the minutes contain items which may be contentious under the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☒