UHI | PERTH

Finance & Resources Committee

Minutes

Meeting reference: F&R2025-26/04
Date: Tuesday 26 May 2026
Location: Online

Members present: Ian Robotham, Chair
Justine Mitchell, Chair of the Board of Management
Sarah Cordwell, Board Member (until Item 8.1)
Deirdre Joy, Board Member
Catherine Etri, Interim Principal
Patrick O'Donnell, Staff Board Member
Andi Garrity, Student Board Member (from Item 6.1 until Item 7.2)

In attendance: Jill Elder, Depute Principal (Item 9 only)
Gail Dunn, Chief Financial Officer
Fiona Cameron, Interim Director of Finance
Sarah Reddie, Director of Finance
David Gourley, Director of Learning Strategies, Enhancement & Resources
Xander McDade, Governance, Growth & Change Manager
Ian McCartney, Clerk to the Board

Apologies: None

Chair: **Ian Robotham**

Minute Taker: Ian McCartney

Quorum: 4

MINUTES

Item		Action
1	**Welcome and Apologies** Chair welcomed Justine Mitchell, new Chair of the Board of Management and Sarah Reddie, new Director of Finance to their first meetings of Finance & Resources Committee. Chair noted thanks to Andi Garrity, Student Board Member and Fiona Cameron, Interim Director of Finance for their contribution to the Committee, as this would be their last meeting.	
2	**Additions to the Agenda** There were no additions to the agenda.	
3	**Declaration of Conflict of Interest in any Agenda Item** There were no declarations made.	
4	**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee, 10 March 2026** Clerk noted an additional row between Items 5 and 6.1 in the Draft Minutes, which requires to be removed. Clerk to correct. The minutes were otherwise approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	Clerk
5	**Matters Arising from previous minutes** Chair noted that all items of outstanding matters arising would be covered within the agreed agenda.	
6.1	**Contract Strategy – Water Management** Chief Financial Officer presented Paper 2, a procurement strategy relating to Water Management arising from investigations into water ingress at the Brahan Lecture Theatre and IT Suite. Endorsement was requested from the Committee in terms of an agreement in principle re the procurement routes ahead of final Board approval to allow works to progress over the summer. Chair and Chair BOM sought clarity around framework being utilised, budget implications and timings of works relating to funding. Chief Financial Officer noted that the APUC Procurement Manager was currently on leave so it was not possible to provide a high level	

	of detail re procurement processes to Committee, however advised that emergency funding from SFC would be utilised for the works. Although final quotations were yet to be provided, SFC had indicated they would be content for funding to be rolled into 2026/27 if required as long as funds are committed by the end of the Financial Year. SFC would expect an update re the situation in July. Chief Financial Officer advised that timescales should be clearer once the full survey report had been received as this will define the full scope of work. Chair BOM queried why it had taken so long to get to this position. Interim Principal noted that this was a long-standing issue due to the extension being built above a spring, and that there had been several previous flooding incidents, exacerbated by the apparent lack of drain maintenance over time. Specialist engineers had been brought in and noted a highly complex set of circumstances – their Survey requires to be reviewed in terms of both the short- and long-term proposals, however the risk of not acting to address the position over the summer would be an impact on students for the forthcoming academic year. Chair expressed concern over approval of budgeted expenditure at this stage given the number of issues that still needed to be resolved, however was content to seek Committee's approval of the approach being proposed on the proviso that further information regarding the financial aspects of the works is provided. Committee **APPROVED** procurement approach as outlined within Paper 2, however requested an updated position once financial implications had been determined. Interim Principal noted that, as works would be progressed over summer and outside of scheduled Board meetings, there may be a requirement for Chair's Action to be taken on the matter. Committee **AGREED** on this course of action.	
7.1	**Financial Forecast – Year to 31 July 2026 (as at 31 March 2026)** Interim Director of Finance presented Paper 3, which comprised the management accounts to end March and estimated outturn to July 2026. Interim Director of Finance advised that end of year projections were slightly ahead of the forecast break-even position, due to additional clarity around International charges and additional income received re 2023/24 claw-back. The SFC Emergency Funding previously discussed was not yet included in the figures	

	as the treatment of these monies were still to be determined. Interim Director of Finance also advised that a legacy of around £135k had been received, but not in time to be included in the report. Following a query from the Chair, clarification was provided that this legacy was to be treated as unrestricted funds, and management are looking at how it best be used in a meaningful, which would be communicated in due course to the Executors. Chair queried progress around ASW review. Depute Principal advised that additional support had been sourced to review the Customer Journey with a view to producing a plan for ASW in July. Chair queried whether the additional audit fees issue had been resolved Committee. Chief Financial Officer advised that discussions with External Auditor had continued to take place however the matter remained unresolved. It is hoped that a final decision can be reached soon. Staff Board Member queried whether the position around the Centre for Mountain Studies had been resolved. Interim Principal noted that the matter was still ongoing, mainly due to issues around HR savings within the plan, however UHI Perth continue to push for a resolution to the matter. Chair queried level of expenditure on HR Consultancy fees. Depute Principal noted that an HR&OD Manager was now in place however there was a period of transition while the new structure within the department beds in, and there had been a number of highly complex employee-relation issues this academic year which had resulted in increased costs. Committee **NOTED** Paper 3.	
7.2	**Draft Budget 2026/27** Chief Financial Officer presented the Draft Budget for 2026/27, which shows a small surplus of £54k based on March 2026 actuals and projections based on the FRP. Chief Financial Officer highlighted that: • FE teaching grant income increased based on SFC's indicative allocation • Centre for Mountain Studies included within Budget due to uncertainty of timing s over transfer to UHI • There is confidence over International Income levels due to approval being granted by Ministry of Education in China for ongoing work • Short Course, Modern Apprenticeship and VQ targets may be stretched following review • Other Commercial Income includes car parking fees and rental	

	income from former Nursery • Staff costs have risen, however these include Centre for Mountains Studies staff plus some newly-created roles • A target has been set to retain minimum of £1m cash at the end of each month, however this will require to be worked through with UHI in terms of phasing to achieve • There is a contingent risk around a Pensions Revaluation due in April 2027 Chair BOM queried the risks around cashflow at key times of the year. Chief Financial Officer advised that, while there is much that the college does not have control over, eg SAAS funding issued in a single batch in January, advances from UHI are available if required. Chair BOM asked for clarification around future deficit budgets. Chief Financial Officer noted that 2027/28 and 2028/29 deficits were based on an assumed Flat Cash provision going forward, plus an increase in costs, however the picture presented for future years shows a high-level forecast if the college does nothing, and work is still required to be done to address these areas. Chair queried whether FRP had been included in proposals. Chief Financial Officer confirmed this to be the case, and that student fee income and student number forecasts for 2026 were broadly in line with expectations, however data was being looked at to a granular level to ensure projections are converted to confirmed places, and advised that courses with waiting lists are looking to convert wherever possible to maximise the recruitment position. Committee discussed the likely timing re a revised Budget and the Financial Forecast Return being presented to Board, with a preference expressed to have a final Budget ready for approval at June Board. Committee **NOTED** Paper 4.	
8	**Estates Update** Director LSER presented Paper 5, noting the move to a more strategic maintenance approach, with a revised operating model looking at improved sustainability. Director LSER advised that the Estates Manager was due to leave the college on 13th July. Director LSER noted that the Brahan Kitchen installation works are due to commence at end June, and presented the 2026 Summer Works Programme, which was primarily focused on building resilience and Health & Safety compliance. The Brahan car park would undergo focused patching work over the summer, rather than a full resurfacing, to lower costs.	

	Chair queried whether there should be some prioritisation within the Summer Works Programme for additional clarity. Director LSER agreed and would review Programme accordingly. Staff Board Member queried levels of confidence to deliver the Programme. Director LSER noted high level of confidence if funding is available. Committee **NOTED** Paper 5.	Director LSER
9	**HR Update** Depute Principal presented Paper 6, highlighting that the National Job Evaluation Scheme has not moved forward, and that there will be a provision in the Budget relating to ongoing National Bargaining around teaching staff pay claims based on latest submissions. Committee discussed some ongoing HR issues and the requirement for Board involvement in some of the more challenging matters, and were advised that the appropriate policies and procedures were being reviewed. Chair requested that sector/ONS data re sickness absence benchmarking be included in future reports. Additional information on improvements to CIPHR will be circulated after the meeting. Committee **NOTED** Paper 6	Depute Principal
10	**Digital Transformation Update** Director LSER advised that £114k had been received from the DigiTay fund for delivery of AI training and workplace upskilling, and it is hoped to look at own workforce in the same area. Committee **NOTED** Paper 7.	
11	**Committee Minutes** Committee received and noted minutes for the following meetings: • EDIT – 26 February 2026	
12	**Date & Time of Next Meeting** • tbc	
13	**Review of Meeting** Committee confirmed the business of the meeting had been consistent with the Terms of Reference.	

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 ☑**