

# Strategic Development Committee

## Minutes

**Meeting reference:** SDC 2022-23/01

**Date:** Wednesday 21 September 2022

**Location:** Boardroom (Braham Room 019)

**Members present:** Andrew Comrie, Board Member (Chair)  
Michael Buchanan, Board Member  
Heather Cormack, Board Member (from Item 6.1)  
Sheena Devlin, Board Member  
Jenny Hamilton, Board Member  
Derek Waugh, Staff Board Member  
John Dare, Staff Board Member  
Margaret Cook, Principal  
Charlea Jefts, HISA Perth Depute President Activities & Welfare

**In attendance:** Veronica Lynch, Vice Principal (External)  
Catherine Etri, Vice Principal (Academic)  
Iain Wishart, Vice Principal (Operations)  
Ian McCartney, Clerk to the Board

**Apologies:** Todor Pavlov-Kennedy, Student Board Member  
Lorenz Cairns, Depute Principal

**Chair:** Andrew Comrie

**Minute Taker:** Ian McCartney

**Quorum:** 3

**Minutes:**

| Item |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Action                                                |
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| 1.   | <p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b></p> <p>Chair welcomed all present to the meeting, and welcomed Charlea Jefts as a new member of the Committee.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                       |
| 2.   | <p><b>Additions to the Agenda</b></p> <p>There were no additions to the Agenda.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                       |
| 3.   | <p><b>Declaration of Interest in any Agenda Item</b></p> <p>No interests were declared</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                       |
| 4.   | <p><b>Minutes of Meeting held on 16 May 2022</b></p> <p>The minutes were agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                       |
| 5.   | <p><b>Matters Arising from Previous Minutes</b></p> <p><b><u>Actions outstanding from prior meetings: 02 November 2021</u></b></p> <p><u>Item 6.3 – Commercial/Non-Core Business Strategy</u><br/> <b>Action 3:</b> Provide further report on Commercial activity following College Strategy approval</p> <p><b>Action Update:</b> Deferred to next meeting</p> <p><u>Item 6.5 – Development Trust</u><br/> <b>Action:</b> Provide Committee with more information including presentation by representative of Trust</p> <p><b>Action Update:</b> Not complete, defer to next meeting. Principal noted that work was continuing around development fundraising events in the interim.</p> <p><b><u>Actions outstanding from prior meetings: 16 May 2022</u></b></p> <p>Chair noted that all actions from meeting of 16 May 2022 related to the Strategic Plan had been amalgamated with other Committee inputs into a final version which was subsequently approved by the Board of Management in June.</p> | <p>Vice Principal<br/>(External)</p> <p>Principal</p> |

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| 6   | <b>Items for Discussion</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
| 6.1 | <p><b>Option &amp; Risk Appraisal Arising from Extraordinary Board Meeting, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022</b></p> <p>Chair proposed spending the substantive part of the meeting on Item 6.1, going through the suite of papers provided by the Executive Team, and to consider the cultural changes required if the College was to remain within the UHI partnership.</p> <p>Chair outlined that Committee was tasked with going back to the Board with its deliberations and to represent the thinking behind any decisions. Principal confirmed that an Extraordinary Board had been convened for Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October, following the Graduation ceremony.</p> <p>Principal noted in Paper 2 (Executive Summary) that SMT had considered three options/scenarios for structural change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remain in UHI and continue to work on improving the partnership</li> <li>• leave UHI and be a stand alone college retaining our HE numbers</li> <li>• leave UHI and create a Tayside FE/HE formalised collaboration</li> </ul> <p>Principal summarised Paper 3 (UHI Revitalisation), noting that there had been a focus on 7 groups identified to work on 2-year process for substantive change. Principal scheduled to chair one of these groups (Shared Services) with support from Vice Principal (Operations). The key question identified was “Why is this different?” – UHI had identified that there was a “burning platform” for change due to pressing financial impetus.</p> <p>Board Member asked what structures would change programme have, eg leading or sponsoring? And where are resources coming from? Principal advised that the leadership of groups had not been fully identified yet, although a closed Court meeting on 22/09/2022 would look at leadership following departure of UHI Principal, and the structure of groups was not yet determined.</p> <p>Principal <b>agreed</b> to report to EBM meeting on 06/10/2022 re likely structures of change programme. The expectation is that work will commence January 2023 per proposals, although PC would like some momentum to be retained</p> <p>Board Member expressed concern re “what is UHI?” and whether this can evolve out of change programme; in addition, concern was raised that that 7 different groups might take 7 different positions if this not defined.</p> |  |

Committee **agreed** that regular reporting to/reviews with Colleges are required to ensure clarity over direction of travel, and these should be included within the mode of delivery.

Board Member noted concern over 2024 being a realistic timescale given recent changes in UHI leadership.

Board Member identified that the College needs to know project management model to be utilised, eg PRINCE2. Principal **agreed** to confirm which project management model to be used once known.

Board Member queried what could happen re the areas of work identified by PC but not in 7 workstreams identified by UHI – could there be new subsets within workstreams. Principal advised that this is a discussion point for senior group responsible for delivery.

Committee **agreed** that there needs to be some form of input from Boards of APs, and the Principal should negotiate the form this may take.

Vice Principal (Operations) presented Paper 4 (Financial Comment), which provided detail on key financial implications not discussed in detail at Extraordinary Board. Vice Principal (Operations) advised that the 7 workstream scenarios have not been modelled, therefore there is no definition of what completion, or part thereof, means financially.

Board Member queried what are sector benchmarks re overhead v teaching costs? Vice Principal (Operations) responded that this was approx. 50/50, although “teaching expenditure” needs defined.

Committee **agreed** that outline deliverables should be defined.

Student member asked how much of College’s teaching and academic spend (ie 63%) is HE vs FE, and what is College’s contribution to shared teaching on networked courses, ie what would College need to spend to retain current levels in event of a split from UHI? Vice Principal (Operations) advised that a detailed split on a cost basis would be extremely difficult to track as there is no clarity in terms of what PC draw down from EO – there are no SLAs, and the top slice is not defined by what APs want.

Board Member queried why College is paying for something not being used? Was opt-in/out discussed? Vice Principal (Operations) advised that this issue has not been discussed since formation of EO, and impact of EO costs on APs has never been assessed.

Committee **agreed** that review of EO needs to go back to “first principles”.

Chair asked for input/points of clarification into Paper 5 (SWOT Analysis).

Board Member asked whether the SWOT was evidenced, or purely SMT opinion? Principal noted that the analysis was subjective opinion based on qualitative rather than quantitative evidence, as deeper levels of detail not able to be provided within such a short turnaround

Board Member queried whether the retention of Degree-awarding powers within UHI was likely to be a deal-breaker for the College’s HE provision? Principal advised that other colleges provide degrees offered by other HE organisations, eg Open University, Greenwich University, however the funded places ceiling may have an impact on Scottish Universities offering degrees with Scottish Colleges.

Board Member noted that a weighting for the different strengths/weaknesses may help support a decision about the preferred option. For example, should political intervention be strongly weighted, given that political positions may have evolved in recent months.

Board Member asked whether anything in the current Audit Scotland report should be factored into the SWOT analysis? Principal **agreed** that SMT would cross-reference this prior to presentation to Board.

Board Member advised that student voice and staff upheaval should also appear within Scenario 1, and that weighting should be given to opportunity the College has to be a dynamic leader in this process to the benefit of all.

Committee **agreed** that Scenario 1 should be adopted as the position moving forward, however the SWOT analysis for this requires attention prior to submission to full Board.

Principal presented Paper 6 (Areas for Negotiation) and sought feedback from Committee in terms of being strongly for/against.

Board Member advised that revenue generation parts require greater impetus.

Board Member sought reassurance around the implications of the negotiating areas around Curriculum Strategy, in particular whether there could be any risk of signing up to a strategy that might not suit the College.

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|     | <p>Vice Principal (Academic) noted that UHI had recently conducted a Curriculum Review, however this was more of a rationalisation process with no strategic framework, and didn't allow for local niche provision. Vice Principal (Academic) advised that any future review would need more input from Academic Partners, particularly around networking on programmes</p> <p>Board Member identified that some timescales on negotiation positions look very tight eg, one includes a reference to Oct 2022), and sought clarification on any bandwidth for negotiation/compromise</p> <p>Principal advised that SMT will review Paper ahead of Board meeting given changes in recent past, including a prioritisation of list of negotiation areas.</p> <p>Strategic Development Committee <b>ENDORSED</b> the SMT position to propose Scenario 1 to the Extraordinary Board meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October, subject to changes agreed.</p> <p>Board Member expressed concern that the Board meeting would relitigate the lengthy discussion that had just taken place and sought a way to avoid this. Clerk offered re repackage notes in an summary paper to allow Board a simpler way to check on the scrutiny and decisions taken today. This approach was <b>agreed</b>.</p> |  |
| 6.2 | <p><b>Delivering the College Strategy – update</b></p> <p>Chair proposed to defer this Item to the next meeting, which was <b>AGREED</b>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| 6.3 | <p><b>KPI Prioritisation – update</b></p> <p>Chair proposed to defer this Item to the next meeting, which was <b>AGREED</b>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |
| 7   | <p><b>Date and time of next meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday 05 December 2022 @ 5:00pm</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
| 8   | <p><b>Review of Meeting</b></p> <p>Committee confirmed the business of the meeting had been compliant with its Terms of Reference.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |

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 1998?      **Yes**       **No**

DRAFT