

# Strategic Development Committee

## DRAFT Minutes

**Meeting reference:** SDC 2023-24/01

**Date:** Wednesday 13 September 2023

**Location:** Room 019/Online

**Members present:** Andrew Comrie, Chair  
Michael Buchanan, Board Member  
Rebecca Bond, HISA Activities and Welfare  
Jenny Hamilton, Board Member  
Margaret Cook, Principal  
John Dare, Staff Board Member  
Derek Waugh, Board Member

**In attendance:** Lorenz Cairns, Depute Principal  
Veronica Lynch, Vice Principal Engagement  
Iain Wishart, Vice Principal Operations  
Catherine Etri, Vice Principal Academic  
Isobel Syme, PA to Principal and Chief Executive

**Apologies:** Fiona Smith, HISA Perth President

**Chair:** Andrew Comrie

**Minute Taker:** Isobel Syme

**Quorum:** 3

**Minutes:**

<b>S</b>		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>  Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and noted apologies.  Chair welcomed Rebecca Bond to the meeting and Rebecca introduced herself to the Committee.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Additions to the Agenda</b>  No additions to the agenda.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Declaration of Interest in any Agenda Item</b>  None.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Minutes of Meeting held on 12 May 2023</b>  The minutes were agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Matters Arising from Previous Minutes</b>  8.1 – ASOS. Vice Principal Academic updated the committee on the impact of ASOS in relation to our Graduation event in October. The Executive Support Team are working very hard to ensure that most students are being given the opportunity to participate in this event.  A return has been going back to the Scottish Government mainly around apprentices with regard to ASOS. This is being measured across the country. UHI and Perth have been keeping students as up to date as possible via our website and by emails. Specific queries are being dealt with individually. The ASOS issue has still not been resolved. We have tried to ensure that students are not suffering any detriment.  It was <b>NOTED</b> that there has been additional workload put on staff with regard to the ASOS issue.  10.1 – Risk Register. Vice Principal Operations explained that the risk around cash is very clear. This will be shown to the Audit Committee in 2 weeks' time. The Risk Appetite Statement was put together by the Board and we will be working on this with the Audit Committee in the Autumn.	

	<p>10.2 – Communications around the consultation process – it was <b>NOTED</b> that the process is still underway. Principal updated the committee on progress. A further update will take place at the Board of Management meeting in October. An extraordinary Board meeting may also need to be scheduled in.</p> <p>Staff Board Member requested an update on voluntary severance at the next Board meeting. This was <b>AGREED</b>.</p> <p>10.5 – KPIs – verbal update from Depute Principal. Some visioning is taking place with our SMT looking at the current strategy going forward making sure it is still fit for purpose. Still a very sound strategy in terms of content and context around the sector. A refreshed strategy is currently out to SMT for comment. The KPIs have been truncated. Moving forward after full consultation we will engage with the teams looking at core value and set the KPIs.</p> <p>Student Voice Rep Process – Depute Principal has reviewed this.</p>	Principal
<b>6</b>	<b>Items for Discussion</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	<p><b>Key Performance Indicators</b></p> <p>Staff Board Member asked for clarification regarding staff engagement and how this will be done.</p> <p>Depute Principal explained that core values have already been agreed.</p> <p>Chair noted that any changes would need to go to the Board of Management for approval.</p> <p>It was <b>AGREED</b> that the updated Strategic Plan will come to the next meeting.</p> <p>Board Member noted that there is value in getting this back in focus and will provide comfort to staff.</p> <p>Principal explained that KPIs may change, however the strategic objectives may remain.</p>	Depute Principal
<b>6.2</b>	<p><b>Discussion around areas of Strategic Development for 2023-24</b></p> <p>The Strategic Plan will come back to this meeting in November 2023</p> <p>Other income streams were discussed in relation to bringing in additional monies.</p>	

	<p>Chair noted that we should also be looking at areas of growth including partnership working and International.</p> <p>Board Member added that the curriculum offer and recruitment issues could also be looked into including areas of specialism and unique selling points.</p> <p>Vice Principal Academic explained that a major constriction on curriculum is UHI. We are constantly engaging with employers and Scottish government priorities.</p> <p>Principal noted that engagement between the Learner Engagement Committee and this committee might be beneficial. It was <b>AGREED</b> that we invite some of our academic colleagues (SDDs) to come along to a future joint meeting in cycle 3 of the schedule.</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding partnerships and the constraints on us through UHI and student numbers.</p> <p>Vice Principal External updated the committee on International opportunities going forward.</p> <p>Associate Principal explained that UHI approve our Degree programmes, however some of our FE courses are done through national governing bodies as these are more relevant qualifications to employers. It was agreed that examples of this sort of curriculum development would be included in the future joint meeting of the Learner Engagement Committee and this Committee.</p>	<p>Clerk to the Board</p>
<p><b>6.3</b></p>	<p><b>Target Operating Model – UHI</b></p> <p>It was <b>NOTED</b> that this is a confidential item.</p> <p>Principal updated the committee. A meeting took place at the beginning of August with UHI Principals and Chairs to look at how we can move collectively from deficits across UHI of around 20 million pounds. The three specialist institutions were not at this meeting. There was agreement that this deficit is not sustainable.</p> <p>Principals have been tasked with coming up with a new operating model and meetings are taking place every 2 weeks. The future by 2030 may be a single institution option or a collective partnership option. Lots of legislation would need to change with regard to a single merged institution. By November we should have proposals for a new way of working and this will then go to the Scottish Funding Council for discussion.</p>	

<p>We need to look at a different way of working. A vast amount of our expenditure is in staffing, and we cannot continue as we are – we need to look at making savings and efficiencies. Shared systems and processes are needed across the partnership eg HR and Payroll. Meetings will take place with the Scottish Funding Council in November and January.</p> <p>Board Member noted that he is not surprised they are looking at a radical solution but queried the financial sustainability of the options and what this means for FE.</p> <p>Principal explained that two thirds of UHI is FE and it can be quite challenging re how they engage with FE. Legislative change will also be a challenge with regard to different organisational status. Financial sustainability – we all pay a top slice and then some of this money supports the smaller partners. Our students should not be disadvantaged by this.</p> <p>Board Member noted that he hopes this opinion is shared by the Board. SFC need to fund accordingly.</p> <p>Principal noted that this is a real issue for the college Boards and the Court of UHI. We will continue to argue very hard for fairness and equity across the board.</p> <p>Chair noted that this might influence the political will as the financial models are not working. The quality and recruitment of UHI are not stacking up.</p> <p>Vice Principal Academic noted that there has been a substantial amount of work has gone into this with regard to recruitment. The service the students get in Perth is second to none. It remains very difficult to recruit HE students.</p> <p>Depute Principal reminded the committee that the Board wanted to give UHI 2024 a fighting chance. We need to recruit to make UHI work. UHI Perth makes up a significant part of UHI and it would have a significant impact if we came out of UHI. However noted that there is a very short time to come up with a solution.</p> <p>Chair noted that this is a sub-committee of the Board and the Board need to have a strategic discussion re this.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b> – this should be referred to the Board for discussion.</p> <p>The full Board may wish to ask this Committee to undertake more detailed work on other options/scenarios arising from the Board.</p>	<p>Clerk to the Board</p>
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<b>6.4</b>	<b>Future Agenda Item – Restructuring Strategic Plan and Alternative Income Sources</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Date and time of next meeting:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thursday 23 November 2023</li> </ul>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Review of Meeting</b>  Committee confirmed the business of the meeting had been compliant with its Terms of Reference.	

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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**