

Strategic Development Committee

Minutes

Meeting reference: SDC 2024-25/01

Date: Tuesday 17 September 2024

Location: Boardroom (Braham Room 019)

Members present: Jenny Hamilton, Board Member (Chair)
Mary Fraser, Board Member
Elaine Piggot, Board Member
Derek Waugh, Board Member
Margaret Cook, Principal & Chief Executive
Patrick O'Donnell, Staff Board Member
Xander McDade, Student Board Member

In attendance: Lorenz Cairns, Depute Principal
Lynn Murray, Depute Principal (Operations)
Ian McCartney, Clerk to the Board

Apologies: Andi Garrity, Student Board Member

Chair: Jenny Hamilton

Minute Taker: Ian McCartney

Quorum: 3

Minutes:

Item		Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies Chair welcomed all present to the meeting, and noted apologies.	
2.	Additions to the Agenda There were no additions to the Agenda.	
3.	Declaration of Interest in any Agenda Item There were no declarations of interest.	
4.	Minutes of Meeting held on 12 May 2024 Chair advised that a section of the table on Page 2 of the minutes appeared to be missing some data – Clerk to append the correct details.	Clerk

	<p>Subject to the above correction, the minutes were agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
5.	<p>Matters Arising from Previous Minutes</p> <p>The outstanding Action noted in the Minutes under Item 8 is included on the Agenda as Item 6.3.</p> <p>Board Member queried progress around Cashflow under Item 6.1. Depute Principal (Operations) noted this matter would be discussed in detail at the next Finance & Resources Committee.</p>	
6.1	<p>UHI Outline Business Case</p> <p>Chair advised that Chair of Board had requested this Committee discuss the latest iteration of the UHI Outline Business Case (OBC) in some detail with a view to developing a list of questions on the OBC and its process ahead of the Board Development Session.</p> <p>Committee noted the following:</p> <p>1 Has the UHI comprehensively understood the issues and potential solutions? For example, does UHI recognise that it is the HE sector of UHI that is a significant contributor to ‘the problem’ – the HE sector has never met numbers whereas FE numbers are solid. The range of options set out in the OBC were not necessarily the full range of possible options.</p> <p>2 The theoretical nature of the document gave no indication of how we begin to implement the proposals contained within it.</p> <p>3 The absence of transformative vision for the UHI that was more than simply a sum of its parts (and the underling sense that the document didn’t reflect the true nature of the UHI).</p> <p>4. The drivers for the restructuring of UHI are difficult to discern from the document but it appears that there are primarily 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial; • Reputational (ie the UHI wants to be able to improve its international standing); • Legacy - addressing what are perceived to be long-standing legacy issues (ie eliminating the complex leadership and governance arrangements which UHI argues creates duplication and arguably slows down 	

	<p>receptiveness to emerging opportunities and challenges).</p> <p>5. There is no real recognition within the document that FE is the core of the UHI's provision. The document suggests that UHI is a traditional university and in some sense it is (it has the typical university management structures), but in another sense it is quite unique because 70% of its students are FE students and they are spread over a significant geographical area.</p> <p>6. In relation to finances, Committee had a number of concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the OBC fails to acknowledge the steps that UHI Perth has undertaken to get its own house in order financially and what this therefore means in terms of options potentially available to Perth; • it is not at all clear what value UHI Perth college gets for its financial contribution to the UHI and what benefits EO provides for our students and our community; • there is no guarantee of the investment that is likely to be needed to support the reorganisation or closer collaboration or the various options currently contained in the OBC. <p>7. The timescales set out for implementation of whatever option is ultimately decided upon are quite unrealistic.</p> <p>Committee reached a view that it is not at all clear at this stage what benefits the various options set out in the OBC would provide for Perth, its students and its community. Whatever option is chosen for the closer collaboration within UHI it has to have very clear benefits for Perth students and its community.</p> <p>Committee expressed concerned that the Executive Office is setting the agenda for the exercise. Committee noted that UHI intends to release a press release on the 18th and has asked Principals of the various colleges to also issue a release to its staff and has suggested the wording of that release. The UHI press release was not available but the proposed message to staff was discussed. Committee suggested a revised wording.</p> <p>Committee AGREED that there was a view we should take the opportunity to influence the discussions on the nature and future of UHI, by providing feedback on what is missing from the document.</p>	
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	<p>Committee FURTHER AGREED for the Board Development Session it would be useful to receive a top-level summary of UHI Perth's 'business operations' including for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actual numbers of students we have for both FE & HE compared against formal targets; • value of the Top Slice for HE & FE; • spend per student as a sector average and per UHI Perth student; • Breakdown of what UHI Perth receive from UHI Executive Office, and what we think these services are worth to UHI Perth both financially and in terms of wider student staff and community benefit. 	
6.2	<p>Strategic Plan – Monitoring & Review</p> <p>Clerk presented Paper 2, which sought endorsement on a draft schedule of Non-Board KPIs (ie those KPIs outside of the Balanced Scorecard reported to Board) for scrutiny at Strategic Development Committee.</p> <p>Committee ENDORSED Paper 2.</p>	
6.3	<p>Review of Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>Chair presented Paper 3, which sought endorsement for some updates to the Terms of Reference for the Committee, including role changes.</p> <p>Committee ENDORSED Paper 3. Clerk advised that this Paper would now be presented at Board for formal approval</p>	
7	<p>Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 12 September 2024 	
8	<p>Review of Meeting</p> <p>Committee confirmed the business of the meeting had been compliant with the Terms of Reference.</p>	

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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** ☒