

**University of the Highlands and Islands**

**Draft Minute**

**Committee** Further Education Regional Board (FERB)/FE Planning Board  
**Date & Time** Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2013 at 2.00pm  
**Location** EO1 Ness Walk, Inverness  
**Purpose** Scheduled meeting  
**Quorum** Further Educational Regional Board (FERB)/FE Planning Board Friday (Half plus one)

**Present**

Michael Foxley (Chair) & Lydia WHC  
 Rohmer (p) (vc)

Bill Ross (p/vc) & Janice Annal (c) Orkney College (VC)

Drew Ratter (c) & Irene Peterson Shetland College  
 (p)(vc)

Anne Lindsay (p) & Jana Hutt (c) Moray College

Niall Smith (c) Gordon Jenkins North Highland College  
 (p)(vc)

Brian Chaplin (c) Iain MacMillan (p) Lews Castle College (VC)

Penny Brodie (c) & Margaret Perth College (VC)  
 Munckton (p)

Dianne Rawlinson (p) & Hector Inverness College  
 Douglas (c)

Fraser Durie (p) & Andrew Argyll College  
 Campbell (c)

Rachel Parker (President) UHISA

Morven Cameron HIE

Fraser Grieve SCDI

Patrick O'Donnell Staff representative

**In attendance**

Judith Henderson Scottish Funding Council (SFC)  
 Halena McAnulty (SFC) (VC)  
 Fiona Larg (UHI Chief Operating Officer & Secretary)  
 Linda Stewart  
 Louise MacDonald  
 Roger Sendall (*minutes*)

**Apologies**

Carroll Buxton, Hugh Fraser, Crichton Lang, Gordon McGuinness, Hector Morrison, Aideen O'Malley, Boyd Robertson, Garry Sutherland.

Agenda Item	Action
<p><b>1 WELCOME</b></p> <p>The Chairman opened the meeting and noted that a quorum was present.</p> <p><b>Declarations of interest:</b> None</p> <p><b>AOCB:</b> None</p>	
<p><b>2 MINUTES</b></p> <p>2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013 (FERB13-041) were reviewed and approved.</p> <p>2.2 The proceedings of the strategic event held at the Newton Hotel Nairn on 26<sup>th</sup> August (FERB13-42) were noted.</p>	
<p><b>3 MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>3.1 <b>Transitional Funding Bid</b> – It was reported that SFC had now agreed in principle to provide transitional funding to assist the University to progress new governance arrangements and to finance the administration of new activities associated with progressing shared services. Conditions of the funding had not been finalised to date.</p> <p>It was noted that a third Fort Augustus summit was scheduled for later in the week to examine the business case for shared services in detail. FERB requested that SFC endeavour to provide clarification on the full extent of the funding and any associated conditions prior to that meeting.</p> <p>3.2 <b>Student Representation Project</b> – It was noted that the bid for project funding from SFC to assist with promoting student engagement in governance had been successful. A grant of £205k had been awarded and some good progress was being made. The Chair welcomed Louise MacDonald Student Representation Project Manager to the meeting as an observer. It was noted that interviews for an FE student representative to assist the project were planned for 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013.</p> <p>3.3 <b>Development of Employer Engagement Strategy</b> – FERB noted that the employer engagement strategy was progressing under the title UHI for Work and Enterprise. It was noted that to be effective that the strategy would need to be developed in a manner that was consistent with the Regional Skills Investment Plan under discussion at agenda item 8.</p> <p>3.4 <b>Regional Schools Group</b> – It was noted that FERB would receive a full presentation on activities and issues relating to building and enhancing relationships with schools at the January FERB meeting.</p> <p>3.5 <b>EU Structural Funds Update</b> – Noted that the Director of European &amp; International Development was present and would provide a presentation later in the meeting.</p>	SFC

## 4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chair provided FERB with a verbal report on his recent engagements with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning and with other FE Regional Leads. The following key points were highlighted:

**Common Application Process** – The Chair was pleased to report that the flawed proposal to launch a central applications administration system for all FE courses had been abandoned.

**Regional Leads Working Groups** - The Chair reported that the FE Regional Leads had established a number of working parties to consider key issues affecting colleges such as governance, human resources, finance and curriculum. UHI already had representation on each group, however, opportunity existed for others to join too. Anyone wishing to do so was encouraged to contact the Chair by email as soon as possible.

**Regional Leads Role and Responsibilities** – The Chair requested members to review the recently circulated note outlining the role and responsibilities of FR Regional Leads in Scotland and to provide feedback or comments as soon as possible.

**Grant Funding Opportunities** – The Chair reported that the SFC had published a note earlier today requesting submissions for grant funding applications aimed at improving articulation and reducing inequality for students by enhancing skills in key sectors. In addition the Chair advised that he had submitted an early verbal request for additional funding for tourism related initiatives, however, he advised that opportunity existed to develop submissions and requested members to give the matter early consideration. It was noted that a number of members considered that STEM opportunities should be regarded as priority areas above tourism and it was noted that the issue would be discussed by college Principals at their next meeting scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> November with an update to FERB in January 2014.

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**ONS Reclassification of Colleges** - The Chair reported that he had met with the Cabinet Secretary and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to discuss concerns over the impacts on colleges of the Office of National Statistics (ONS) decision to reclassify incorporated colleges as public bodies and in particular the problems associated with the requirement for affected colleges to adopt a financial year that was different to the academic year utilised by the partnership. He reported that feedback from the meetings was positive and felt encouraged that that a potential solution would be identified.

**National Pay Bargaining** – FERB noted that the Principal of WHC and UHI COOS were working with the partnership Human Resources Practitioners Group (HRPG) with a view to collating salary data and terms and conditions with a view to identifying an appropriate single spine for the region as a response to the government's desire to introduce consistent national policies. It was noted that FERB would receive an update on progress with the initiative at the January meeting.

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## 5 TERMS OF REFERENCE

FERB noted the draft terms of reference paper FERB13-043. It was noted that a number of amendments would need to be made to reflect provisions of the Post 16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 and to incorporate comments made by FERB at an earlier meeting. It was noted that the Secretary would amend the document in consultation with the Chair with a view to presenting amended draft terms of reference to Court for approval in December.

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## 6 DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT

### 6.1 Self-Evaluation Report and Context Statement

FERB considered paper FERB13-044 prepared by the Associate Principal Further Education providing an early draft of the Self-Evaluation Report and Context Statement required as documentation for the SFC in preparation for development of the 2014/15 Outcome Agreement (OA).

It was noted that further consideration should be given to allocating particular targets identified within the OA to particular APs and to developing a more sophisticated approach to targets and metrics that would be effective at measuring performance within a complex and highly variable region. Reliance on post code data and SIMD indicators were not considered appropriate for the region and opportunity existed for the partnership to develop more appropriate measures. It was noted that Perth College UHI would be willing to present alternative performance measures to the next Community Planning Partnership meeting. It was noted that the issue would be discussed by college Principals at their next meeting scheduled for 6th November with an update to FERB in January 2014.

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## 7 REGIONAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

FERB noted paper FERB13-045 prepared by the Associate Principal Further Education comprising a draft context statement with regard to identifying the breadth and sophistication of FE provided by APs and attempting to highlight issues and barriers to change that may exist and identifying possible solutions. Comments by email were invited.

All

## 8 REGIONAL SKILLS INVESTMENT PLAN

FERB received a presentation from Jude Henderson of SFC in connection the draft Regional Skills Investment Plan that had been developed jointly by SDS, SFC and HIE. A copy of the presentation slides are appended to and form a part of this minute.

FERB also noted the draft Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan dated October 2013 and associated Local area profiles document FERB13-46.

The following key points were highlighted:

- FERB considered that the plan was fundamentally flawed because of the omission of Perth and North Ayrshire. Perth College UHI was the University's largest AP and a primary agent for delivery of key targets identified within the plan for the Highlands and Islands region and the SFC Outcome Agreement. This was a critical issues that must be resolved.
- FERB considered that regional consultation on the plan was essential and noted that the projected timescales for agreeing a final Skills Investment Plan by Christmas 2013 were wholly unrealistic if the intention was to undertake appropriate dialogue and consultation with key delivery bodies.
- FERB requested that data contained within the report should be presented in a format that would enable analysis by HIE area.
- FERB considered that would it would not be possible to provide a consensus view until January 2014 at the earliest.

- FERB considered that the role of SMO and SAMS were considerably understated.
- UHI should be granted opportunity to have representation at HE and FE level in the short life working group established by COHI to progress the plan.

## **9 EUROPEAN FUNDING**

FERB received a presentation from the Director of European & International Development entitled UHI 2020 - A plan for EU engagement 2014-20. A copy of the presentation slides are appended to and form a part of this minute.

It was noted that the partnership should strive to develop a common voice when bidding for EU project funding and it was agreed to invite the Director of European & International Development to attend the next meeting of FERB in January 2014 with a view to discussing potential applications and priority areas.

## **10 RESPONSE TO WOOD COMMISSION'S INTERIM FINDINGS**

It was noted that the issue would be discussed by college Principals at their next meeting scheduled for 6th November with an update to FERB in January 2014.

## **11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

## **12 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

Next meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014