

Regional Strategy Committee (RSC)

Wed 10 February 2021, 11:00 - Wed 10 February 2021, 14:30

Webex Teams: 143378345@uhi.webex.com

Attendees

Board members

Garry Coutts (Chair), Andrew Campbell (Chair Argyll College UHI), Archie Macdonald (External independent member), Beverly Clubley (Vice Chair), Blair Sandison (Chair North Highland College UHI), Brian Crichton (Chair Perth College UHI), Bruce Robertson (External independent member), David Sandison (External independent member), Diana Murray (Chair SAMS UHI), Florence Jansen (HISA President), Michael Foxley (Vice Chair), Sarah Burton (Chair Inverness College UHI), Stuart Smith (External independent member), Todd Walker (Principal and Vice Chancellor)

In attendance

Fiona Larg (Chief Operating Officer & Secretary), Gary Campbell (Vice Principal - Strategic Development), Lydia Rohmer (Vice Principal - Tertiary), John Kemp (Vice Principal Further Education), Niall McArthur (Director of Corporate Resources), Ali Jarvis (Board Observer), Nicholas Oakley (Clerk)

Meeting minutes

1. *Welcome

 RSC Agenda - 10 February 2021.pdf

1.1. *Welcome & apologies

The Chair welcomed the members to the meeting and noted the apologies received from Angus Campbell. The Chair also welcomed Professor Todd Walker, Principal and Vice Chancellor, to his first Committee meeting. Prof Walker expressed his gratitude to the Chair and the members for their warm welcome and his initial, productive, meetings with them.

1.2. *Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1.3. *Notification of Any Other Competent Business

There was no other competent business raised.

1.4. *Starring

The Chair made some changes to the running order of the meeting agenda, and that items 3.1, 3.2, and 4.1 would be discussed together.

Members requested that items 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4 also be starred for discussion.

2. Governance

2.1. *Minutes of the last meeting held 5 November 2020

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2020 as an accurate record.

Approve

 RSC19-20-031 Minutes_Regional Strategy Committee (RSC)_051120.pdf

2.2. *Matters Arising

The Committee **noted** the matters arising.

Note

 RSC20-21-032 RSC Matters Arising February 2021 20210203.pdf

2.3. *Review of Delegated Decisions

There were no delegated decision to review.

3. Strategic Issues & Items for Discussion

The Chair invited T Walker to introduce the following items.

T Walker reported that there were some overlaps and gaps in the 18 workstreams emerging from the assembly work. He expressed his concern about the insufficient management resource applied to the work, and acknowledged that some workstreams had been paused pending his appointment. T Walker also made the following observations on the work-to-date:

1. There was no embedded project methodology either individually or as a body of work.
2. The lack of an effective project management system. T Walker reported that he had requested an immediate move to MS Projects to improve the reporting and alignment of interdependencies.
3. No project control group to manage the 18 workstreams and oversight. T Walker reported that this will be introduced.
4. That there will be a revision of the 18 workstreams to align or merge workstreams as necessary. Each stream will have a separate project plan, but the Committee will be receiving a consolidated, strategic overview progress report, with individual project plans available for review.

Members welcomed the approach proposed by T Walker, noting the complexities, and reported this would be extremely helpful for both the executive and the non-executive. Members noted that the sequential operation approach taken to date had delayed activities, and concurrency of activities needs to be emphasised moving forward.

Members unanimously **endorsed** the proposed approach.

3.1. *Gaelic - Interim report & strategy statement

Neil Simco

[Moved from item 3.3]

Neil Simco updated the Committee on the Gaelic strategy interim report.

Members requested more detail on the current position, and in particular how Gaelic was being promoted across the partnership beyond SMO, with information such as course activity, uptake trends, financial information (funding) and evidence of activity. The final report to Court should also include an action plan specifying targets, course proposals, funding and future plans for 2021/22.

Action: Gaelic Strategy - N Simco to incorporate the Committee's feedback into the full report to Court.

N Simco reported he would be presenting the full report to the Court in March 2021. He also noted that there was a previous paper from Autumn 2020 which includes benchmarking and agreed to provide this to members after the Committee meeting.

Action: Gaelic Strategy - N Simco to provide members with Gaelic background papers.

In the discussion about the item the following points were also made by the members:

1. Perth College noted that there was little student demand for Gaelic resources amongst their students, and so focusing resources for Gaelic where it could best be applied would be more effective.
2. Strong support and commitment from AP chairs was needed to enable this to progress; members noted that this would be sought following the action plan at Court and the RSC **agreed** to provide N Simco the full support of the Committee to ensure effective implementation.

[Blair Sandison joined the meeting at 11.30]

The Committee **noted** the report.

 RSC20-21-035 Gaelic interim report and strategy statement.pdf

3.2. *Curriculum Review - Summary/Overview of the process and progress

Gary Campbell

[Moved from item 3.3]

G Campbell updated members on the curriculum review progress. He noted that this was a fully tertiary plan, including both FE and HE elements. He also reported that:

1. It represents the best approach for the partnership, but that implementation may sometimes be a challenge for individual partners.
2. Provides collective control where it is required, i.e. for the collective curriculum
3. Fits in with 'fewer partners' and 'strong federal' structures but does not support 'everyone for themselves'.
4. It has been approved by Partnership Council and implementation is underway.

Members **noted** the report, and that progress on the curriculum review was imperative despite recognition that it may involve some hard choices to ensure effective delivery.

 RSC20-21-034 Curriculum Review Strategy and Framework 100221 .pdf

3.3. *RAM Review - Outcome from consultation

John Kemp

[Moved from item 3.1]

J Kemp updated the Committee on the RAM review. He reported that it was was a key tool in delivering the curriculum review, but also about financial strategy and tertiaryness.

The Committee **agreed** and **approved** the curriculum review and the RAM review papers, and fully supported the proposals contained therein.

[B Robertson left the meeting at 12:15]

 RSC20-21-033 RAM Review 100221.pdf

3.4. *RSC Externally Facilitated Governance Workshop 8 January 2021 - Next Steps

John Kemp

J Kemp gave members an update on the externally facilitated governance review, based on the workshop held on 8 January 2020. He noted that the discussion had focused on the structure of the university which were regarded as impeding the strategic discussions. The proposal was therefore to embed these into the work on the strategic plan to ensure embeddedness and not siloed as a separate workstream.

The Committee **agreed** the proposal and noted the change in the manner the committee was operating.

 Minutes_RSC Development Workshop_080121.pdf

 RSC20-21-036 development10Feb 21.doc.pdf

3.5. Committee Effectiveness Review

The Committee **noted** the committee effectiveness review.

 RSC20-21-037 RSC Effectiveness Report 20210203.pdf

4. General Updates & Reports for Noting

4.1. Consolidated Strategic Update Report

Neil Simco

[Moved from item 4.1]

N Simco introduced the strategic update report. The Committee **noted** the progress and that they will now be driven by a project management system.

 RSC20-21-038 Strategic update paper100221.pdf

4.2. Financial Sustainability: Update on progress to deliver savings targets

Niall McArthur

The Committee **noted** the update on financial sustainability, and that the announced increase in funding was welcome but that there were still increasing cost pressures.

 RSC20-21-039 - fin sust update.pdf

4.3. Alignment of Financial Services: Progress report

John Kemp

The Committee **noted** the reported without further discussion.

 RSC20-21-043 plan update 3, Feb 21.pdf

4.4. Dashboard Report

Fiona Larg

J Kemp provided members with an update on the dashboard report. He reported that the credit position was poor, and although SFC will not clawback this year for underperformance against activity target where this is Covid-related, without demonstration of progress the target may nonetheless be reduced in future years. The new RAM process will need to include a review of this area, and the need to differentiate underlying trends and Covid-related underperformance. He reported that sectoral modelling was currently underway on next AY delivery and potential consequences, and that a ministerial taskforce had been formed to look at potential mitigation.

The Committee **noted** the update.

 RSC20-21-041 dashboard combined.pdf

4.5. AP Financial Information Update

Niall McArthur

The Committee **noted** the financial information update without further discussion.

 RSC20-21-042 AP fin monitoring.pdf

4.6. Update on Change Management Plan

The Committee **noted** the change management plan update without further discussion.

 RSC20-21-043 plan update 3, Feb 21.pdf

4.7. Draft 2020-21 Highlands and Islands regional interim outcome agreement

The Committee **noted** the regional interim outcome agreement. Members reported positive feedback from Academic Partner Chairs and expressed their thanks to the authors and those involved.

 RSC20-21-044 210129 Regional outcome agreement.pdf

5. Date of Next Meeting: 4 May 2021

6. Any Other Competent Business

There was no other business and the Chair closed the meeting at 12:35.