

Regional Strategy Committee

Tue 03 May 2022, 11:00 - 13:00

By VC Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Board members

Alastair MacColl (Chair), Angus Campbell (Further Education Regional Lead), Beverly Clubley (Vice Chair), Brian Crichton (Chair Perth College UHI), David Sandison (Chair Shetland UHI), Diana Murray (Chair SAMS UHI), Heather Innes (HISA President), Rosemary Allford (Chair Argyll College UHI), Rosemary McCormack (Staff Governor), Stuart Smith (Chair Highland Theological College UHI), Todd Walker (Principal and Vice Chancellor)

In attendance

Donna Heddle (Acting Vice Principal Research & Impact), Jen Vanderhoven (Vice Principal Engagement), Max Brown (Director of Transformation), Niall McArthur (Director of Finance), Nicholas Oakley (Clerk), Roger Sendall (Director of Corporate Governance - in part), Sheena Stewart (University Secretary), Vicki Nairn (Vice Principal Operations)

Action

Decision

Meeting minutes

1. WELCOME

Alastair MacColl

 RSC - Agenda - 3 May 2022.pdf

1.1. *Welcome & apologies

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the members. Apologies were noted from Gary Campbell and Lorna Walker.

1.2. *Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1.3. *Notification of Any Other Competent Business

There was no other business notified.

2. Minutes of Meetings

Alastair MacColl

2.1. *Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2022

Nicholas Oakley

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2022 as an accurate record.

 RSC21-22-20 Minutes_Regional Strategy Committee (RSC)_070322 (1).pdf

2.2. *Matters Arising

Nicholas Oakley

There were no matters arising from the last meeting.

 RSC21-22-21 Matters Arising 220426.pdf

2.3. *Review of Delegated Decisions

None reported.

3. Starred Items for Discussion

3.1. *Conference agenda

Prof Todd Walker, Principal and Vice Chancellor, reported that a two-day conference of Board Chairs and Principals, and the University Senior Executive Team (SET), was planned for mid-June. Topics of discussion would include progression over the past years, the new strategic plan, the current operating and political environment, and other key strategic issues.

The Committee **noted** the verbal update on the June conference.

[Brian Crichton joined the meeting]

3.2. *FE/HE Recruitment update

Todd Walker

Vicki Nairn, Vice Principal Operations, introduced a paper on further and higher education student recruitment issues. She reported that 2022/23 higher education (HE) recruitment was down on 2021/22 by around 18%. This was reportedly due to the impact of Brexit, regional employment opportunities, grade inflation, and larger institutions reducing entry criteria. Mitigating action was being undertaken with partners with the Further Education (FE) Strategy Group, and SET were undertaking a review of recruitment that included other projects including the curriculum review. Dialogue was also ongoing with the SFC on current and future funding, and work underway with senior management teams of partners on individual recovery plans. Vicki Nairn reported that the SFC decision on clawback was anticipated on 26 May.

In the discussion following this update it was noted that the current cohort of school leavers had been severely disrupted by the pandemic, and that special attention should be paid to meet their specific needs.

It was also noted that competition from other universities in some parts of the region was high (and well-funded), and all universities were extremely active in recruitment across Scotland. Concerns were noted that it would be difficult to recover from low HE recruitment rates in the immediate future.

Action: Vicki Nairn to produce a 24–36-month recruitment forecast, including risks and mitigating actions, to provide members with a consolidated recruitment plan/ overview.

The Committee **noted** the FE/ HE recruitment update.

 RSC21-22-23 Student Recruitment issues and challenges.pdf

3.3. *ONE UHI

Todd Walker

Prof Todd Walker, Principal and Vice Chancellor, reported that ONE UHI would be the focus of the mid-June conference [see item 3.1].

The Committee **noted** the ONE UHI update.

 RSC21-22-24 Ten Year SSI.pdf

4. Unstarred Items

4.1. Change Management Plan

Max Brown

Max Brown, Director of Transformation, reported on the change management plan update. He noted that:

1. Court agreed that reporting on the UHI Blueprint will cease as it will not deliver on its objectives. The lessons learnt from this project will be drawn out and considered by the Senior Executive Team (SET). UHI will require a new financial sustainability plan which the VP Operations will lead on developing.
2. The Technology One project is under review and a report is currently being considered by the VP Operations. Recommendations on the future of the project will be presented to F&GPC in due course.
3. The Rural and Islands College Merger Partnership Board agreed to move the vesting date of the new college from January 2023 to August 2023 because of delays in the procurement of due diligence contractors. The work, however, is progressing well and the additional time allows for a pre-consultation phase on the full business case.
4. The curriculum review was agreed at the March Academic Council and has progressed into the implementation phase.
5. UHI successfully launched its new brand on time on Monday 28th March 2022.

[Diana Murray joined the meeting]

The Committee **noted** the change management plan update. Members then discussed the TechnologyOne finance system and the impending review by the Vice Principal Operations, and urged the SET to take decisive action on the future of the project following the functionality review and options appraisal. Members heard that a recommendation would be made at the next SET meeting.

 RSC21-22-25 Change Management Plan update, May 22.pdf

4.2. Academic Partner Agreements update

[Roger Sendall joined the meeting]

Roger Sendall, Director of Corporate Governance, reported on the revised academic partner agreements. He reported that the work remained on target and expected to agree by 31 May 2022. Brian Crichton, Chair of Perth College UHI, requested clarification on the intellectual property procedure; Roger Sendall took an action to provide this alongside the draft agreements.

Action: Roger Sendall to issue IP procedure with draft academic partner agreements.

The Committee **noted** the academic partner agreements update.

[Roger Sendall left the meeting]

 RSC21-22-26 New AP Agreements update April 2022.pdf

5. Any Other Competent Business

There was no other business and the Chair closed the meeting at 12:00.

6. Date of Next Meeting: 14 September 2022

