

Regional Strategy Committee (RSC)

01 September 2020, 11:00 to 14:30

Webex Teams: 143378345@uhi.webex.com

Attendees

Board members

Garry Coutts (Chair), Beverly Clublely (Vice-Chair), Michael Foxley (Vice-Chair), Crichton Lang, Fiona Larg, Blair Sandison, Andrew Campbell (Chair Argyll College UHI), Sarah Burton (Chair Inverness College UHI), Diana Murray, Brian Crichton (Chair Perth College UHI), Willie Printie, John Kemp, Niall McArthur, Lydia Rohmer, Gary Campbell, Max Brown, Bruce Robertson, Neil Simco, David Sandison, Florence Jansen, Fiona McLean, John Maher (- in part), Ali Jarvis (Meeting coach), David Robertson (- in part), Nicholas Oakley (Clerk)

Meeting minutes

1. Welcome

 Agenda - 1 Sept 2020.pdf

1.1. *Welcome & apologies

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the members. There were no apologies recorded.

1.2. *Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

1.3. *Notification of Any Other Competent Business

There was no other competent business reported.

2. * Presentation - Information Security

David Robertson & John
Maher

The Committee received a presentation from John Maher and David Robertson (Chief Information Security Officer) on the university's response to the public sector Cyber-Resilience Action plan. Members heard there had been a 500% increase in cyber attacks in the past year on further and higher education institutes. Members were then briefed on the 'three pillars' approach the organisation is taking, and the partnership's wider approach to addressing information security risks. Each partner has a common cyber security risk on their risk registers, and members were asked to consider whether each of their data governance, training, awareness and compliance approaches, including non-technical aspects such as physical security, working practices and cultural approaches, were in place and appropriate to meet the risks. There are resources for boards available and these will be circulated after the meeting to each AP chair (Action: John Maher). Information security risk group outputs will also be circulated across the partnership on an ongoing basis.

[J Maher and D Robertson left the meeting.]

3. Governance

3.1. *Minutes of the last meeting: held on 5 May 2020

Decision

The Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting of 5 May 2020 as an accurate record.

 RSC1920-015 Minutes_Regional Strategic Committee (RSC)_050520.pdf

3.2. *Matters Arising

Information

The Committee **noted** the matters arising.

 RSC2021-001 20200825 RSC Matters Arising.pdf

3.3. *Review of Delegated Decisions

There were no delegated decisions reported.

3.4. *Feedback/Survey results following first RSC meeting

The Chair thanked members for completing the survey and the Committee **noted** the responses.

 RSC2021-002 Feedback Survey RSC - 599119(1)-1.pdf

3.5. *Meetings Coach

The Chair introduced Ali Jarvis as the RSC meeting coach, and explained that her role was to add value and achieve impact through a common frame of reference and elements of success as laid out in the paper. The Committee welcomed and **approved** the approach, and asked that the 'respectful dialogue' aspects also be reported upon under behaviour, culture and relationships.

 RSC2021-003 Meetings Coach.pdf

3.6. Shetland Merger

The Committee heard that the College Board is meeting soon. The Committee **noted** the position and paper.

 RSC2021-004 Shetland update.pdf

3.7. Academic Partner Chairs: Summary of Chairs and Positions on University Committees

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

 RSC2021-005 APchairs UHIcommittees.pdf

3.8. Options Appraisal: Potential Merger(s) of Academic Partners

John Kemp gave the Committee members an update on the options appraisal for potential merger(s) of Academic Partners. The Committee heard that no substantial resource had yet been committed to this, as it was still pending SFC and SG views, but the principals and chairs will be meeting to discuss the proposal.

Members **requested** that as much inclusive, internal dialogue be conducted as possible with as wide a group as possible (including currently non-participating boards/ Chairs).

HISA welcomed the move and the desire for an evidence-based approach to the options appraisal.

The Committee **endorsed** the proposed direction of travel and recognised that internal communications to be addressed through an open, aligned dialogue to ensure proper communication across the partnership. The Committee suggested that a focus on curriculum, rather than just governance arrangements, be at the forefront of discussions and encouraged as many discussions as possible take place, and wanted to be engaged in these discussions going forward.

 RSC2021-006 RSC alignment paper240820.pdf

Discussion

Information

Fiona Larg

Information

John Kemp

4. Monitoring Performance

4.1. The Partnership Change Management Plan

The Committee received an update on the Change Management Plan from Max Brown. The plan will be a regular report to the Committee. Members heard that the response to Covid-19 has prompted excellent partnership working. The following was also noted in the subsequent discussion:

1. The biggest risk over the next 2-3 months was the necessity of critical decisions being made (e.g. shape of EO, RAM, curriculum planning), which is challenging without a clear steer on the endpoint from the partnership and without conducting these workstreams in parallel.
2. The finance workstream is delayed and progress is slow; and that a paper to FGPC on details of this is being prepared for FGPC's next meeting.
3. The RAM review is looking at both HE and FE funding.
4. The Executive Office (EO) evaluation is now complete, but a separate project (overseen by the same team) has now commenced and workstreams initiated, taken forward by the executive team in EO.

Members raised serious concerns about the finance workstream delays, and asked what actions were in place to get this back on track, especially as this was heavily emphasised at the last meeting of the RSC. Two issues were identified – there was limited/ no capacity for detailed work on what the service will do, and a lack of time to fully consult on implementation and especially seeking consent for this across the partnership.

The Committee reiterated their expectations that the consultation on the finance workstream be concluded and additional or new capacity be assigned as needed, and unanimous support for the finance workstream activity across the partnership sought. The Committee noted it was imperative to find the resource and increase the pace as partners are at real threat of making learner-facing redundancies and other extremely undesirable actions. The Committee therefore requested assurance and a detailed plan for action to bring this back on track.

Action: M Brown and J Kemp to take a paper on finance workstream to FGPC and this will be circulated to all members of the RSC and, with context, all AP chairs.

The Committee understood the exceptional circumstances and workload pressures due to coronavirus; however there was an expectation that an interim report (within six weeks) where these issues were reported on and resolved, including the level of buy-in from individual partners. If needed, an additional meeting could be convened (or an existing seminar meeting be repurposed) to discuss this further.

Action: An update report on progress on the finance workstream was requested before the next RSC meeting (J Kemp).

The Committee also requested reporting on the progress of the EO evaluation project workstreams be reported to RSC.

Action: Updates on Executive Office evaluation to be included in future reports to RSC (M Brown/ J Kemp).

 RSC2021-007 The Partnership Change Management plan update 1.pdf

4.2. Performance Dashboard Report

Fiona Larg

The Committee **noted** the Performance Dashboard report. Lydia Rohmer gave members a verbal update on recruitment, reporting that the current status was one of acceptable risk being managed by the executive against metrics set to monitor what was a particularly dynamic recruitment situation.

Members discussed the level of detail on the report. It was noted that detailed reports supporting the dashboard were included in the reading room on AdminControl; and if any members have difficulties accessing these additional training could be provided.

Action: The Chair and Vice-Chairs would meet to further consider how the performance dashboard could be developed, including improved clarity of information coming to the committee.

 RSC2021-008 Performance Dashboard Report.pdf

4.3. Economic Recovery Plans

Lydia Rohmer

The Committee received an update on the Economic Recovery Plans from Lydia Rohmer. The Committee welcomed the update and noted the constantly evolving position.

The Committee also recognised that there were multiple relationships and opportunities across the partnership, and that it was the partnership's role to identify and capitalise upon synergies and opportunities that the partnership is best placed to utilise. There was also a need to be fully diverse and mindful of the different geographical opportunities (e.g. Islands, Tayside) with as little duplication as possible, and appropriate representation in these key fora developing strategy and policy.

 RSC2021-009 Economic Recovery Aug2020.pdf

4.4. Student Satisfaction Surveys

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

 RSC2021-010 Student Satisfaction Surveys.pdf

4.5. Reserch Excellence Framework: Update

Neil Simco

The Committee received an update on the REF from Neil Simco. The Committee welcomed the update report and the good progress made.

 RSC2021-011 Research Excellence Framework update.pdf

4.6. Islands Deal Update

Neil Simco

The Committee received an update on the Islands Deal from Neil Simco. The Committee welcomed the update report and the opportunities it presented for the region.

 RSC2021-012 Islands Deal Update.pdf

4.7. Preparation of Strategic Plan 2020-2025 - Update

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

 RSC2021-013 Strategic Plan 0920.pdf

5. Items for Next Meeting

5.1. Curriculum Review - November 2020

5.2. SIP/SDS and Regional Economic Recovery - for a seminar in October

6. *Any Other Business

There was no other business and the Chair closed the meeting at 13:50.

7. Date of Next Meeting: 5 November 2020

8. Post-Meeting Action Summary

1. Circulate cybersecurity/ cyber resilience resources for boards to the Chairs (Action: John Maher).
2. M Brown and J Kemp to take a paper on finance workstream to FGPC and this will be circulated to all members of the RSC and, with context, all AP chairs.
3. An update report on progress on the finance workstream was requested before the next RSC meeting (J Kemp).
4. Updates on EO evaluation to be included in future reports to RSC (M Brown/ J Kemp).
5. The Chair and Vice-Chairs would meet to further consider how the performance dashboard could be developed, including improved clarity of information coming to the committee.

