

# FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held on  
Thursday 6 March 2025 at 13.30pm  
in the Boardroom and by MS Teams

## Present:

Grenville Johnston (Convener)  
David Patterson  
Ralph Luck

Caroline Webster (MS Teams – joined at 14.40pm)  
Sarah Marshall

## In Attendance:

Alex Hastings (Minutes)  
Eleanor Melton (Clerk)  
Murray Easton (via MS Teams - left at 15.15pm)

Michaela Munro (Left at 15.00pm)  
Derek Duncan

Item		Action	Date
<b>F.25.01.01</b>	<b>(i) Resignations</b>		
1.1	There were no resignations.		
	<b>(ii) Appointments</b>		
1.2	There were no appointments.		
<b>F.25.01.02</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>		
2.1	There were no apologies for absence.		
<b>F.25.01.03</b>	<b>Any Additional Declarations of Interest including specific items on this Agenda</b>		
3.1	It was agreed that Murray would leave the meeting so that the Committee could discuss the SLT Staffing agenda item.		
<b>F.25.01.04</b>	<b>Draft minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 10 October 2024</b>		
4.1	The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes meeting held on 10 October 2024 were accepted as a true and accurate record: Proposed: Caroline Webster Seconded: David Patterson		
<b>F.25.01.05</b>	<b>Minutes of Joint Audit &amp; Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 11 December 2024</b>		
5.1	The minutes of the joint meeting were approved by the Audit Committee at the 20 February 2025 meeting. FGP members noted.		
<b>F.25.01.06</b>	<b>Matters Arising/Actions from Finance and General Purposes Committee held 6 June 2024</b>		
6.1	<u>6.1</u> - Complete		
6.2	<u>7.1</u> – On agenda		
6.3	<u>7.3</u> – On agenda		
6.4	<u>7.4</u> – On agenda		

<b>F.25.01.07</b>	<b>Matters Arising from Joint Audit and F&amp;GP Committee meeting held on 11 December 2024</b>		
7.1	The matters arising were reported back to the Audit committee on 20 February. There was nothing further to note by FGP members.		
<b>F.25.01.08</b>	<b>Financial Position (RESERVED)</b>		
	<b>(i) 2024/25 Forecast and 2025/26 Outlook</b>		
8.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	<b>(ii) Risks to Delivery</b>		
8.2	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	<b>(iii) FRP Status Update</b>		
8.3	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
<b>F.25.01.09</b>	<b>Estates Update</b>		
9.1	<p>Derek supported the paper, firstly by thanking the Estates team for the continued work throughout the reduced service.</p> <p>Derek highlighted that Colleges were asked to complete a condition survey by the SFC, rather than specialists conducting a high-level condition survey. A quote is now being evaluated to carry out a condition survey to inform longer term maintenance planning. Derek added that there is not any indication that this will accrue further funding for backlog maintenance. Ralph stated that from experience, condition surveys have never led to more funding. Derek pointed out that although that is likely the case, a survey will allow the College to have an estates plan and a position for when the SFC look at building conditions across the sector.</p> <p>With regards to the vandalism reported at the Technology Centre, Caroline asked if this would be covered by insurance. Derek stated that the cost to replace the window may exceed the insurance policy excess, but this will be checked. Michaela queried if this has been reported to the police, advising that the insurers may ask for a crime reference number.</p> <p>The Committee noted this update.</p>		
<b>ACTION</b>	Derek to check ability to claim through the insurance policy for window replacement.	<b>DD</b>	<b>ASAP</b>
<b>F.25.01.10</b>	<b>Policies Due for Review</b>		
10.1	Derek provided an update on where policies are currently sitting. The Travel, Subsistence and Accommodation Policy requires further guidance and advice, although there is time as the new session requirements begin on 1 August 2025.		

	<p>Derek advised that Murray's assistance is required for the Financial Regulations Policy. The plan is for this policy to be completed by the next F&amp;GP Committee meeting. This is to be updated prior to the next external audit. Derek stated that as the policy is lengthy, items will be circulated when completed.</p> <p>Derek informed the Committee, following discussions with Jessie McLeman, the Gift, Hospitality &amp; Entertainment Policy and the Fraud Policy and Response Plan will now be considered for approval by the Audit Committee. These policies will be presented to the F&amp;GP Committee for comments.</p> <p>The Committee noted this update.</p>		
<b>ACTION</b>	Murray to assist Derek with the Financial Regulations Policy.	<b>ME/DD</b>	
<b>F.25.01.11</b>	<b>Moray Growth Deal Update</b>		
	<b>(i) BE Hub</b>		
11.1	<p>David informed the Committee that the FBC for the BE Hub was effectively signed off by the Scottish Government and the UK Government by default, although formal approval is pending.</p> <p>David reminded the Committee of the 'Long Term Plan for Town Centres' brought in by the previous government. The decision of what would happen with this following the change of government was awaited. David advised that this has now been replaced by the 'Plan for Neighbourhoods' scheme. David added that a letter was received stating that progress already made has not been done for nothing. It is essentially a rebrand. David is in discussions with Jenny Urquhart, the Chair of the Town Centre Board regarding this.</p> <p>Murray informed the Committee that the approach to management and governance was supported by the Audit Committee on 20 February. Murray informed members that he was seeking approval of the proposal.</p> <p>Grenville asked for clarification on what boards were involved in BE Hub discussions. David explained that there is the Moray Programme Board, a Project Board for the BE Hub which will change to Development Board once progress is made.</p> <p>There is a working group between the College and Robertsons that meets fortnightly.</p> <p>David added that there have been discussions with the Chair of the Board on creating a sub-committee to oversee the BE Hub. David explained that the plan was for formal progress</p>		

	<p>to be reported to the F&amp;GP Committee and then bring in support if required. The Chair agreed to this.</p> <p>Caroline queried the likelihood of a fixed price contract agreement from Robertsons. Murray explained that it is a little bit unpredictable but added that the DFA would not be signed without an agreed fixed cost. This may lead to Robertsons coming back with higher costs.</p> <p>The Committee noted this update and agreed to approve the management and governance proposal.</p>		
<b>F.25.01.12</b>	<b>Emerging Issues</b>		
	<b>(i) MGD: Moray Engineering &amp; Energy Innovation Centre</b>		
12.1	<p>David notified the Committee that following the workshops, the outcome of votes on three MGD proposals were received, with MEEIC recording the highest score. David added that this is a council stated process and does not count as approval. Written feedback will be included in the Board Pack for the next meeting on 27 March 2025.</p> <p>The three proposers have been given a questionnaire to answer which is to be completed by 12 March 2025. Examples of these questions include whether there is capacity to carry out the proposal, and whether the proposal sits within our strategic priorities. Confirmation is required from UHI House for this, however, David stated that it would be unexpected if UHI were to disagree with us regarding the strategic pathway. David advised that Kerry McInnes is working on the questions that are easier to answer, and David is in discussions with Moray Council and UHI House, where Mike Baxter is overseeing MGD projects.</p> <p>The Committee noted this update.</p>		
	<b>(ii) SLT Staffing Plans</b>		
12.2	<p>David reminded members that SLT has been depleted following the departures of the Deputy Principal and the Finance Director.</p> <p>David informed the Committee that in a meeting held between the Chair of the Board and Vicki Nairn, the RSB were considering writing a letter of concern relating to the College's financial management process, following findings in Deloitte's wider scope audit. It is the RSB's opinion that the College should have a full-time Financial Director in post, which Eilidh agreed to. David reminded members that SLT have been conducting approval of payments as normal, however, nothing high-level has been run by SLT. David highlighted that the College has managed to get through a</p>		

	<p>significantly difficult period with a part-time FD. Despite this, Vicki Nairn has agreed funding to pay the difference to make this a full-time position.</p> <p>David stated that recruiting a new FD would require transitional planning. Grenville asked if Murray would be open to staying on longer. David advised that Murray stated he would be happy to stay on to summer. David explained the difficulty of the situation and feels that the College cannot go against what the RSB and Chair have agreed to. Given the work involved in upcoming projects, David highlighted the importance of finding a way to keep Murray in post for at least 3-4 months. It would also be unlikely to recruit a FD and have them in post before June.</p> <p>The Committee agreed for David to go ahead with the recruitment process, highlighting that it is imperative that Murray stays on to allow for a transition period.</p>		
	<b>(iii) Target Operating Model</b>		
12.3	<p>David informed members that the FBC is down to be submitted and endorsed by the end of 2025, which is much more realistic. The anticipated date of completion of the project is in 2029.</p> <p>£1m funding has now been approved to appoint consultants of the project, although the companies that were approached failed to meet the deadline and the company that applied failed to answer all questions.</p> <p>David explained that from the workshops Principals have been involved in, there is a recognition that legal and political advice will be required. It was noted that option 3 does not require legislative change, however, option 6 does. During the workshops, David raised the issue of option 3, where what is agreed cannot look like business as usual, however, what this consists of has not been identified.</p> <p>David informed the Committee that Vicki Nairn will be attending a Pre-Board meeting on 27 March to discuss the governance of the RSB with all members.</p> <p>The Committee noted this update.</p>		
	<b>(iv) SFC Funding Model</b>		
12.4	<p>David supported the PowerPoint provided. The College Principals' Group have stated that it is time to look at the funding modelling for the sector. It was noted that whilst a lot of information is uncertain, this is a massive risk for the College. As a region, the College are paid more for various reasons and there is a vast differential with regards to what colleges are funded per credit. This could also be a risk to the financial forecasting.</p>		

	David has asked for sight of the modelling. It is understood that the full amount of funding from the SFC would be given directly to the RSB. David asked if the College and the RSB will see the modelling of this, however, this is uncertain.  This update was noted by the Committee.		
	<b>(v) UHI Student Accommodation (RESERVED)</b>		
12.5	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	<b>(vi) Terms of Reference</b>		
12.6	El listed the amendments suggested to the Terms of Reference. The Committee raised no issues with this, and all Committee Terms of Reference will go to the Board for final approval.		
<b>F.25.01.13</b>	<b>Date of next meeting – 29 May 2025</b>		
<b>RESERVED ITEMS</b>			
<b>F.25.01.14</b>	<b>Draft Reserved Minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 10 October 2024</b>		
14.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
<b>F.25.01.15</b>	<b>Reserved Minutes of Joint Audit and F&amp;GP Committee meeting held on 11 December 2024</b>		
15.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
<b>F.25.01.16</b>	<b>Reserved Matters Arising from Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 10 October 2024</b>		
16.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
<b>F.25.01.17</b>	<b>Reserved Matters Arising from Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 11 December 2024</b>		
17.1	This item is reserved, and the minute held in confidence.		
	<i>Meeting closed at 15.30</i>		