**BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

**Tuesday 17 June 2025 at 5.00pm in Room K-TO-226 Kingsway Campus and via Microsoft Teams**

***Draft***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PRESENT:** | Laurie O’Donnell (Chair) | Simon Hewitt |
|  | Derek Smith | Neil Lowden |
|  | Adele Lawrence | Robert Young |
|  | Brian Lawrie | Kara Ramsay |
|  | Ged Bell | Helen Honeyman |
|  | Donald Mackenzie | Stephen Oakley |
|  | Matthew Beattie | Brian Mooney |
|  | Richard Gordon | Kirsten Marsh |
|  | Colin Smith |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **IN ATTENDANCE:** | Julie Grace (Vice Principal Curriculum and Partnerships) | |
|  | Steve Taylor (Vice Principal Support Services and Operations) | |
|  | Penny Muir (Board Administrator) | Connor Pithie (New DASA President) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **WELCOME**  L O’Donnell welcomed all attendees to the Board of Management Meeting and extended a warm welcome to Connor Pithie, attending his first meeting as the new Student President. He also welcomed Kirstin Marsh, Brian Mooney, and Colin Smith as newly appointed Board Members. L O’Donnell expressed his sincere thanks to Kara Ramsay and Adele Lawrence for their valuable contributions to the Board, noting that this meeting would be their last. |
|  | **APOLOGIES**  Apologies were received from Carri Cusick, Kelly McIntosh, Nicky Anderson and Jackie Buchanan. |
|  | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR CONNECTION**  S Taylor declared an interest in item 16 on the agenda and withdrew from the meeting for this item. |
|  | **MINUTE OF LAST MEETING**  The minute of the Board of Management meeting held on 13 March 2025 was approved as an accurate record. |
|  | **MATTERS ARISING**  All matters arising had been progressed and subsequently closed. The action relating to the Student Association for Freaky Friday had not been taken forward and would be closed. |
|  | **NATIONAL ACTIVITY UPDATE**  L O’Donnell provided an update to the Board, noting that the financial position remains tight. The latest spending review confirms continued pressure on finances, and it is expected that the next three years will remain financially constrained. He emphasised the need to make tough decisions and to manage the budget and expenditure with great care. A major ongoing challenge is the generation of additional income, which remains extremely difficult in the current climate.  S Hewitt informed the Board that two bills are currently making their way through the Scottish Parliament. The Education (Scotland) Bill, which focuses on qualifications and reform, is at Stage 2 with no foreseeable challenges. He noted that this represents a positive step forward for the college sector. The Education, Training and Funding Bill has not yet progressed through its parliamentary stages, but it is intended to consolidate funding arrangements for apprenticeships and funding streams such as SAAS. It is anticipated that this bill will progress and be passed by March 2026.  As part of the national sector-wide work, progress has been made on the Curriculum Transformation Framework, with arrangements launched to enable colleges to use some core funds to support transformation and strategic priorities.  B Mooney asked for clarification regarding the Spending Review and L O’Donnell advised that the uplift for sectors out with health and defence was c. 0.9%. |
|  | **INFRASTRUCTURE VISION UPDATE**  S Hewitt provided an update on the project, noting that it is reaching a critical phase, with the next six months being particularly crucial. He explained that recent press coverage had been intentional to raise awareness and generate support. He highlighted the positive economic impact of the work completed to date, noting that the business community had written to the First Minister in support of the project, which was viewed as impressive.  Staff briefings have been conducted over the past few weeks to ensure internal engagement and understanding.  He reported that the college is working with Grant Thornton to support the preferred financial model, particularly focusing on how to attract private investment and explore viable funding routes. There has been ongoing collaboration with colleagues in the Scottish Government.  S Hewitt highlighted that technical support for the Outline Business Case (OBC) was being progressed at a much reduced cost compared with initial estimates.  S Hewitt emphasised that the period from September 2025 onwards will be critical, particularly in terms of working with the Scottish Government. He acknowledged there were some ongoing risks around the levelling-up funding which must be committed by March 2026.  Additionally, RAAC timelines had identified the need to resolve the presence of RAAC within a window of three to five years, which was now one to three years. Despite these challenges, the college is in a strong position and continues to receive support from the Scottish Government.  L O’Donnell stressed the importance of having the funding model agreed upon before the 2026 election, with December 2025 identified as the key point by which a decision should be in place. He concluded by noting the excellent profile the Vision has brought to the college and expressed his appreciation for the efforts made to maintain momentum.  C Smith asked if December was the deadline for full approval and it was confirmed that this would be for OBC stage approval.  The update and progress being made was welcomed. |
|  | **STRATEGIC ITEMS**   * 1. **2030 Strategy Development Update**   S Hewitt presented the final version of the College Strategy, noting that a previous draft had been brought to the Board and approved following initial feedback. Further feedback was received from both staff and students, and this final version reflects that input. He shared that one of the suggestions was to develop a student-friendly, one-page summary. S Hewitt thanked everyone involved for their contributions, highlighting that a key priority throughout the process was to simplify the strategy and ensure it reflected what truly matters to the College.  G Bell welcomed the inclusion of technology and the digital strategy within the document.  B Mooney commented positively on the strong sense of the College’s identity that comes through in the strategy and was pleased to see specific elements represented.  L O’Donnell noted that themes such as student impact, college structure, and wider community outcomes were clearly visible in the strategy. He asked how the staff feedback process had gone. S Hewitt responded that discussions centred on the opportunities the strategy would bring and how it would be implemented.  S Oakley confirmed that the strategy had been built from staff contributions, with staff feeling involved and part of the process.  From the student perspective, it was noted that students were pleased their feedback had been heard and incorporated. Engagement sessions had helped promote inclusivity, with students identifying areas of importance such as accessibility and mobility issues. The process provided valuable insight into both staff and student perspectives and highlighted where additional support may be required.  C Smith asked how many had read the previous strategy. S Hewitt responded that it had been published shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic and, while the fundamentals had remained the same, the new strategy had been referenced consistently in briefings and discussions to maintain alignment.  R Young raised a question regarding the College’s “North Star” and how often the progress would be measured against it. S Hewitt confirmed that the College operates a rolling three-year strategic plan that is reviewed annually. He noted that strategy measurements feed into Board metrics and that changes at the Scottish Funding Council, including the outcome agreement, support this approach.  R Young emphasised the importance of having a strategic reference point, particularly when activity accelerates. S Hewitt agreed, adding that part of the strategy’s design was to simplify its focus and to ensure it could guide decisions such as budget setting-becoming a true "North Star" for the organisation.  D Mackenzie commended the strategy for being clear and concise and raised a question regarding the metrics, particularly those relating to the estates vision. He asked how expectations would be managed given the scale of the ambition.  S Hewitt acknowledged the challenge, noting that the key issue was not only about securing funding, but about reassessing how the College delivers its courses and services. He indicated that the strategy provides an opportunity to explore transformative approaches, and while achieving the funding target may be difficult, the need for investment-particularly around backlog maintenance-remains a reality. He praised staff and student engagement in the process and reiterated that ambition should not be curtailed by challenges.  S Oakley expressed support for the College taking control of its future direction and welcomed the strategy’s aspirational tone.  N Lowden raised a point regarding the measurement plan, particularly the potential for confusion in relation to student success within SIMD10 (the most deprived communities), as tracked by the Scottish Funding Council. He requested further elaboration to ensure Board members fully understand how these metrics are interpreted. S Hewitt agreed to clarify this within the final document. **S Hewitt to progress.**  The Board formally approved the final strategy and accompanying paper and expressed appreciation to all involved in its development.   * 1. **Strategic Projects Update**   J Grace presented the paper for noting and highlighted three Tay Cities projects as significant examples of the College’s contribution to regional skills and economic development. She noted that the project reports serve as powerful evidence of the impactful work undertaken by the College.  She informed the Board that the College had secured a Tay Cities bid currently awaiting approval by the Joint Committee. If approved, this would result in an award of £1.9 million in funding to support retrofitting initiatives aligned with net zero targets for 2025.  J Grace also advised that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will not continue, and the College is currently awaiting decisions on other smaller submitted bids. This funding has historically supported skills development for SMEs and enhanced regional workforce skills, acting as a replacement for the Workforce Development Fund. She confirmed that the College has strategically used grant opportunities to supplement and support these activities.  R Young asked about the long-term sustainability of such initiatives once external funding ceases and asked whether the College had considered future planning for these projects. J Grace noted that the Tay Cities programme will continue until 2030. The College is currently exploring options through the Curriculum Transformation Fund and evaluating ongoing solutions to sustain activities. She explained that in many cases, the funding has allowed the College to purchase equipment that would otherwise not have been possible or would have diverted funds from elsewhere. The College continues to seek future opportunities, including through the apprenticeship contract, which generates additional funding. However, she noted that while the income and expenditure may appear balanced on paper, the actual financial contribution from these projects can be more limited.  R Young acknowledged the secondary benefits of such initiatives, including enhancements to College equipment and infrastructure.  L O’Donnell commended the great work undertaken and thanked the team for their efforts. |
|  | **STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION REPORT**  A Lawrence provided an update on recent student activity, beginning with the Students' Association election. Voting had now closed and Connor Pithie was elected as the new Student President, with Chloe O’Hare and Laura McDonald elected as Vice Presidents for Gardyne and Arbroath respectively. No candidate had come forward for Kingsway.  She reported that the staff awards process was progressing well, with winners shortlisted. Connor and Kara would be presenting the awards, with four categories and one winner per campus.  A Lawrence highlighted the Breakfast Club initiative, which supports over 100 students weekly, has been paused over the summer. The team is currently seeking sponsorship from independent businesses to support its continuation.  A Lawrence highlighted recent events held at Dundee & Angus College, including S3 engagement and Connect2 activities, which had taken place successfully, offering opportunities for students to sign up and participate in a variety of sessions.  K Ramsay noted the valuable contribution made by students to the recent strategy development session, describing the session as productive, with key ideas explored and shared with the strategic planning team.  She highlighted a range of summer activities planned for students, including crochet sessions, beach cleans, campus photography sessions, and esports events.  R Young enquired about the capability to collect feedback via QR codes, however, K Ramsay confirmed that QR codes are regularly used for this purpose.  N Lowden expressed interest in the Breakfast Club initiative and welcomed the approach to local businesses. He also recommended investigating national funding sources such as Bright Starts Scotland, which offers grants of up to £12,000 per organisation, as well as Youth Work Scotland.  S Oakley asked about the importance of the Thrive project. K Ramsay explained that Thrive allows staff and students to donate goods to support students in need and has been a meaningful way to give back to the student community. She shared that Christmas care bags had reached those who needed them most, with items such as shaving kits made available to any student requiring support. S Oakley endorsed this and noted recent fundraising efforts that he would share with Board members.  C Smith enquired about IT equipment recycling. R Gordon confirmed that the College has a designated company that handles IT recycling and that laptops are made available to students through a long-term loan scheme, supported by secure laptop lockers.  The report and excellent work of the Students’ Association was praised. |
|  | **PRINCIPAL’S REPORT**  S Hewitt provided a brief overview of current activity within the College. He highlighted the recent Staff Awards as a particularly successful and positive event. He also spoke of the ESOL graduation, describing it as a phenomenal occasion which clearly demonstrated the transformational impact the College has had on learners’ lives and the wider positive outcomes of its work.  L O’Donnell commended the strong and meaningful links within the reports to the College’s strategic priorities, recognising how they reflect the ongoing development and alignment of the College’s activities with its overarching goals.  L O’Donnell thanked S Hewitt for the report. |
|  | **NATIONAL BARGAINING UPDATE**  S Taylor summarised the update on national bargaining, noting the multi-year agreement with academic staff, which has enabled progress in other key areas, including ongoing discussions within the national bargaining group.  He reported that a number of issues outlined in the report have been resolved, and that support staff negotiations are now moving forward. Discussions are ongoing regarding a salary offer for support staff, with the aim of creating a period of stability that will allow for progress on the national job evaluation process. Overall, good progress has been made, with several areas of agreement reached and finalised.  L O’Donnell acknowledged the significant challenges involved. |
|  | **FINANCE ITEMS**   * 1. **Financial Sustainability & Savings Planning**   S Hewitt provided an update on the College’s financial position, outlining it as a significant risk and a core strategic priority for the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). He noted that substantial savings of approximately £4.5 million had already been made, which, while challenging, had created a more stable platform. He acknowledged that future projections pointed towards flat cash settlements, indicating a difficult two to three years ahead. There had been some questions as to why such actions were being taken at this time, but it was now clearer to colleagues why these decisions were necessary, and the College is now in a stronger position as a result.  He stressed the importance of the College staying in control of its own destiny and taking a more proactive, year-on-year approach to financial management. The priority must remain focused on directing funds towards the College’s core business of learning, teaching, and student support.  S Hewitt highlighted that a paper was submitted to the Finance & Property Committee concerning the Service Design Academy and Gardyne Sports Centre. It was noted that the College is currently subsidising these activities by an estimated £800,000 to £1 million per year- resources that are not being allocated directly to core college operations. S Hewitt explained that student usage of the Gardyne Pool equated to roughly two hours per week.    S Hewitt noted the consultation period had closed, and decisions were being worked through, with an interim budget in place. It was anticipated that further efficiencies were still required and highlighted the difficulty of setting an acceptable budget at this point in the year, as student numbers and National Insurance contributions remain uncertain.  S Hewitt highlighted the Senior Leadership Team are working through the worst-case scenarios to ensure transparency. While the current year may show a small deficit, the overarching issue remains that core funding is not keeping pace with rising costs, such as employer on-costs which were now 41% of the academic salary paid. There is a pressing need to ensure resources are directed toward the College’s core business.  G Bell agreed, stating that the clarity and focus on the core business was essential.  It was confirmed that consultations regarding Gardyne Sports Centre had concluded and in his view that there were no operational matters requiring further Board approval.  N Lowden welcomed that consultation with sports centre users had been undertaken, even though it was not required. S Hewitt noted that this was an important part of arrangements for the college. He confirmed that final decisions were still pending and dependent on responses from staff and partners.  In response to a question about the Service Design Academy, S Hewitt advised that a range of options were being considered which would include the retraining and redeployment of affected staff.  A query was raised whether the developments would raise concern for the Scottish Funding Council given proximity to the issues facing Dundee University. S Hewitt responded that while there is a higher level of scrutiny across the sector, the Funding Council had been supportive and complimentary of the College’s approach to managing its finances.  B Mooney asked about possible public relations impacts arising from any closure decision. S Hewitt confirmed that communications support was in place, with external support available for this. He reiterated the importance of aligning with core business, noting the College must distinguish itself from a leisure centre.  S Oakley agreed with the direction of travel, noting the College’s primary role in delivering education. He acknowledged the effort to avoid compulsory redundancies and commended the work being done to support impacted staff.  S Taylor added that supporting staff through the process remained a priority and reiterated the importance of taking proactive decisions to avoid more difficult outcomes in the future.  N Lowden queried whether a Board response would be issued in relation to the correspondence sent to each member. It was confirmed that a response would be sent on behalf of the Board. **S Taylor & L O’Donnell to progress.**  R Young asked about the timing of capital vs revenue funding (CDEL:RDEL) decisions and whether a different outcome might shift strategic priorities. S Hewitt advised that contingency plans were in place, with a ‘Plan B’ developed by SLT. S Taylor added that the 2025/26 capital funding position was clear, and there must be a shift in how capital funds are used, given the current sector-wide constraints.  R Young queried whether opportunities to invest smaller amounts should be explored instead, and S Hewitt clarified that the additional campus fund is entirely separate and will not detract from the student or teaching experience, which will remain a priority. He also noted that decisions around this funding sit at Cabinet level, not with the Funding Council.  The Board welcomed the update.   * 1. **2025/26 Draft Interim Budget**   S Taylor presented the draft budget for approval. He confirmed that a budget with a £2.6 million deficit would not be brought forward and that the team was actively working on reductions and efficiencies to achieve a break-even position. A final version of the budget will be brought back to the Board for approval in September.  B Lawrie emphasised the importance of approving a balanced budget and noted that while assumptions are necessary, it is essential to be aware of them. He stressed the need to strike a sensible balance and not to take an overly pessimistic view, suggesting that reviewing trends over the past three years could help inform a realistic approach.  He also referenced the CDEL:RDEL arrangement with the Scottish Government and the need for the funding model to adapt accordingly. While acknowledging cuts in income, he noted that less focus had been placed on reducing expenditure.  K Marsh highlighted the importance of identifying and understanding the assumptions underpinning the budget and suggested that a scenario planning exercise would be beneficial to prepare for both upside and downside risks. She also advised caution when pursuing external funding opportunities, ensuring they remain aligned with the College’s strategic objectives and remit. S Hewitt agreed, confirming that all funding must align with the College’s goals.  The paper was approved on the basis that the Executive will return in September 2025 with the final budget, and that ongoing updates will be shared with the Finance and Property Committee. It was noted that clarity should be provided regarding changes made between the interim and final budget developments. **S Taylor to progress.**   * 1. **Financial Forecast Return (FFR)**   S Taylor confirmed that the return was to be completed by the end of the calendar month, with final approval to be delegated to the Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Finance and Property Committee.  The Board agreed to this delegation. The item will return to the Board in September 2025 for information. **S Taylor to progress.**   * 1. **Finance & Property Committee Management Accounts(for information only)**   The paper was noted. |
|  | **GOVERNANCE ITEMS**   * 1. **Membership Update**   S Taylor sought endorsement from the Board for the appointment of three new Board Members, the appointment of a Vice Chair, and the approval of the co-option of two, potentially three, additional members.  The Board approved the recommendations.   * 1. **Board Evaluation & Development Plan Update**   S Taylor advised that Scott Anderson had completed the externally facilitated review of the effectiveness of the Board back in December and that the Board Development Plan had been updated to reflect the actions identified within his report.  S Taylor reminded Board members of the requirement to undertake specific induction and other training offered by the College Development Network (CDN) and asked Board Members attending CDN training sessions notify P Muir to ensure accurate recording.  L O’Donnell welcomed the report and praised the quality of the training provided, particularly noting the valuable resources available through CDN.   * 1. **Infrastructure Governance Arrangements**   S Taylor provided an update on the Infrastructure Governance Arrangements and stated once the approval for the Outline Business Case (OBC) is secured, a dedicated campus board will be established with diverse membership. Highlighting that this approach aligns with governance arrangements previously approved by the Funding Council through the Falkirk project, which serve as a useful precedent.  H Honeyman asked about the indicative membership and specifically whether the Board should identify what specific skills it needed on the Campus Board. S Taylor acknowledged the importance of this but noted that it may be challenging to identify this too far in advance, however a balance of skills across the membership will be pursued as the project progresses.  S Taylor also referenced the Welsh model, where at the final business case stage, the college transfers responsibility to an independent company for completion, which may influence future governance arrangements. R Young added that the approach could depend on the chosen procurement method.  L O’Donnell recommended rewording the report from ‘project’ to ‘programme governance.’ **S Taylor to progress.**  L O’Donnell highlighted that when presenting the case to ministers, the focus was on benefits realisation- specifically the regeneration of the town centre and employability outcomes. He stressed the need to identify the promised benefits, which go beyond the construction phase to include areas such as upskilling and community impact.  The proposed governance arrangements were approved.   * 1. **Board Metrics**   S Taylor presented the update for noting.  H Honeyman enquired about staff engagement levels, questioning whether they had stabilised or remained slightly elevated following a peak in 2022. S Taylor noted that staff engagement surveys are conducted biennially, with the next scheduled for 2026 and would show if there was a specific trend.   * 1. **Committee Titles**   L O’Donnell introduced an item proposing that the names of the Board Committees be refreshed. He suggested that that Human Resources & Development should be changed to People, Culture and Wellbeing. D Mackenzie, as chair of Human Resources & Development expressed support for the proposal to incorporate the term People rather than Human Resources. This committee will be renamed People, Culture and Wellbeing from the start of next session.  L O’Donnell mentioned Finance & Property to be changed to Finance, Estates and Infrastructure. B Lawrie suggested that Finance and Infrastructure would cover all elements. G Bell stated that it would be good to reference digital but accepted that this was covered by infrastructure. This committee will be renamed Finance and Infrastructure from the start of next session.  L O’Donnell suggested amending the title of Audit and Risk to Audit and Assurance. H Honeyman felt that much of the assurance activity did not sit with the Audit & Risk Committee so could not support this change. This committee will remain as Audit and Risk.  The title of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee was discussed and L O’Donnell suggested this be amended to Students, Curriculum and Partnerships. S Hewitt noted the important role this Committee played in terms of quality should not be overlooked and N Lowden stated that there was also an on-going focus on Learning and Teaching.  A Lawrence supported the idea of explicitly including students within the Committee Title and it was suggested that this be discussed further at the next meeting of the Committee. **S Taylor to progress.** |
|  | **MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**  The minutes of the Committee meetings were noted.  B Lawrie commended the paper on finance and governance, noting it was well presented and should be circulated to all Board members. It was agreed that this included on the agenda for the next Board meeting under ‘Governance.’ **S Taylor to progress.**  H Honeyman confirmed that the Audit and Risk Committee had approved the reappointment of Henderson Loggie as internal auditors following a procurement exercise.  The minutes were noted from Board members. |
|  | **CORRESPONDENCE**  The correspondence was noted |
|  | **REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE PROFESSIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**  The report was discussed verbally among Board members. It was agreed that a revised paper, outlining a range of options, would be submitted for consideration at the September Board meeting**. L O’Donnell to progress.** |
|  | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**  Tuesday 30 September 2025 at 5.00pm Room A-IS-103 Arbroath Campus |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Action Point Summary** |  |  |
| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Date** |
| Clarify terminology within final strategy around SIMD10. | S Hewitt | 30 September 2025 |
| Respond to Board correspondence in respect of the Gardyne Sports Centre pool. | S Taylor / L O’Donnell | 27 June 2025 |
| To identify main changes in income/expenditure and related assumptions between the interim and final budget. | S Taylor / N Anderson | 30 September 2025 |
| Delegate approval of the Financial Forecast Return. | L O’Donnell / B Lawrie / N Anderson | 30 June 2025 |
| Update to incorporate Programme within the finalised Infrastructure Governance Arrangements | S Taylor | 30 September 2025 |
| Amend Committee names where agreed and include the item for discussion on the LTQC agenda. | S Taylor | 27 August 2025 |
| Revised paper on governance professional options to be considered at the next Board meeting. | L O’Donnell | 30 September 2025 |