BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Tuesday 16th June at 5pm
Room K-TO-226, Kingsway Campus and Hybrid on Teams

Draft confirmed by Chair.

PRESENT:	Laurie O'Donnell (Chair)	Robert Young
	Jenna Lawrence	Simon Hewitt
	Brian Lawrie	Carri Cusick
	Ged Bell	Connor Pithie
	Colin Smith	Kirstin Marsh
	Brian Mooney	Donald MacKenzie
	Ronnie Donegan	

IN ATTENDANCE: Julie Grace (Vice Principal Curriculum and Partnerships)
Steve Taylor (Vice Principal Support Services and Operations)
Nicky Anderson (Director of Finance)
Rachel Wall (Governance Professional)
Ian Simpson (Project Director)

1. WELCOME

L O'Donnell welcomed Board members to the meeting and extended a warm welcome to Rachel Wall for her first full Board meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Helen Honeyman, Richard Gordon, Kelly McIntosh, Neil Lowden and Adele Lawrence

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR CONNECTION

There were no declarations of interest or connection.

4. APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNANCE PROFESSIONAL

The appointment of Rachel Wall to the role of Governance Professional for the Board was confirmed.

5. MINUTE OF LAST MEETING – 17th March 2026

The minute of the Board of Management meeting held on 17 March 2026 was approved as an accurate record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

S Taylor confirmed that two matters arising had been closed with a further two on the agenda. The action in respect of page numbering on the PDF combined papers would be looked at over the summer.

7. NATIONAL ACTIVITY UPDATE

L O'Donnell provided a verbal update and noted the outcome of the Scottish election with the positive inclusion of the D&A Infrastructure project as a manifesto commitment for the new SNP administration.

The reappointment of Ben Macpherson as the Minister for the college sector was welcomed and the revised portfolio covering tertiary education along with innovation and technology was and interesting development.

The recent news of further job losses at Dundee University was discussed, with the potential for this to impact the economy of the whole region.

The College Sector of the Future work being progressed by the Scottish Funding Council, Scottish Government and Colleges Scotland was highlighted, with outcomes and future plans anticipated by the end of the calendar year. Similar work within the University sector was also noted.

S Hewitt highlighted developments progressing in respect of regional skills planning, although there remained a lot of unknowns. It was confirmed that the region for D&A was based around the Tay Cities Deal area. S Hewitt also noted that discussions were ongoing in terms of what the tertiary sector covered as it was felt that this was wider than just colleges and universities.

The update was welcomed by the Board.

8. INFRASTRUCTURE VISION UPDATE

I Simpson introduced himself to the board and summarised the update report on progress being made in respect of the Gardyne Green Skills and innovation Hub (GSIH) outline business case.

This included appointment of main contractors and other specialists as summarised in the report and progress in respect of excellent engagement with specialist staff within the trades areas of the College.

I Simpson stated that the assumption is that the GSIH would be developed under a capital model via the Scottish Funding Council, with future programme developments taken forward through the Mutual Investment Model (MIM).

Input and learning from other recent sector developments was noted, with further engagement and visits planned to ensure that the College picked up on aspects of learning and best practice. I Simpson outlined the desire for the OBC to be completed and approved by the Board by late August 2026 so that it could be considered by the SFC Infrastructure Committee in September but noted that dates and timelines remained unclear from the SFC and Government side.

S Hewitt outlined progress being made on the overall programme, with engagement arrangements in place with the Minister and the new local MSPs. Proposals for a meeting around the Welsh government approach to MIM were noted.

B Lawrie welcomed the update and highlighted that there had also been a detailed discussion on arrangements and progress at the Finance & Infrastructure meeting.

R Young confirmed that a lot of detail had been discussed at the Finance & Infrastructure meeting and that it was important to record that the contract agreed with McLaughlin and Harvey was only through to completion of the OBC stage and that this was recognised as good practice for any large project.

R Young stated that he welcomed the plans to develop a sub group to support governance of the project as it developed.

8.1 Infrastructure Programme Governance

S Taylor summarised the governance structure proposed for oversight of the Gardyne development, with this covering the key aspects in terms of standing orders and delegated authority discussed at the March Board Development session. It was noted that the arrangements proposed were based on similar governance structures adopted to oversee major developments at Fife College and Forth Valley College in recent years. S Taylor advised that the proposal had also been shared with the Scottish Funding Council who were content with the proposed approach.

S Taylor highlighted the SFC decision making flowchart on page 2 of the proposal and noted that the College was currently between points 4 and 5 of 20 on this flowchart. Based on the experience of others, the recommended point for the Campus Executive Board to become involved would be following SFC approval of the OBC and once funding to progress to full business case stage had been allocated. It was noted that the timeline for this was unknown, but that time would be needed to recruit and appoint individuals to the Campus board.

R Young noted that the wording in terms of the delegated financial authority limits (bullets 2, 3 and 4 under section 3.3 appeared to be contradictory) and asked about decision making responsibilities. I Simpson confirmed that these should be a cumulative value rather than individual and S Taylor noted that the wording would be revised. **S Taylor to progress.**

I Simpson advised that a decision making log was being developed to record key decisions and support retention of decision making and authorisation around these.

G Bell asked about the likely timeline for the Campus Executive Board to be enacted. S Taylor stated that this was difficult to assess as it would be dependent upon decisions and timelines set by SFC and the Scottish Government. S Taylor noted that the earliest anticipated timing would be between September 2026 and April 2027, but that it could equally be 2028.

C Cusick queried whether the Campus Executive Board should be named only for the GSIH development. K Marsh asked what the roles and responsibilities of the different Campus Executive Board members would be and also asked if the Board would only have responsibility for the GSIH. I Simpson noted that the individual roles on the Campus Executive Board would depend on the skills mix and the different areas of specialism. It was noted that these responsibilities were linked to the areas of delegated responsibility and that there would be a constant feedback loop to the College Board.

R Young stated that it would be important for the Campus Executive Board to have insight into what was coming next whilst overseeing the GSIH development as some aspects were likely to impact on future stages of the wider infrastructure project.

L O'Donnell noted concern that the proposed governance didn't incorporate the revised employability operating model as part of the overall infrastructure programme and noted that this may be required before the governance arrangements could be approved.

S Hewitt stated that he felt that, whilst important, the employability operating model and proposals were separate from the Campus Executive Board roles or responsibilities. I Simpson stated that oversight of the whole Infrastructure vision and operating model would remain with the College Board.

R Donegan asked about arrangements to recruit to the Campus executive Board and it was confirmed that this would be the responsibility of the Nominations Committee.

C Smith asked if there were risks in delaying the approval of the governance structures and S Taylor advised that this would be dependent upon the timeline for approval of the OBC, but that time would be needed to recruit and establish the Board.

Following further discussion the governance arrangements were approved subject to amendment to the delegated financial values and with incorporation of an expanded introductory summary establishing the context in respect of the GSIH project within the wider infrastructure programme and vision. **S Taylor to progress.**

Timelines and arrangements for the identification, recruitment and appointment to the Campus Executive Board would be developed and implemented in line with the appropriate timescale. **R Wall to progress.**

9. FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE ITEMS

9.1 Financial Sustainability

S Hewitt provided a verbal update summarising the c£2.5m savings achieved and the improved out-turn forecast for 2025/26, with this discussed in detail at the Finance & Infrastructure meeting.

S Hewitt noted that a close to breakeven budget had been progressed for 2026/27 with recognition that there were also some further significant funding allocations to be confirmed through SFC, although it was recognised that funding would remain tight for the foreseeable future.

L O'Donnell thanked S Hewitt for his update and noted that he wanted to thank everyone involved in progressing the savings plan arrangements and funding campaign. S Oakley welcomed this and noted that thanks were also due to the board for their support through the arrangements.

9.2 2026/27 Budget and 2027/28 & 2028/29 Indicative Budgets

N Anderson summarised the 2026/27 budget noting that this had been recommended for approval by the Finance & Infrastructure Committee. N Anderson noted the small deficit forecast for 2026/27, but that continued flat cash funding would result in this increasing again in future years. This would continue to be monitored alongside the assumptions incorporated into the budget report.

B Lawrie welcomed the budget document and confirmed that this had been discussed in detail at the Finance 7 Infrastructure meeting and that he didn't have any of the reservations he had identified the previous year in respect of the budget or its impact on financial sustainability. B Lawrie noted that this reflected the value of the Financial Strategy and clearly documented assumptions. The benefit of repayment of the Gardyne loan was noted for future years.

J Grace stated that there had been a further update on the likely Child Poverty funds available to the sector since the papers had been issued. It was confirmed that c£21 million of funds would be made available, with a baseline of funds likely to be allocated to Colleges over a 5 year period.

L O'Donnell noted the improvement in the budget process in recent years.

The 2026/27 budget was approved.

9.3 Financial Forecast Return (FFR)

N Anderson stated that the information request for the FFR had recently been received from SFC, with a return date of 30 June 2026. As this required Board approval it was requested that approval to submit be provided through the Principal, Board Chair and Chair of the Finance & Infrastructure Committee, with the final version being brought to the September meeting. This was agreed. **N Anderson to progress.**

9.4 Finance and Infrastructure Committee Management Accounts

The Financial Accounts were for information only and were noted by the Board.

10. STRATEGIC PROJECTS UPDATE

J Grace presented the Strategic Projects Update for noting and highlighted the positive work being progressed with Montrose Ports. The report was noted.

11. STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION REPORT

C Pithie noted the detailed Student's Association update provided and highlighted the new DASA team in place for 2026/27. C Pithie stated that the team were aiming to move away from the campus designation for Vice Presidents, but that this was balanced with their role on each campus.

R Donegan welcomed the increase in student nominations for the staff awards and C Pithie outlined how this increase had been achieved through better promotion and engagement with students.

12. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

S Hewitt stated that the report was for noting. The positive representation and promotion of the College across the region was especially commented upon, particularly in contrast with the situation at Dundee University.

13. NATIONAL BARGAINING UPDATE

S Taylor summarised the paper noting that a new national procedure agreement is now in place, supported by a new website. He advised that negotiations on academic staff salaries seemed to be progressing well, with the hope of achieving a three year pay deal.

D Smith stated that it was anticipated that an offer would be put to union members in the coming few days.

The update was welcomed.

14. GOVERNANCE ITEMS

14.1 Board Development Arrangements

L O'Donnell confirmed that the proposed Board Development session arrangements would be progressed over the summer to create a programme for 2026/27. **L O'Donnell and R Wall to progress.**

R Donegan highlighted the value of the recent College Development Network session for Board members and it was noted that CDN was a useful source of Board training.

14.2 Board Self-Evaluation and Development Plan

S Taylor summarised the paper and proposed approach to support the Board self-evaluation in the period through to the September meeting. It was confirmed that this would encompass the drafting of the evaluation with each Chair, with these drafts discussed and agreed at the relevant Committee and then the board meeting.

S Taylor also noted the Board Development Plan update and recommended that the outcomes from the self-evaluation inform the Development session programme going forward.

The self-evaluation plan arrangements were approved. **R Wall to progress.**

14.3 Membership Update

The Board noted the nomination of Chaesel Melia as Student Board Member for 2026/27. The extension of appointment as Board Chair was discussed and it was agreed that arrangements for confirmation of an interim Chair would be progressed via e-mail over the summer should reappointment of L O'Donnell not be confirmed. **R Wall to progress.**

L O'Donnell noted that the terms of office for Helen Honeyman and Neil Lowden would come to an end in December 2026 and that neither were likely to reapply. Recruitment arrangements for these vacancies would be progressed by the Nominations Committee after the summer. **R Wall to progress.**

14.4 Board Metrics

S Taylor noted the usual range of Board metrics, which set out figures aligned to strategic measures and assumptions. The metrics were noted.

15. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The minutes presented were approved and D MacKenzie noted a positive discussion around the impacts of artificial intelligence on organisations and services. It was noted that this may make a good Board Development discussion point in the future.

J Grace noted a positive discussion around the Elevate Learning and Teaching project at the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee.

16. CORRESPONDENCE

The list of recent correspondence was noted.

17. AOCB

L O'Donnell asked that the thanks of the Board be passed on to Adele Lawrence for her input over the past 2 years and thanked S Taylor for his input and guidance to the Board since merger.

These thanks were echoed by Board members.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 29 September 2026 at 5.00pm, Arbroath Campus, room tbc.

Action Point Summary		
Action	**Responsibility**	**Date**
Update Infrastructure Governance wording to clarify delegated financial limits and expand the context	S Taylor	30 June 2026
Infrastructure Governance Arrangements to be timelined and enacted	R Wall	29 September 2026
FFR to be progressed for approval	N Anderson	30 June 2026
2026/27 Board Development Programme to be created	L O'Donnell, R Wall	22 September 2026
Board Self-Evaluation Reporting to be progressed	R Wall	29 September 2026
Interim Chair arrangements to be progressed as necessary	R Wall	10 July 2026
Board recruitment to be progressed	R Wall	15 December 2026