UHI Argyll

Review of Board Effectiveness

November 2025

by

Weak Assurance

Contents

Section 1 Introduction

This Externally Facilitated Board Effectiveness Review (EFBER) was commissioned by the UHI Argyll (the College) Audit Committee. The purpose of the EFBER is to meet the requirements the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges (the Code) 2024 edition which sets out the principals of good governance for colleges in Scotland.

As the College receive funding from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the College is required to ensure compliance with the Code including Section D.24 which states that:

"The Board must keep its effectiveness under annual review and have in place a robust self-evaluation process. There should also be an externally facilitated evaluation of its effectiveness every three to five years. The Board should determine the timing for this externally facilitated review as part of the annual effectiveness review. The Board must send its self-evaluation (including an externally facilitated evaluation) and Board development plan (including progress on previous year's plan) to its funding body and publish them online".

In order to comply with the Code, this independent EFBER was carried out between September 2025 and November 2025.

The scope of the review is outlined below.

In broad terms, the review set out to cover:

(1) That the Board of Governors (the Board) are compliant with the Code of Good Governance;
(2) The progress the Board are making in relation to self-evaluation; and
(3) What levels of participation there are by the Board Members in this process and in the strategic decisions taken by the College.

Wbg's role was to make an independent assessment of the arrangements and to provide an opinion to the Board on these matters.

Our findings, recommendations and suggested action plans are set out in Sections 4, 5 and 6 below.

To reach these findings, we undertook a series of interviews both on a one to one, and group basis. In addition, we reviewed Board and Committee papers of Academic Year (AY) from October 2024 to October 2025 including Board papers for the meeting on 3 November 2025 which we also attended remotely, as was the format of the meeting.

Section 7 includes relevant Annexes to support our findings as follows:

i) A full list of all the Board & Staff Members interviewed during this process;
ii) A copy of the Board Agenda from 3 October 2025; and
iii) Grading Structure.

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Wbg would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Board Members and Staff involved in this review for their time, energy and commitment to help us conclude our review, and for the positive and open way in which they all engaged in this process.

Section 2 Scope

In agreement with the Chair of the Board (at the time of our appointment) and the Secretary to the Board on behalf of the Board, the Scope for the Review is set out below. Our report considered each element in turn and provides observations, recommendations and actions based on our findings.

Scope of review

Our objectives for this review were to assess whether

- The Board assesses its effectiveness and has a robust self-evaluation process in place.
- The effectiveness review covers the five sections of the Code of Good Governance.
- The Board sends its self-evaluation and Board of Governors development plan to the funding body.
- There is sufficient input by Board Members into the self-evaluation process.
- Any actions arising from the self-evaluation are being actioned.

Approach

Our approach to the review was:

- Initial meeting with the Secretary to the Board, Director of Finance & Corporate Services, Chair of the Board and Chairs of the Committees to agree the review, approach and timelines.
- To observe the following meetings:
  - Finance & General Purposes Committee – 17 September 2025
  - Audit Committee – 22 September 2025
  - Board of Governors – 3 October 2025
- Review of governance information including Board and Committee papers, attendance records, Terms of Reference, Standing Orders, Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation.
- Interviews with the following:
  - Chair of the Board of Governors;
  - Secretary of the Board;
  - Principal;

- Director of Finance & Corporate Services;
- Group meeting with the Chairs of the following Committees:
  - HR;
  - Audit;
  - Finance & General Purpose; and
  - Learning, Teaching & Enhancement.

- Analysis and review of questionnaire issued to Board Members.

- To review the structure of the Board and Board Member development plans, appraisals, skills mix and induction arrangements.

Section 3 Overall Conclusion

Our review considered:

- Board of Governors and Committee papers from October 2024 to October 2025;
- Attendance at a Board of Governors meeting (3 October 2025);
- Interviews with Board of Governors Members (including the Chair, the Principal, the Director of Finance & Corporate Services and the Secretary to the Board as well as Committee Chairs);
- Questionnaire results; and
- Various Governance documentation.

In reaching our overall conclusion we have identified **four areas** of ***Good Practice*** (see **Section 4**) and **five recommendations, actions** and **One Observation** (see **Section 6** below) for continued improvement in this regard.

Overall, we can provide a ***Weak*** level of assurance over the Board of Governors Effectiveness at UHI Argyll. Our assurance level is predicated on continued improvements being made by the Board of Governors in their approach to Governance.

Section 4 Good Practice Identified

Outlined in this section are the areas of good practice we identified at the College whilst undertaking our review of Governance Effectiveness.

Good Practice 1

The Board meeting held on 3 October 2025 had a comprehensive agenda to work through. The meeting was chaired by the Vice Chair of the Board due to the Chair being unavailable due to personal circumstances. While standing in at short notice, the Vice Chair ensured each agenda item had sufficient time for discussion, debate and resolution where required. This included ensuring any item's requiring approval was rescheduled to ensure quorum was achieved due to the late arrival of some Board Members. Despite all of these hurdles and complexities, in our view, the Board meeting was well chaired.

Good Practice 2

The College has a robust process in place for the development of its agendas for Board and Committee meetings. This involves the Secretary of the Board working with the Senior Management Team, the Principal and the Chairs of the Board and its Committees. This ensures that the agenda is balanced, aligns with the College's priorities which helps improve accountability, the quality of papers and results in more efficient and purposeful meetings.

Good Practice 3

We attended the October 2025 Board meeting along with the September 2025 Finance & General Purpose and Audit Committee meetings and it was clear to see that there was a positive culture in the meetings and they were open, transparent and that all Members felt involved. This is also further highlighted through the questionnaire results, our results highlighted that Members felt the meetings are transparent, supportive, inclusive, diligent and respectful when asked about the culture of the Board.

Good Practice 4

Through our review of Board and Committee meeting minutes along with our attendance at Board and Committee meetings, it was clear that College put student learning and student experience at the forefront of it aims.

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Section 5 Findings

We have provided an overview below of findings from the work undertaken. These are narrative focused and highlight the circumstances found to be in place at the time of the review. Recommendations are included in Section 6.

5.1 Compliance with the Code of Good Governance

5.1.1 Leadership & Strategy

The College has a complex Board which has faced some significant challenges over recent years, and which was also highlighted during our review which include:

- The recruitment of Board Members to aid quoracy;
- Change in Principal;
- The resignation of the Chair of the Board; and
- Transformational change at the UHI (University of the Highlands and Islands) Partnership.

Throughout our review and discussions, one of the key topics highlighted was the requirement to recruit further Board Members to enhance the skills of Members and the risk of meetings being inquorate. This was evidenced at the October 2025 Board meeting we attended with the quoracy of the meeting not being met until 30 minutes after the start of the meeting. We also note that the September 2025 Audit Committee was inquorate and that the September 2024 and February 2025 Audit Committee meetings were also inquorate. We highlight that the Board are aware of this and are looking to further recruit Board Members. At the time of our review, the Board recruited two new Members to further strengthen the Board.

The College has also been impacted with the frequent change in Principals over the last three years with the current Interim Principal being the third in three years. This frequency of change could risk having an impact on the College meeting its strategic aims. However, our discussions during our review with the former Chair of the Board, the Chair of the Committees, the Director of Finance & Corporate Services and the Staff Board Member highlighted that the current Interim Principal is driving the College to meet its strategic aims while working with UHI Partnership on the transformation case.

During the course of our review, the Chair of the Board resigned from their role with immediate effect with the Vice Chair of the Board stepping up as interim Chair. Please see **Section 5.1.5** for further information on relationships between Board Members and staff members.

One of the key areas of challenge is the lack of a formal strategy for the College, the reason for which is due to the wider strategic change being driven by the UHI Partnership, the UHI Transformation Business Case which is scheduled to be published during 2026. The Board, its Committees, the Principal and the Senior Management of the College all strive to ensure that the College continues to work towards its aims highlighted in the Strategic Plan for 2022-2025, these being:

- Learning for Life;
- Sustainable Communities;
- Partnership; and
- Resources (people, Process, Technology, Estates, Finance).

The College has its '*Code of Conduct*' for Board Members which outlines what is expected from them on a personal and professional basis. The Code is based around the *9 Principles of Public Life*. From the Board of Governors papers reviewed and from discussions held & witnessed, it is clear that these principles form the framework for decision making and underlying conduct of the Board of Governors.

The Board benefits from experienced members who all noted that the Board has an open positive culture in the meetings and they were open and transparent.

The Board and its Committees hold all meetings online via Microsoft Teams. Please see **Section 6** for further information.

5.1.2 Quality of the Student Experience

The quality of student experience is of paramount importance to the Board and its decision making. The Board ensures there is effective oversight in place through the Learning, Teaching & Enhancement Committee which has oversight to advise and make recommendations to the Board on all matters relating to learning and teaching, curriculum development and the student experience.

The College does not have its own stand-alone Student Association and the College's Student Association is the Highlands & Islands Student Association (HISA). HISA's Constitution and Memorandum and Articles of Association were implemented in December 2023. We also note that HISA is resourced by UHI Partnership according to its requirements. The new Student Board Member attended their first Committee meeting on 3 October 2025, and we were impressed by their input and that they actively took part in the meeting. Our discussions with Board and Committee Members highlighted that they believe over the years the input from the HISA representatives have been inconsistent along with attendance. The College should look to encourage the Student Board Member to keep up their positive contribution throughout their term. Please see **Section 6** for further information. We also note that the Learning, Teaching & Enhancement Committee has a standard agenda item for the Student Board Member to provide an updated. We note that we were unable to hold a meeting with the Student Board Member during our review due to their availability.

5.1.3 Board Accountability

Following our review of Board and Committee papers/minutes and our attendance at meetings, it is clear that decision making is transparent, and decisions are made collectively. Agendas and papers are structured and provided to provide members with detailed quality information to support discussions and outcomes. Board and Committee papers are published on the College website to provide transparency to all stakeholders.

The Committee structure in place at the College works well with each Committee Chair providing each Board meeting with updates on the discussions and decisions made.

This highlights a level of trust and accountability between the Board, its Committees and the Senior Management Team. This was also supported within our questionnaire as all Board Members who answered noted that they believe the structure is effective.

Section D.24 of the Code outlines that colleges should undertake an annual self-assessment against the Code stating that they "must keep its effectiveness under annual review and have in place a robust self-evaluation process". Throughout our discussions with the personnel outlined in Annex i, we were informed that this has not taken place in recent years. Our discussions with the Principal and the Secretary to the Board confirmed that they aim to complete this during 2026. We also found that the College does not undertake self-assessment against the Code. Please see **Section 6** for further information.

Risk management is considered throughout the governance framework at the College with each Committee being responsible for their own risks with the Board having ultimate responsibility for this. We note that the College has revised its Risk Register and our discussions highlighted that this has been well received by Board Members. Within our questionnaire, we asked Board Members if they have a robust understanding of the risk management arrangements and all answered yes.

Reading Board and Committee papers along with speaking to Board Members, there is evidence that the College is proactive in attempting to influence the shape of the UHI Transformation Business Case with the outgoing Chair and the Principal taking part in discussions.

Conflicts of interest are noted and dealt with appropriately by the Board of Governors and its Committees. The Board of Governors have a Register of Interest, with interests being declared where appropriate. We note that the Register of Interests is also published online.

The College makes good use of their Board of Governors Committee structure, with all members of the Senior Leadership Team and others contributing to paper creation. This is in line with good practice.

Terms of Reference for the Board of Governors and its Committees are clear and unambiguous. The Schemes of Delegation are in line with schedules we have reviewed elsewhere.

5.1.4 Board Effectiveness

From the interviews we conducted with both Members of the Board and the Staff Member ***Annex i)***, the consensus was that the Chair of the Board of Governors (and the new Interim Chair) and the Principal was effective. This was also supported through questionnaire results with a positive average score of 4.1 out of five rating the support provided by the Chair.

Our discussion with the former Chair and the Principal noted a respectable working relationship was in place and that they met weekly to discuss progress and the College overall. Within our questionnaire, Board Members noted that they had a strong relationship with the Chair rating it 3.7 out of five. However, our discussions with Board Members and the Senior Management Team found that the relationship could have been improved. With a new Interim Chair in place the College should look to build on this.

The Board and the Senior Management Team are supported by the Secretary of the Board who splits their role at the College to spend two days per week on their Secretary role. Our discussions with the Secretary of the Board highlighted that they generally spend more than two days on this role and the College may wish to consider re-evaluating the time split. Please see **Section 6** for further information.

The College has developed an Induction Pack for new Board Members which provides information on the College, meetings with the Principal and the Chair of the Board along with supporting documentation. New Board Members are also encouraged to undertake training offered by the College Development Network. Our discussion with the Staff Board Member found that they believed the training could be further enhanced and specific to their role to ease their transition. Please see **Section 6** for further information.

As noted earlier, the Code requires that the Board keep its effectiveness under review, during our discussion with the Secretary to the Board, we were informed that they were unaware of when the last evaluation was undertaken. We were informed that the evaluation for 2024/25, while started, was not completed due to staff turnover at the College and the Secretary to the Board role. We note that this is a requirement of the Code and should be completed. Our discussions with the Chair of the Board, the Principal and the Secretary of the Board found that the evaluation is scheduled to be completed in May 2026 as there is no requirement to undertake this the same year as the EFBER. Please see **Section 6** for further information.

5.1.5 Relationships & Collaboration

The College's Strategic Plan 2022-25 highlighted that the College will grow its curriculum offering through partner collaboration and improve its access provision through schools, colleges, UHI and local employers. The Strategy also noted that the curriculum will be responsive to industry and evolving digital practice.

Our discussions with the Chair of the Board, the Principal and the Chairs of the Committees highlighted that logistical difficulties due to the geography and topography of Argyll, however, the College acknowledges the importance of collaborative working and continues to work with schools, employers and the wider UHI Partnership in that respect. This is work that should be continued and further enhanced.

5.2 Board of Governors Self Evaluation

5.2.1 Individual Board of Governors Members

As noted within Section 5.1.3, the Secretary of the Board stated that the Board evaluation was scheduled to be undertaken during 2024/25 and was not completed due to staff turnover. We note that this is being scheduled for May 2026. Please see **Section 6** for further information.

5.2.2 The Collective Board of Governors

As noted within Section 5.1.3, the Secretary of the Board stated that the Board evaluation was scheduled to be undertaken during 2024/25 and was not completed due to staff turnover. We note that this is being scheduled for May 2026. Please see **Section 6** for further information.

We also note that the UHI Partnership are undertaking their own Regional Strategic Board review in 2025 which could have an effect on the College.

5.3 Board of Governors Member Participation in Strategic decisions

The Board of Governors papers, subsequent minutes and discussions observed during this review indicates that Board Members all appear to participate in decision making at the College. However, as noted, the College await the outcome of the UHI Transformation Business Case in 2026 which will outline the future strategy of the wider Partnership and the College.

Section 6 Recommendations, Client Comments & Action Plan

	Finding	Recommendation	Grading	Client Comments	Agreed Actions & Responsibility	Timeline
1.	Section D.24 of the Code states that colleges "must keep its effectiveness under annual review and have a robust self-evaluation process in place". This is to help the College assess the effectiveness of the Board and forms part of the annual governance reporting. During our review, we were informed that the annual review for 2024/25 was started but not completed due to changes in staffing and differing priorities at the time. Our discussions with the former Chair of the Board, the Principal and the Secretary of the Board found that the College are scheduling an annual review during 2026.	We recommend that the College ensure that the annual self-evaluation is undertaken in 2026 and subsequent years as required by the Code.	**Priority 1 - High**	• Review completed 1st May 2026 • Summary to audit committee 29th May 2026. Board secretary to schedule for 2027.	Chair/Board	September 2026

	Finding	Recommendation	Grading	• Client Comments	Agreed Actions & Responsibility	Timeline
2.	The published versions of the Board's Standing Orders, Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation note that they were all due for review in May 2023, however this has yet to take place.	We recommend that the College review the Standing Orders, Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation.	**Priority 1 - Medium**	• Board Recruitment Policy – draft completed 17/4/26 • Standing orders – draft completed 17/4/26 • Terms of reference – draft completed 17/4/26 • Scheme of Delegation – draft completed 17/4/26 • Reviewed with company secretary April 2026 Reviewed at audit committee 29th May 2026	Company Sectary & Principals	June 2026

	Finding	Recommendation	Grading	Client Comments	Agreed Actions & Responsibility	Timeline
3.	Our discussions with the Board Members and the Senior Management Team found that the College believe that over the years the attendance and input of the Student Board Member has varied at meetings. We attended the Board meeting held on the 3 October 2025 which was the first meeting attended by the new Student Board Member, we found that the Student Board Member actively took part in the meeting and made a positive contribution. The former Chair of the Board noted that the College has been working with HISA who developing a framework to enhance the role of the Student Board Member.	We recommend that the College continue to support and work with the Student Board Member and HISA to encourage a positive contribution of their term and for future Members.	**Priority 3 - Low**	We continue to work closely with HISA, where the intention is that at least 2 student Board reps will be recruited to the College board. This should ensure that there is more regular student attendance at Board meetings. There is however a limit to any influence we have over this and the most we can do is ensure a proper induction when new students are elected to HISA roles, and encourage participation at Board meetings when the student rep/s is present.	Head of Student Services will continue to liaise with HISA. Chair of Board will continue to encourage participation at Board/Committee meetings.	Ongoing

	Finding	Recommendation	Grading	Client Comments	Agreed Actions & Responsibility	Timeline
4.	Our discussion with the Secretary to the Board found that they split their current role between two days per week on Secretary duties and three days on their other role as the Events & Communication Officer. Our discussions found that the time taken to complete the Secretary role is challenging in two days particularly with the UHI Transformation Business Case and work on the role is often more than two days. The Secretary to the Board noted that they are new to the role and is receiving support/guidance from the UHI Partnership Board Secretary and the wider Senior Management Team.	We recommend that the College consider reviewing the time allocation for the Secretary to the Boards role and if the two days per week is sufficient.	**Priority 3 - Low**	Discussions completed by line manager – variation to contract (0.6 FTE Board allocation) to be approved by SMT in December 2025.	Principal	Completed - January 2026

	Finding	Recommendation	Grading	Client Comments	Agreed Actions & Responsibility	Timeline
5.	Our discussions with the Principal, former Chair of the Board and the Board Secretary highlighted that the College have developed a new Induction Pack for Board Members including the Staff Board Member. Our discussions with the Staff Board Member found that following their induction, they were not fully clear on their role as Staff Board Member and found that this role can be conflicting with their day job. They also noted that they believe the wider College staff base are not fully clear on the role of the Staff Board Member. We note that the Staff Board Member believes that they have received support in the role and are growing into this through experience.	We recommend that the College consider reviewing the Board Induction Pack for Staff Board Members to specifically outline their role and responsibilities. The College should also consider providing an update to the wider staff base on the role of the Staff Board Member.	**Priority 3 - Low**	Reviewed at board away day on 1st May 2026	Board Secretary	July 2026

Section 6.1 Observations

	Observation
1.	Due to the geographical nature of Argyll and the dispersed locations of Board members, meetings are conducted via Microsoft Teams to aid attendance and overcome the problems of such a diverse geographical spread of Members. Discussions with Board members and the Senior Management Team indicated that previous attempts to hold in-person meetings were unsuccessful. It was also noted that some Board members have never met face-to-face because of the remote nature of these meetings. The College may wish to explore the feasibility of hosting at least one in-person Board meeting annually to strengthen engagement and collaboration.

Section 7 Annexe's

Annex i)

Board of Governors Interviewee List

Interviewee & Role	Method	Location
Rosemary Allford – Chair of the Board of Governors	1-2-1	MS Teams
Alice Blakey – Secretary to the Board of Governors	1-2-1	MS Teams
Joe Wright – Principal	1-2-1	MS Teams
Ailsa Close – Director of Finance & Corporate Services		
Bettina Sizeland – Interim Chair of the Audit Committee	Group 1	MS Teams
Maggie Tierney – Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee	Group 1	MS Teams
Rosemary Allford – Chair of the Learning, Teaching & Enhancement Committee	Group 1	MS Teams
Paul Wylie – Staff Board Member	Group 2	MS Teams

Annex ii)

Board of Governors Agenda – 3 October 2025

MEETING OF UHI ARGYLL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Friday 3 October 2025, 10am – 12.30pm

AGENDA

ITEM	SUBJECT	STATUS
25.3.01	**Welcome and apologies**	
25.3.02	**Declarations of interest & to identify any items deemed confidential**	
25.3.03	**Minutes of previous meetings:** **a) Unapproved Circulated Minutes of Board Meeting – 13 June 2025** **b) Unapproved Circulated RESERVED Minutes of Board Meeting – 13 June 2025**	For approval For approval
25.3.04	**Outstanding Actions** • RA to follow up on Transformation matters at Court • AEC to add interpretation column to Board Dashboard • AEC to explore if contextual information can be added to Board Dashboard • AEC to develop Risk Assurance Framework	
25.3.05	**Matters arising** (*not covered elsewhere in agenda*) **i. AGM**	For information
25.3.06	**Chairs Report: overview of activity and key issues** **i. SFC's Expectations of Good Governance**	For information
25.3.07	**CONFIDENTIAL Principal's Update**	For noting
25.3.08	**Board Dashboard October 2025**	For noting

	RESOURCES	
25.3.09	**Minutes of previous Finance and General Purposes meeting held on 17 September 2025**	For information
25.3.10	**Management Accounts to 31 July 2025**	For noting
25.3.11	**Reforecast for year to 31 July 2026**	For discussion
25.3.12	**F&GP AOCB** **i) Treasury Management** **ii) SFC Emergency Capital Fund application – Dunoon Portakabin** **iii) Emergency Management and Business Continuity Plan**	 For information For noting For noting
25.3.13	**Draft Minutes of previous meetings** **i) Audit Committee, held on 6 June –** approval required as Committee was inquorate **ii) Audit Committee, held on 22 September 2025**	 For approval For information
25.3.14	**Transformation Working Paper**	TBC
25.3.15	i) **Health & Safety internal audit report** ii) **Fraud Prevention internal audit report** iii) **Follow up reports**	For noting For noting For noting
25.3.16	**Health and Safety Report – Quarter to 31 July**	For noting
25.3.17	**Audit AOCB** i) **Fraud Response Plan –** approval required as Committee was inquorate ii) **Update on external audit** iii) **Feedback from political engagement sessions**	 For approval For noting For discussion
	STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE	
25.3.18	**Risk Register**	For discussion
25.3.19	**Draft Minutes of Learning, Teaching & Engagement Committee held on 19 September 2025**	For information

25.3.20	**Finalised Position – FE credits and HE FTEs for 2024-25**	For noting
25.3.21	**Finalised provisional KPI position for 2024-25 Only to FE activity** a) **KPI comparison with previous 2 AY**	For noting For noting
25.3.22	**Applications Report**	For information
25.3.23	**Progress to targets- FE credits and HE FTEs**	For information
25.3.24	**Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Update** a) **Support services update** b) **STEP update** c) **Pre-apprenticeship programme** d) **TQFE & other CPD update** e) **MA contract update** f) **Hospitality activities**	For noting
25.3.25	**HISA report – September 2025**	For noting
25.3.26	**Proposed Adoption of CWB Charter**	For approval
	PEOPLE	
25.3.27	**Draft Minutes of HR Committee held on 19 September 2025**	For information
25.3.28	**HR Report**	For noting
25.3.29	**Employment Rights Bill**	For information
25.3.30	**Staff Survey on Sexual Harassment Presentation**	For information
25.3.31	**Staff Development Update**	For information
25.3.32	**HR AOCB** i) **National bargaining update**	 For information
	BOARD GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT	
25.3.33	**AOCB**	

25.3.34	**Date of next meetings** • Committees: 28 November 2025 • Board & AGM: 12 December 2025	

Annex iii)

Questionnaire Summary

7 Board Members Responded

Question 1: Are you aware of the College's Strategic Priorities and the Board's role in Developing and achieving them.

All Board Members answered yes with two Members noting the impact of the UHI Transformation Business Case.

Question 2: Do you understand your responsibilities under the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's College?

All Board members answered yes.

Question 3: Do you believe the Board has an appropriate balance of skills and experience?

Board Members generally noted yes but the need to strengthen was highlighted.

Question 4: Do you feel you have the knowledge and training to fulfil your role as a Board member?

Six of the seven Board Members noted yes with one saying no.

Question 5: How would you describe the culture of the Board?

Answers included:

- Very positive.
- Broadly both supportive, engaged, transparent and challenging.
- Under development.
- Open, honest and diligent.
- Inclusive, supportive and respectful.
- The UHI Argyll management have quite a strong influence on board discussions and decision making.
- In some respects, excellent. Colleagues feel confident to comment, challenge and support. In some respects, the information forthcoming from the Chair to the Board (eg in the Chair's Reports each quarter) lacks sufficient substance to support proper robust engagement from the rest of us. That said, some of the Chair's lack of content is understandable as the ramifications of the Outline Business Case were being worked through (privately, I think) over 2025.

Question 6: Does the Board have robust understanding of risk management and aware of emerging risks?

All Board members answered yes.

Question 7: Does the structure of the meetings enable constructive debate and timely decision making?

All Board members answered yes.

Question 8: Are Board members briefed with the information needed to make decisions?

Six of the seven Board Members answered yes with one noting not fully.

Question 9: Is attendance at the meetings adequate?

The answers to this question were mixed with the quoracy issued noted.

Question 10: What changes, if any, would you suggest to how the Board operates or makes decisions?

Answers included:

- More emphasis placed on induction, the goal posts are shifting, with more and more accountability being placed upon members.
- More transparency at times.
- Perhaps some greater openness from the Chair in her briefings, which could be protected at each meeting if necessary with a Confidential header. If bigger potential changes are being explored with UHI and other partners between board meetings (as I am sure they, quite rightly, must be), then it would be helpful to learn the broad contents and direction of those discussions as they happen rather than waiting till a Full Business Case is available for the board to scrutinise.
- There is a lot of information being prepared and then to be digested ahead of Board meetings in a relatively short space of time - I do not know a solution to this though.
- Recruit more Board members to avoid quoracy issues.

Question 11: Does the Chair provide effective leadership and encourage debate?

Board Members responded positively to this rating this 4.1 out of 5.

Question 12: How strong is your relationship with the Chair of the Board and do you feel you are supported?

Board Members responded positively to this rating this 3.7 out of 5.

Question 13: How effective do you thing the Board self-evaluation and action planning is?

Board Members responded fairly neutral to this rating this 2.9 out of 5.

Question 14: How well would you rate your induction to the Board?

Board Members responded fairly neutral to this rating this 3.1 out of 5.

Question 15: Do you have any other comments or areas for development?

Answers included:

- A structured induction would be useful to include a site visit of a facility.
- No.
- External tensions and events can impact on internal board matters. Need for greater awareness of impact of theseus.
- I haven't been through a cycle of Board self-evaluation or skills gap analysis yet as I'm relatively new to the Board.

Annex iv)

Assurance Levels

Strong	Controls satisfactory, no major weaknesses found, no or only minor recommendations identified.
Substantial	Controls largely satisfactory although some weaknesses identified, recommendations for improvement made.
Weak	Controls unsatisfactory and major systems weaknesses identified that require to be addressed immediately.
No	No or very limited controls in place leaving the system open to significant error or abuse, recommendations made require to be implemented immediately.

Recommendation Priorities

Priority	**Classification**
1 (High)	Weakness that we consider needs to be brought to the attention of the Board and addressed by the College.
2 (Medium)	Significant issue or weakness/improvement which should be addressed by the Organisation as soon as possible.
3 (Low)	Minor issue or weakness/improvement reported where the Organisation may wish to consider our recommendation.