

REGIONAL BOARD

NOTE OF MEETING

Note of Meeting of the Regional Board of North East Scotland College held on Wednesday 17 June 2026 at 10:00am in G10 Boardroom, City Campus

Agenda Item	Present: Susan Elston, Regional Chair Leona McDermid, Vice Chair Jim Gifford, Vice Chair Iain Watt Mark Fotheringham Neil Cowie Ellie Zemani Sheena Ross Duncan Cockburn Caroline Laurenson Mickey Dugan Jim Douglas Present via Teams: Gerry Lawrie Averil Watt In Attendance: Stuart Thompson, Vice Principal, Finance & Resources Paul Smith, Assistant Principal Marketing & Communications (for Agenda Item 83-25/26) Duncan Abernethy, Assistant Principal Curriculum & Commercial Development (for Agenda Item 91-25/26) Lorraine Garden, Minute Secretary Karen Fraser, Acting Secretary to the Board Guest Attendees: David Archibald, Partner, Henderson Loggie (for Agenda Item 86-25/26) Viktorija Nikitina, SA Regional President AY2026/27 (as observer) Val Ustariz, SA Depute President AY2026/27 (as observer) Regional Chair S Elston welcomed all to the last meeting of the AY. New curriculum staff member J Douglas, together with observers V Nikitina and V Ustariz, were introduced.
74-25/26	Apologies for Absence (S Elston) Apologies were received in advance from S Lawrance, E MacIsaac, R McGregor, C Dempster, B Hutcheon, and E Rattray.
75-25/26	Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interest in Relation to Any Agenda Items (S Elston) J Gifford declared a potential conflict of interest by virtue of his position with Aberdeenshire Council. D Cockburn declared a potential conflict of interest by virtue of his position with RGU. L McDermid declared a potential conflict of interest by virtue of her position with Aberdeen Foyer.
76-25/26	Minute of the Previous Meeting (18/03/26) (S Elston) The Minute was approved as a true and accurate record.
77-25/26	Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting (18/03/26) (S Elston) Members noted the updates to the 8 Matters Arising captured in the shared report

	Reserved Matters for Decision
81-25/26	Financial and Capital Budget 2026-27 (incl. SFC funding allocation) (S Thompson)
82-25/26	ASET Update (S Thompson)
	Matter for Discussion
	Guest Attendee D Archibald left the Meeting at 11:18am
	Guest Attendee P Smith joined the Meeting at 11:18am
83-25/26	Graduations 2026 (P Smith) P Smith shared information pertaining to the planning currently in place for the 2026 graduation ceremonies. Highlighting L Hatherley's retirement in March 2026, it was noted that new event officer A Forsyth is due in-post from July 2026. Host Fiona Stalker was confirmed, together with guest speaker Johnny Brooks for the Aberdeen ceremonies. Fraserburgh's guest speaker is still to be finalised. Members were invited to approach P Smith regarding the opportunities to nominate fellows beyond 2026.
	Guest Attendee P Smith left the Meeting at 11:23am Comfort break 11:24am – 11:38am
	Reserved Matters for Discussion
84-25/26	Lesson Learned – verbal update (N Cowie)

*Items in red denote reserved/private matters

86-25/26	Strategic Risk Register (S Thompson)
87-25/26	Financial Budget 2025-26 Update (S Thompson)
88-25/26	Long-Term Financial Planning (S Thompson)

*Items in red denote reserved/private matters

	Matters for Information
89-25/26	Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (N Cowie) Having been presented to the C&Q Committee on 21/05/26, the results of the Survey for the AY2025/26 student cohorts were shared for information. This "good news story" was given prominence by N Cowie and S Elston expressed praise to all involved in effectuating the level of participation.
90-25/26	Strategic Plan: Sub-Strategy Priority Update (N Cowie) An overview of progress in relation to the College's strategic priorities was captured in the shared Paper. N Cowie reflected on the provision of the "golden thread" and further anticipated updates at the 27/01/27 Strategy Day.
92-25/26	Feedback on SEAP from SFC and QAA (N Cowie) N Cowie provided a verbal update on feedback received and expressed contentment with NESCol's position.
	Guest Attendee D Abernethy joined the Meeting at 12:37pm
91-25/26	HMIE MA Report (D Abernethy) Following the Inspection which took place 20-24/04/26, HMIE's draft report and the resulting Action Plan were shared for information. D Abernethy advised of the final report having been shared on HMIE's website as of 16/06/26 and noted 35 positives alongside 23 areas for improvement. In discussion, scoring not having resulted in "very good" was considered. In response, it was intimated that the report had the feeling of an honest representation and next steps are already in play. The need to potentially note the weakening of the local economy in the SRR in relation to Modern Apprenticeships being a source of income was put forward. In reply, there still being demand was noted, although the negative impact of a downturn was acknowledged. Difficulties associated with geography and sourcing skilled assessors were highlighted. Drawing discussion to a close, S Elston praised D Abernethy and the team.
	Guest Attendee D Abernethy left the Meeting at 12:49pm
93-25/26	Report by the Regional Chair (S Elston) S Elston spotlighted her busiest quarter to date in terms of key meetings and national negotiations. Members were informed of her undertakings of the role of interim chair of Colleges Scotland and beyond this, her role of chair of College Employers Scotland.
94-25/26	Report by the Principal (N Cowie) N Cowie drew attention to the list of national and regional awards won by the College, and to his inclusion of a summation of Aberdeenshire Council's Accounts Commission Report. The purpose of the visit from SFC's outgoing CEO Francesca Osowska was queried.
	Reserved Matter for Information
97-25/26	Credit Activity Update and Forecast (N Cowie)

95-25/26	Report by Committee Chairs The report by the Committee Chairs was noted for information. S Elston summarised content on behalf of the HR and the C&Q Committees. S Ross confirmed much of the F&R Committee Agenda had featured in today's discussions. S Thompson briefly updated members on the action relating to Investment Zone funding. J Gifford itemised A&R Committee's key business and action points. It was noted that feedback on ASET's Risk Register due to be shared with ASET's General Manager remains outstanding.
	Reserved Matter for Information Opportunities Register (S Thompson)
96-25/26	
98-25/26	Any Other Business Recognising this being M Dugan's last meeting, thanks were expressed to him and well wishes passed on. Attention was drawn to the planned Regional Board event scheduled for Wednesday 02/09/26, with final details to be shared in due course.
99-25/26	Summation of Actions and Date of Next Meeting K Fraser summarised the recorded actions and decisions, and confirmed the next Regional Board Meeting as Thursday 17 September 2026 at 9:30am, taking place at City Campus.
	NESCol staff (with the exception of Acting Secretary to the Board), SA Member and observers left the Meeting at 1:10pm
	Private Reserved Matter for Information
100-25/26	Progress Update on Principal's Performance Management Objectives (S Elston)

*Items in red denote reserved/private matters

	Meeting ended at 1:25pm

Action from the Regional Board Meeting of 17 June 2026			
Agenda Item	Action	Responsible Person	Deadline
88-25/26	Long-Term Financial Planning:		
100-25/26	Progress Update on Principal's Performance Management Objectives:		

Signed: S Elston, Regional Board Chair

Dated: 17.09.26