**Minute: NCL Resources and General Purposes Committee (RGP)**

**15.00 on 24 February 2025 at Cumbernauld and via Zoom**

Present: Keith Fulton (Chair), Christopher Moore

Apologies: David Alves

In attendance: Ann Baxter, Ronnie Gilmour, Ronnie Smith (from item 10), Elaine Turkington, Diane McGill, Penny Neish

1. **Chair’s welcome**

Keith Fulton (KF) opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, noting that Ronnie Smith (RS) was expected to join the meeting later. KF advised that the meeting was not quorate following the resignation of Derek Hamill from the RSB, coinciding with the absence of David Alves due to a business commitment. It was agreed that a new member would be sought to replace Derek Hamill in time for the next meeting. KF said that as the meeting was not quorate, any decisions the committee wanted to take would need to go the full Board for ratification.

**2. Apologies**

As noted above.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Ann Baxter (AB) noted her membership of the AMCOL Board.

**4. Minutes**

**Minutes of the RGP meeting of 18 November 2024**

 The minutes were agreed.

**5. Matters arising:**

There were no matters arising which were not included in the agenda.

**5.1 Update on BTO:**

KF reported that he had been in touch with Fraser Hopkins (FH) of BTO to find out if there had been any response from Burness Paul (BP) to the college’s request for a meeting with Galliford Try to try to move things forward. FH had advised that he had been attempting to secure such a response, but because of his counterpart at BP being on holiday, he had been unable to do this ahead of today’s RGP meeting. Previously, BP had noted that its client, Galliford Try, was continuing to try to reach agreement with its sub-contractors on a shared proposal that would then be put to the College. In turn, the College had asked what had encouraged Galliford Try to do this, given that it had been stated before that the sub-contractors were not of a mind to do this. While FH will continue to pursue Burness Paul, the current sist expires on Friday 28 February and KF has instructed FH to seek a further 3 month extension.

Redaction: Two paragraphs are redacted due to commercial sensitivity.

CM advised the RGP of the recent sudden death of Ciaran O’Neill, Academic Leader, who had provided legal advice to the college and the RGP in the earlier stages of the dispute with Burness Paul. CM said that Ciaran was a valued and respected colleague and his untimely death had been a shock to the college.

**5.2 AMCOL Nursery update**:

AB gave an update:

The last AMCOL Board meeting was held on 3 December 2024.

There has not yet been a follow-up visit following the value and condition survey of Meiklewood nursery.

**Service Level Agreement**. The college has been seeking to establish if an SLA existed between college and AMCOL.

Following discussion with Anderson Strathern, a review of the articles of association of AMCOL as adopted on 19 June 2008 was undertaken on behalf of New College Lanarkshire.

The key observations are redacted due to commercial sensitivity.

Following the Finance Committee in May 2024, the protocol for AMCOL Cash Transfers and SFC Cash Advances was agreed, namely that any AMCOL Cash Transfers over £500,000 required formal Finance Committee approval and Board notification, and any SFC Advance Funding required Finance Committee and Board notification. As presented at the September 2024 and November 2024 Finance Committees, the summary Cash Flow Projections indicated both an AMCOL Cash Transfer and an SFC Cash Advance to the College would be required by March 2025. Following ongoing reviews of the cash position this was still the case.

To this end the Finance Committee was asked to formally approve a request for the transfer of £2m from AMCOL no later than 3rd March 2025. On 3 February 2025 Celia Devine, Managing Director for AMCOL confirmed the funds transfer of £2 million from AMCOL to NCL.

KF remarked on the importance for the redrafting of the Articles of Association and the Service Level Agreement between NCL and AMCOL. He said that the current position is not sustainable.

Christopher Moore (CM) said that the college should act quickly as to date AMCOL has not initiated any revision of the documents. He commented that the college should take the lead and instruct its lawyers to draft alternative SLA and Articles of Association for consideration by the Board. (AMCOL reports direct to the Board not to the Principal and Executive Board).

AB advised that she has a meeting with Celia Devine in the coming days and will discuss the situation further.

***Action: NCL to instruct lawyers to draft alternative SLA and Articles of Association for the Board to consider***

**5.3 ICT Update**

In response to KF’s question as to whether Kirkintilloch and Broadwood figures were included in the update given to the last meeting of the RGP, Ronnie Gilmour (RG) assured KF that he had checked on this as requested and confirmed that both minor campuses’ figures were included.

**6. Cumbernauld campus nursery:**

AB advised the RGP that numbers are continuing to increase in all rooms. In terms of places, the 0 - 2, and 2 - 3 rooms are full and the 3 - 5 room is sitting at 73% at the moment. This will increase to 79% by Easter. Looking at the whole Nursery, 79% of places are filled and this will increase to 84% by April. There is a waiting list for both under 3 rooms. Children are continuing to move rooms, which is increasing occupancy in the 3 - 5 room and the Nursery will be able to offer places for the under 3 rooms on an ongoing basis. There are also children increasing their days and/or hours as they are now eligible for Council Funding, which will increase further in the term after Easter.

Occupancy comparative based on places

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Aug 23 | Jun 24 | Aug 24 | Oct 24 | Jan 25 |
| 0 - 2 | 83% | 97% | 97% | 100% | 100% |
| 2 - 3 | 56% | 91% | 97% | 100% | 100% |
| 3 - 5 | 32% | 49% | 54% | 57% | 73%\* |
| Whole Nursery | 40% | 59% | 63% | 68% | 79%\* |
| \*Increasing to 79% in term after Easter\*Increasing to 84% in term after EasterThese increases are due to children who have enrolled in the Nursery, have funding in place, but have an agreed start date between February and April 2025. |  |

**Full Year Provision:** The Nursery currently has 18 children requiring childcare over the full year. There is an increasing number of enquiries and applications from parents who will require full year provision both for Council Funded places, and private customers (working parents).

There will be 18 children attending the Nursery during the Easter break, with possibly a few more term time children whose parents will request some extra sessions during the holiday period.

Staff are confident that the nursery will grow given all the additional support provided by the college.

**Marketing:** The Nursery is working with the marketing department who have now completed the video which will showcase the Nursery. There are plans to use the video and images on the college website, social media platforms, flyers, posters, media and press releases, educational resources and out-of-home advertising. The Nursery is continuing to promote the services they offer via the Facebook page run by parents, and local community social media.

The video creates a soft introduction to the Nursery, highlighting the safe and happy environment on offer. Looking ahead, there are plans to produce supporting / complimentary videos. These will focus on specific aspects such as Forest Learning, STEM, Healthy Eating, or similar topics that showcase the key strengths of the Nursery. These videos will help further build the Nursery’s credibility and positive reputation.

[Cumbernauld kids..... - The Clan - NCL](https://nclan.interactgo.com/page/32614)

 KF welcomed AB’s update and commented on the good progress being made at Cumbernauld.

**7.1 College Registrar’s Report**

Elaine Turkington (ET) spoke to her paper and highlighted a number of points:

* **NCL Strategy 2030**

A detailed proposal for NCL Strategy 2030 was presented by the Executive Board to NCL members of the RSB on 3 February 2025.  The presentation highlighted external regional and community drivers, reviewed and updated the College’s purpose following a summary of progress made up to 2025, and proposed a relationship-led approach to college culture, recognising that each person may require a different approach to reach their full potential.

5 strategic pillars were proposed to ensure focus on:

* delivering close alignment to public, private and third sector need
* being a dynamic collaborator within the Region
* incorporating a clear social good focus and a drive for resource optimisation
* securing financial viability, reputational enhancement and a credible connection to Strategy 2025

Following approval from the Board, it was agreed that an internal College wide consultation exercise would take place during the months of February and March 2025, to run concurrently with external stakeholder engagement.  After a period of refinement to the proposal based upon feedback, the intention would then be to seek NCL Board members’ approval to the final Strategy 2030 document by no later than June 2025 and set a formal launch date of 1st September 2025.

* **Professional Services Review:** This is now complete.
* **CES (College Employers Scotland): Job evaluation** A joint communication has been issued by CES, UNISON and UNITE, essentially indicating that the project will be reinitiated. A revised workplan is in development.
* **National Bargaining Update – NJNC Central Committee**: ***Covid Circular***

It was agreed, at the December 2023 Central Committee, to re-negotiate *Circular 01/20 – COVID-19 – Guidance on Paid Leave for Lecturing and Support Staff* and that this would take place over an expedited timeframe as part of a Short Life Working Group (SLWG).   Discussions are still ongoing with regards to the content of a revised circular. The management side advised that their position remained and paid special leave will no longer apply for absent staff due to Covid.

* **Joint Negotiating Committee Update: JNC Academic**

Evaluation of Learning and Teaching

Management tabled a draft paper which was designed to reflect the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)’s requirements, now that QAA was replacing Education Scotland.  It was noted that peer observation in the classroom is what QAA is looking for.  Other colleges and universities carry this activity out currently and see the benefit of it, and therefore it was hoped that the introduction of this practice at NCL would be recognised as a positive way forward, providing professional support and empowering lecturing staff.

The trade union’s view was that the introduction of peer observation indicated that staffare not trusted to teach or reflect their own teaching practices.  They also expressed concerns that there would be no option to opt out of this activity.  It was agreed that further consultation would be required before the proposal could be put forward to lecturing staff the paper could not be put out to staff in its current form.

* **JNC Professional Services**

NCL is in the process of scheduling a JNC Professional Services meeting in response to requests from UNISON and Unite to have the recommencement of local meetings with NCL.  The JNC Professional Services was last convened on 30 March 2023.

* **Local Recognition and Procedure Agreement**

A new Recognition and Procedure Agreement between the Board of Management of NCL and UNISON Scotland Further Education Branch and Unite was formally signed off by all parties on 22 January 2025.

* **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Report**

Work is underway to enable publication by 30April 2025. This includes consultation with staff, students and trade unions to finalise NCL’s next cycle of equality outcomes for 2025-29.

**8. NCL Estates Update**

This paper was presented by Ronnie Gilmour. RG highlighted:

* **Procurement, Funding, and Finance**: In February 2025, Estates secured £159,600 through the SFC Emergency capital maintenance fund. This funding will be used to survey and repair fire doors across all campuses and complete fire door and fire stopping works in the Motherwell teaching block. The mid-year budget re-forecast is in preparation to ensure the delivery of maintenance and projects up to August 2025, working closely with Finance to monitor expenditure.
* **Academic Curriculum Plans (CDP)**: Estates have now priced all the works for all campuses requested by academic departments. Most requests involve standard minor upgrades and furniture refreshing, but a few projects have exceeded expectations in scope and cost, requiring further high-level clearance. The net costs for all CDP works requested are approximately £300,000.
* **Storm Éowyn in January** **2025:** Storm damage was limited by good preparation. No significant damage was sustained. Coatbridge Campus suffered minor damage to its roof which was promptly repaired.
* **Cumbernauld Campus**: experienced two closures during the period. The first was due to a hot and cold-water pressure issue caused by a faulty pump, which was replaced the following day. The second closure was due to a gas leak in a redundant gas meter. This issue was resolved within 24 hours and NCL is working with Scottish Gas Networks to remove the meter.
* **Baseline 2024:** Estates completed the Scottish Funding Council and Atkins Realis Baseline 2024 survey, which required comprehensive data on the estate. NCL was among the top four for responses, providing 96% of all requested data. KF asked if it would be possible for the Committee to see at least a summary of the data provided by the College. RG advised that, because of the way the survey had been conducted, it had not been possible to retain the data input. He added however, that institutions had been told that a copy of the details input would be made available to them. This was still to be received, however.

KF asked clarification of the slight increase in the college’s carbon footprint. RG advised that this was primarily due to new reporting aspects like fuel and business miles emissions. Unlike colleges which operate on a single site, staff at NCL move between campuses which accounts for the additional carbon emissions. However, the college remains optimistic that efforts to reduce energy and waste through centralised recycling centres will positively impact next year's results.

**9.1 ICT Update**

RG spoke to John Morrison’s paper and noted the following points**:**

* **Digital Inclusion Funding:**  Between August 2022 and July 2024 NCL used a total of £217,544 from this source of funding to provide Lapsafe lockers in the 3 main campuses and to purchase 234 laptops for use with the lockers. The project has been embraced by the students who are taking full advantage of the resources. Unfortunately, this funding is no longer available.
* **VOIP telephony:** the potential cyber security issues have been resolved and the college is anticipating the system going live in March/April.
* **Barrier Networks Cyber Risks Technical Assessment (CRTA)**: In November 2024 Barrier Networks conducted an independent Cyber Risks Technical Assessment (CRTA) of the College’s cyber security systems and processes. A copy of the report has been provided for information. The IT team will now work with Barrier to create an action plan to implement the recommendations as quickly as budget and resource allows.

KF commented on the work of Barrier Networks and suggested that this would be an effective cross-sector project. RG said that a professional review of ICT is imminent which will provide helpful external benchmarking as well as highlighting the importance of cyber protection and providing useful pointers.

**Windows 10 extended support issue:** KF asked if there was any further information on the situation with Microsoft on extending the life of Windows 10.RG said that Microsoft has agreed to extend its support at a cheaper cost: $1.00 per machine for one year in the first instance as opposed to the original cost of c$50 per machine for a shorter timeframe. RG said that NCL will continue to replace laptops as funding becomes available.

**9.2 Information systems and development**

RG spoke to Allan Forsyth’s paper.

* **New student funding system:** this is high priority. A suite of reports has been developed for the Student Funding team which enables them to track more effectively the status of all bursary applications and follow up with students who have not yet been made an award.
* **Staffing:** RG was pleased to advise the RGP that the University of the West of Scotland has awarded NCL’s Graduate Apprentice, Nadia Chinnery, Graduate Apprentice of the Year for the Software Development Degree. The award will be presented at the NCL Apprenticeship Awards dinner on 6 March.
* **Table of projects showing their progress:** KF and the RGP members welcomed this representation of the projects in hand and their respective status. It gave a helpful picture of the developments in hand and their proximity to completion.

**10. NCL Health and Safety Report**

ET spoke to Robert Curran’s paper:

There have been no significant incidents since the last report to the RGP. There are 2 on-going issues which the H&S team is working with the relevant departments to resolve.

**Legal compliance**:

* A new evacuation tag system has been introduced as a pilot in Motherwell to help ensure all areas of the building are safely evacuated in the event of an emergency.
* Fire lifts have now been installed at the Motherwell campus to significantly assist in the evacuation of individuals with disabilities during an emergency.

**Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee**: KF asked how the H,S and Wellbeing Committee related to the RGP in the light of the postponement of the scheduled Committee meeting. He was concerned that, as the Board committee with the remit for overseeing health, safety and wellbeing in the college, the H&S and Wellbeing Committee should meet prior to the RGP so that the RGP received the latest update. ET said she would ensure that this order of committee meetings was retained.

KF asked the RGP if he should be replaced on the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee by a newer Board member to increase their involvement with the college. CM said that KF’s experience in addition to his role as SIM brought enormous value to the H&S Committee.

***Action: ET to ensure the re-arranged Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee did not change the order of committee meetings such that the RGP did not receive the latest update.***

**11. Brand update**

The wealth of information contained in the Brand Dashboard was welcomed by the RGP; there was comment, however, on the colour scheme and the difficulty of reading the yellow text . ET said she would discuss this with the Brand team.

***Action: ET to discuss the change in text colouring with the Brand Team.***

**12. NCL College Update**

AB reported that:

* **Learning Well, NCL’s new digital learning platform,** was launched on 24 February with 91 students enrolled for the new degree in Business and Leadership. These new students would not have been able to join New College Lanarkshire  had it not been for this innovative development.
* **£1.3m** had been received from UWS as a result of the work of the Undergraduate School.
* **NCL’s success at the AHT** (Association of Hairdressers and Therapists) Competition at the Motherwell Campus. The college achieved outstanding success, being named Best College in Scotland.

**13. RSB and Assigned College update**

Ronnie Smith (RS) advised that the Scottish Government, SFC and the RSB will form the Lanarkshire Tripartite Group to take forward arrangements for the dissolution of the RSB at the end of July 2025. The Scottish Government’s lawyers are preparing an SSI (Scottish Statutory Instrument) which will take down the Lanarkshire Order. There will be a 54 day standstill period to allow for any objections to be raised in the Scottish Parliament but no objections are anticipated. It is a tight timetable but as far as Lanarkshire is concerned (plans to dissolve the Glasgow Regional Board and running in tandem), no major difficulties are anticipated. A preliminary meeting with SFC is scheduled to take place next week with the first Tripartite meeting set for the following week. The Board and its Committees will be kept updated on developments.

**14. Chair’s update**

**14.1** **College Asset Disposal – Ministerial letter:** KF said that while the letter from the Minister setting out the Scottish Government’s position was welcome, greater transparency was needed. There remained areas of uncertainty such as that around the use of the words ‘property’/’assets’, the timeline over when the £1m was permitted, and the 70/30 split to a ‘charitable purpose’. KF said that these points had been covered mostly in the College’s original response and that the RGP would welcome clarity on these aspects.

**14.2** In discussion KF was of the view that monies in the **ALF (Arms Length Fund)** would not automatically revert to the college in the case of the ALF being closed. As an independent organisation closing the ALF was not a college decision, neither could the college claim the funds in the ALF. With regard to the former, a decision on closure would be for the ALF Trustees to determine. On the latter and as previously, the College could apply to receive a financial award(s) from the ALF and it would be for the Trustees to decide the success or otherwise of this. KF’s view has been confirmed by legal advisers.

**15. Horizon scanning**

CM advised that the consultation phase of Strategy 2030 would get underway the following week. A number of sessions have been offered to staff who have shown a great deal of interest.

**General Committee Business**

**16. AOCB:** There was no AOCB

**17. Approval of publication of papers from this committee:**

* Agenda for RGP 24 February 2025
* Minutes of the meeting 18 November 2024
* Cumbernauld Nursery update
* Information Systems update
* College Registrar’s Update
* Healthy, Safety and Wellbeing update
* Brand Dashboard
* Ministerial letter

**18. Date of next meeting**: the next meeting of the RGP Committee will be on **Monday 19 May 2025 at 15.00 at Motherwell Campus and via Zoom.**