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

**15.00 on 14 November 2022 at Cumbernauld Campus and via Zoom**

Present: Keith Fulton (Chair), Kenny Anderson, Christopher Moore, Barbara Philliben

Apologies: Iain Clark, Michael McGlynn, Elaine Turkington

In attendance: Ann Baxter, Morag Ferguson, Matthew Smith, Ronnie Smith, Diane McGill, Penny Neish

1. **Chair’s welcome**

Keith Fulton (KF) opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

**2. Apologies**

As noted above.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Minutes**

**Draft Minutes of the RGP meeting of 12 September 2022**

The minutes were agreed.

**5. Matters arising**

**5.1 Update on the NCL VS Scheme**

Ann Baxter (AB) spoke to Elaine Turkington’s paper and said that the paper gave a concise summary of the progress of the VS scheme which had required the Budget Committee to meet on 5 separate occasions to achieve the outcomes recorded in the paper. Prior to notifying staff of the outcome, either a meeting or briefing paper was shared with all 3 Trade Unions. The number of staff leaving represents approximately 6% of the NCL workforce.

KF remarked on the pressure under which staff worked to achieve this outcome and commended their efforts.

KF reported to the RGP that he and Elaine Turkington (ET) had recently attended a meeting of College Employers Scotland (CES) where the issue of VS schemes arose in discussion. A small number of colleges were doubtful that further VS schemes would be possible in the future. Christopher Moore (CM) advised the RGP that there is still interest in NCL in VS should a further scheme be required. However, it would be on a much smaller scale and in response to staff interest in relevant areas and subject to affordability. The college is currently committed to the delivery of the curriculum and targets set out in the ROA for the current academic year, so any future scheme would follow a review of the curriculum for next and subsequent academic years.

**5.2 Nursery Review**

AB advised that the nursery review had commenced on 15 September and 3 meetings have taken place to date. The next meeting is scheduled for 7 December. Membership of the group includes leads from both Cumbernauld and Coatbridge campus nurseries, Executive Lead for the Nurseries, Estates and Academic Dept representation, Equality and Diversity Adviser, Trade Union representatives, NCL Students’ Association as well as external partners including the local authority.

A number of activities such as distribution of questions to current users of the nursery service have been undertaken.

Wylie and Bissett’s audit commenced on 21 September and their final report is awaited, however in their draft report the Cumbernauld nursery was shown to be operating at 42% capacity and the Coatbridge nursery at 91%, both are incurring losses.

Ronnie Smith (RS) asked what proportion of users are associated with the college. AB undertook to find out this information.

***Action: AB to find out the proportion of nursery users associated with NCL.***

RS advised that West College has also recently gone through a nursery review. Concerns around making changes to nursery provision does not necessarily come from staff or students but from politicians. NCL needs to remain alert to this. AB said that only 8 colleges still have nurseries, all of which operate differently, including: SLC, which leases out space for use by a private provider, Clyde College which has mixed provision, and Edinburgh College which has no college children but runs the nursery for the community. ***The following sentence has been redacted.***

Kenny Anderson (KA) asked about the relationship between AMCOL and NCL and suggested that the local authority is key to finding the solution. He sought confirmation from AB that North Lanarkshire Council is involved in the review. AB assured KA that NLC are party to the review. She advised that the NLC refers children to NCL nurseries where they have no capacity themselves but this is still not enough to plug the gap in income for NCL.

There was some concern about the condition of the Coatbridge building and the associated costs to refurbish or rebuild. It was agreed to wait for the conclusion of the review in January 2023 (on the agenda for the next RGP on 27 February 2023) before taking any decisions regarding nursery provision at NCL.

KF said that the RSB Board has ultimate responsibility for the nurseries. He said that the RGP used to receive health and safety reports on any accidents etc but now these are not regularly received and strongly recommended that these reports should be reinstated. RS added that the RSB needs a better link with AMCOL and that the restoration of this link should form part of the review’s conclusions. CM said that it would be useful to have agenda items on finance (Iain Clark) and on the nurseries (Celia Devine) and suggested that AB’s report on the nurseries could be the trigger for the inclusion of these agenda items.

RS asked if there were Articles of Association between NCL and AMCOL and whether the nurseries were on the NCL risk register.

***Action: AB to follow up regarding the Articles of Association and with MS on the NCL risk register.***

**5.3 Update on BTO**

KF spoke to his paper and advised the RGP that he had subsequently received an update from Fraser Hopkins (BTO).

***This section has been redacted due to commercial sensitivities.***

As the decision to proceed to legal debate, or not, is needed urgently, a Chairs’ Committee will be convened to consider KF’s recommendation agreed by the RGP.

This course of action was agreed.

**6. College Registrar’s update**

AB spoke to Elaine Turkington’s paper:

**Voluntary Severance**: see para 5.1 of this note.

**Professional Services review**: A proposal for the reorganisation of Professional Services functions was recently approved by the Executive Board, consulted upon with trade union colleagues, and then presented to Professional Services staff.

The purpose of the proposal is to develop and enhance the contribution of professional services teams to the delivery of NCL’s Strategy 2025, and will not result in any reduction of staff posts.

This proposal aims to modernise, improve and enhance the student journey at New College Lanarkshire by building on areas of strength, securing the benefits of new opportunities as they continue to emerge and ensuring the unique contributions of all services is fully maximised.

To assist in the discussions with staff, the following directorate groupings have been proposed:

* Finance, Funding and Procurement
* Student Wellbeing and Retention
* Library and Learning Technologies
* Estates
* Recruitment and Admissions
* IT Support Services
* Information Systems and Development
* Principal’s Office
* College Registrar’s Office
* Professional and Work-based Learning Directorate

Engagement with Professional Services staff is underway. The proposals will also be formally tabled at the JNC Professional Services meeting on 28November. Executive Board members will consider all feedback before confirming any amendments to the current proposals and subsequently communicating a final version and implementation steps

**College Employers Scotland:** EIS-FELA has initiated national dispute proceedings re staff side’s failure to respond to its pay claim. The staff side is not in a position to respond until the Scottish Government publishes its financial statement. EIS-FELA have acknowledged this situation and is waiting for a response after the budget is known. The EIS and Professional Services unions current pay claims, excluding any costs in relation to the change to terms and conditions being sought by Unison, are far in excess of the £9.6m the Scottish Government has allocated to the sector.

Circular STL 02/21: This Circular implements the agreed resolution to the national dispute raised by the EIS-FELA regarding the use of instructors and other roles instead of lecturers.

UNISON issued an FOI request on 4th November 2022 to colleges, including NCL, in relation their outstanding dispute on Circular STL 02/21. The support staff dispute was originally raised with CES in December 2021 regarding both the agreement of Circular 02/21 as well as the approach contained therein for implementation of this circular. The Professional Services unions believe that this situation could affect their members as well as members of EIS-FELA. The legal advice has confirmed that Circular STL 02/21 is a legally binding document between the two signatory parties and cannot be unilaterally changed by either signatory party. UNISON and the other support staff trade unions are not signatories to the document.

UNISON has still to comment on this matter and the CES team will be following up with them again with a view to closing down the dispute. In the interim, Circular STL 02/21 remains in place and colleges have been advised by CES to continue to implement the Circular if required. Responses to the FOI request are due in by 2nd December 2022.

**JNC Academic:** Section meetings have taken place with Construction/Interim Assistant Principal/Deputy Principal.

**JNC Professional Services:** As previously advised review has commenced for professional services.

**7. NCL Estates Update:**

Matthew Smith (MS) introduced his paper. He advised the RGP that the new Head of Estates started with the NCL on 1 October 2022. MS will invite him to the next meeting of the RGP.

MS summarised recent Estates activity campus by campus:

* **Coatbridge Campus**: replacement of 900 smoke detectors was completed over the October break, as was carpeting to various classrooms and offices. The Refectory lift was refurbished at the beginning of November.
* **Cumbernauld Campus**: Estates is seeking a second opinion on repairs to the roof and a further report carried out in October determined pull out test results were good and that roofing sheets were in reasonable condition. Feedback from the consultant was they may not view things quite as badly as Atkins had previously suggested. Awaiting final report for confirmation.
* **Motherwell Campus**: The cladding issue is on-going (see item 5.3 of this note).

Heating and Ventilation Teaching Block: Further surveys carried out to provide options for consideration due to latent defects: Estates will monitor and react to anomalies in comfort levels during the winter months

Option 1 – Replace existing windows with openable windows (£1m plus 6 months)

Option 2 – Local Mechanical Ventilation (£40‐£75K per room {Cost Prohibitive)

Option 3 – Centralised Mechanical Ventilation (Circa £1.5m plus 6 to 8 Month Decant)

* **Kirkintilloch Campus**: Asset valuation – MS reported that he is still working on the car park exchange with East Dumbarton Council. He has been advised that the car park situation will make no difference to the valuation.
* **Broadwood Campus**: A ventilation survey has been carried out in order to provide assurance that ventilation is adequate in all areas There has been no outcome from discussions with venue management regarding maintenance obligations ‐ as a result Estates will now look to progress a ventilation validation survey.

**8. ICT Update:**

**Update on the progress of the VHPM fund projects**: The predicted cost for the upgrade of the Wi‐Fi network infrastructure has increased from the original estimate of £150k to £268k (exc. VAT). [Expenditure over £200k would make this project a procurement issue.] There are several reasons for this increase in cost. The initial quote of £150k was based on replacing the existing Wi‐Fi infrastructure on a like‐for‐like basis. However, to ensure that the new, upgraded network is adequate for college needs, both now and in the future, the quantity of wireless access points in the design has been increased from 210 to 300. This has also resulted in an increase in the number of licences and supporting security devices required. In addition, as all the major equipment manufacturers in this space are US based companies they quote prices in US dollars.

Putting the project for the replacement of the unmanaged switches on hold and diverting those funds (£60k), coupled with the savings made from the procurement of the classroom A/V displays (£40,500), Estates is confident the increase in the estimated cost can still be met.    A suitable procurement framework for this project has been identified and work on the tender documentation is underway.

A site survey, to be included as part of the tender document, has been commissioned and is due to take place at the end of the month. The procurement exercise is on course to be completed in January 23 and the plans for the installation schedule will be completed after the contract has been awarded. Given the level of disruption required it is likely that the majority of the installation work will need to take place during the summer break. However, once the contract has been awarded, Estates will explore the possibility of carrying out some of the work during the Easter break.

MS also advised that he has recently met with JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee**)** and is confident that NCL could benefit from working with them and will arrange regular meetings.

KF thanked MS for his clear and helpful report. KA said that keeping up to date with IT is a challenge for community organisations for hybrid activities and suggested that the college may want to look into how to become involved with other organisations on this. MS agreed to look into it. MS will also work with SFC to maximise the use and flexibility of funding where possible He advised that Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire has already been offered the use of space on 2 campuses. This was welcomed by KA.

Pen testing: NCL and SLC are working on this together as suggested at the last meeting of the RGP.

**9.** **Health and Safety update**

**Management system:** The work on improving the health and safety management systems has continued. The new policies are being implemented.

The new permit to work system is in place across the campuses. The list of approved contractors has been reviewed; 30 contractors have been advised of their requirement to be CHAS accredited (or equivalent).

The work on the e-learning induction programme continues. The one for staff one is in process and should be finished in the coming weeks. The versions for students, contractors and visitors will follow.

A number of policies are being reviewed including violence and aggression, excursions and driving on company business.

A review is currently underway in Motherwell and Cumbernauld to move the majority of supported learners to the ground floor. This follows an increase in the number of learners with level 6 personal emergency evacuation support plans.

**Incident at Fir Trees Nursery:** investigations are on-going. AMCOL is leading on this.

**NCL Joint Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee:** The NCL Joint HS&W Committee met again on 8 September. The next meeting is scheduled for 22 November. Two of the Unison H&S Representatives have now left the college. Unison has been actively recruiting to find replacements and to date have identified one who is currently undergoing training for this new role.

**Cladding at Motherwell Campus:** Both Building Control and Scotland Fire & Rescue have confirmed in writing that the scaffold can be removed from everywhere where netting is in place. MS is working on the options relating to the disposal of the scaffolding and will report back to the RGP. There will continue to be safety inspections of the netting.

**Air Quality:** complaints have slowed down since the last report. Carbon dioxide has been monitored closely alongside the use of the passivents system (natural ventilation systems). Now that the new Head of Estates has joined NCL further remedial actions can be investigated.

**10. Brand update**

A tendering exercise is currently underway to find a supplier to rebuild the NCL website. Phase one will be for the external facing element, ie courses, recruitment, etc and phase 2 will be the internal element. It is planned to split the cost over 2 financial years.

**11. NCL College update**

**NCL Graduation** is set to take place on Friday 18 November. There will be 2 ceremonies, one at 12 noon and one at 17.00. 3 new Fellows of NCL will be inducted.

**Sports Scotland** has agreed to fund NCL to appoint an active sports co-ordinator. The appointment will be for a period of 3 years from August 2023. The aim of the appointment is to achieve active campus staff and students without the need to have a dedicated sports department. CM said that NCL would be happy to work with SLC on this and NCL would support an SLC application should they wish to make one.

**12. RSB and Assigned College update**

RS reported that there had been a meeting with SFC and SLC at the end of last month which had been very constructive. A note of the meeting will be circulated once it has been agreed by SFC. The discussion concluded that the best deliverable solution at the current time was to proceed with SFC’s proposed de-assignment of SLC. RS will continue to press for progress on dissolution by August 2023. SFC will restore the Transition Group which included representatives from the Scottish Government.

One outstanding concern is how SFC will deal with SLC once de-assigned. There is the potential that if SLC also becomes a regional college the situation in Lanarkshire could become difficult and competitive. The current NCL/SLC staff work well together, as demonstrated by the joint presentation given at the meeting with SFC, and collaborate to the benefit of the students of both colleges. Any changes to this approach would be a backward and unwelcome move. In the meantime, NCL will continue to explore partnerships with SLC and UWS where possible.

While acknowledging that there is no more money, the new Director of Funding seems collaborative and prepared to work constructively with NCL.

**13. Chair’s update**

KF said in addition to his work with BTO on the Motherwell cladding issue, he had attended the meeting with SFC referred to in para 12 of this note, and meetings of CES as he had reported earlier in the meeting.

**14. Horizon scanning**

CM said there was nothing further to report to the RGP at this time other than the next phase of the dissolution of the RSB as discussed at the meeting with SFC (note 12 of this note) and the invitation issued to SFC to attend a meeting of the college’s Executive Board to help senior staff understand from SFC the real difficulties that the sector is facing.

**General Committee Business**

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

• Agenda for RGP 14 November 2022

• Minutes of the meetings 12 September 2022

• NCL Organisational Development Update

• Brand and Comms Dashboard

**16. AOB**

KF sought the views of the RGP on SLC becoming members of this committee in line with their membership of the other 3 RSB committees. After a short discussion and reflecting on the agenda for the current meeting which was all NCL/Region business, it was agreed to share meeting agendas with SLC in advance and discuss with them whether they saw a need to attend. The RGP agreed it was important to engage with SLC where there is shared interest on an issue by issue basis rather than a blanket invitation to attend when they may have no interest in the issues to be considered.

**17.** Date of next meeting: the next meeting of the RGP Committee will be on **Monday 27 February 2023** at 15.00 at Cumbernauld Campus and via Zoom.

*.*