

**LANARKSHIRE REGIONAL STRATEGIC BOARD MEETING**

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| **DATE** | 17 March 2025 |
| **TITLE OF REPORT** | Principal’s Update  |
| **REFERENCE**  |  |
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| **PURPOSE:** | To provide members with information not included on the Board of Management meeting agenda.  |
| **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/ DECISIONS:**  | Members are recommended to:* note that the voluntary severance scheme will have now closed;
* note that the Scottish Funding Council visited the College in preparation for dissolution; and
* note the wider sector updates including the post school funding reform.
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| **RISK**  | * That the College does not keep up with sector reform and pace of change is too slow impacting on future business.
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| **RELEVANT STRATEGIC AIM:** | * Successful Students
* Highest Quality Education and Support
* Sustainable Behaviours
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| **SUMMARY OF REPORT:** | * The Voluntary Severance Scheme and Consultation closed on 28 February, and work is now ongoing to finalise VS applications and produce the final consultation document which will consider feedback received.
* The SFC have visited the College in preparation for dissolution. It has also been announced that all funding will now be consolidated into the SFC, this includes apprenticeship funding.
* Colleges Scotland are seeking to change governance arrangements at their organisation.
* It is expected that the increase in National Insurance Contributions may be partially funded.
* The national job evaluation for support staff has progressed with agreement between Trade Unions and employers that the 2018 data is no longer accurate.
* Staff views are being considered on the new strategic aims.
* Teams have led on the creation of two new partnerships, the launch of the Civil Engineering Academy and Skillsminer.
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1. **INTRODUCTION**
	1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with information not included on the agenda of the Board Meeting scheduled for 4 March 2025
2. **VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE UPDATE**
	1. The Voluntary Severance Scheme and accompanying Consultation is closing on 28 February 2025. The Voluntary Severance Committee is in the process of finalising voluntary severance applications as well as preparing the final Consultation paper. Further information on the outcome of the voluntary severance and college structures will be brought to the next round of committee meetings.
	2. This has been a challenging time for all staff and managers, as it marks the first time a consultation has been carried out at the College. A lessons learned exercise will be conducted, and if this process needs to be repeated in the future, the appropriate modifications will be made.
3. **SCOTTISH FUNDING COUNCIL (SFC)**
	1. For the first time since regionalisation a team from SFC visited South Lanarkshire College on 29 January 2025 to learn more about the work of the College. Key areas of focus were governance, the new strategic priorities, an overview of the SLC and strategic areas of focus, current challenges including financial as well as potential opportunities and of course a focus on the great work taking place across the organisation and the wider community.

* 1. In attendance were, Jacqui Brasted, the Interim Director of Access, Learning and Outcomes, Elizabeth Shevlin, Deputy Director of Assurance and Outcomes and Mairi Mitchell, Senior Policy Officer and Linda Macleod Assistant Director. Linda and Mairi are now the new points of contact for Lanarkshire and Glasgow post dissolution. At the meeting it was confirmed that this was expected to be in place by August 2025.
	2. The SFC announced in January 2025 as part of their approach to simplifying the post school funding landscape in Scotland that all post school funding will be consolidated within the SFC and all student support funding (including further education support) within the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS). This change will see SFC taking responsibility from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to deliver all apprenticeships and national training programmes.
	3. The Tertiary Education Bill was published on 6 February 2025 and if passed, then these changes are expected to come into effect by Autumn 2026.
1. **COLLEGES SCOTLAND (CS)**
	1. New governance arrangements are being put in place at College Scotland. This also includes a “Council of Members” consisting of Principals and Chairs where they can work more autonomously to shape the college sector. More information is to follow shortly and terms of reference for this are being drafted.
	2. The Parliamentary Reception is being held on Tuesday, 29 April 2025 and SLC will be hosting a stand showcasing the work being done in heatpump training across Scotland.
	3. At the time of writing CS have indicated that imminent guidance on employer National Insurance contributions is about to be received, with confirmation anticipated that the Scottish Government would fund 60% of the increase. They will continue to lobby Westminster for the remaining 40% estimated by Scottish Government as a £3.5million short fall.
	4. CS are also setting up a series of industry roundtables to allow Principals and Chairs to have opportunities to network with strategic decision makers driving Scotland’s economic and industrial agenda.
2. **COLLEGE EMPLOYERS SCOTLAND** **(CES)**
	1. Progress appears to have been made on the national job evaluation between Support Staff Trade Unions and Employers. On 17 February 2025 there was a joint announcement to state that the previous evaluation and scoring from 2018 cannot be considered reliable, therefore, employers and trade unions are now exploring options for current data collection and analysis to ensure the integrity of the project.
	2. Clarification was also provided that while it is understood that Job Evaluation does not equate to the harmonisation of pay for jobs across different employers, work is being undertaken in partnership to aid meaningful negotiations on the appropriate application of Job Evaluation outcomes to pay structures. The full announcement can be found here: [Latest News](https://njncscotlandscolleges.ac.uk/job-evaluation/latest-news/)
3. **DRAFT STRATEGY**
	1. The Executive Team have been meeting with teams across the College to gather feedback on the draft strategic aims. It is important that staff’s views are taken into account as the College continues on this journey of transformation and change. In addition, stakeholders and employers are also being encouraged to feedback their views.
4. **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**
	1. The Principal has engaged in the following activities:
		1. attended the College Principals’ Group with College Scotland;
		2. attended College Employers Scotland meeting;
		3. Jacqui Brasted, the Interim Director for Access, Learning and Outcomes, Keith Coyne, Assistant Director, Elizabeth Shevlin, Deputy Director of Assurance and Outcomes and Mairi Mitchell, Senior Policy Officer attended the College on 29 January 2025 and met with the Executive Team.
		4. attended the quarterly meeting with Paul Manning, CEO of South Lanarkshire Council, Alison Brown Head of Enterprise and Sustainable Development and Douglas Hashagen, Employability Manager;
		5. hosted Dr Graeme Jackson, the Interim CEO of Colleges Scotland;
		6. met with Professor Soumen, Director of Health and Social Care at South Lanarkshire Council to ascertain how we could work together to tackle Health and Social Care challenges with further work now in train with the Health and Social Care Team at the College; and
		7. met with Martin McKay CEO of Clyde Gateway to explore collaborative opportunities.
5. **GOOD NEWS**
	1. ***The CECA Academy***
	2. The College was delighted to launch the CECA (Civil Engineering Contractors Association) Academy on 19 February 2025 alongside a range of CECA members, tier 1 construction companies, Monica Lennon MSP and Chair of the Construction Skills Party as well as delegates from the Scottish Funding Council.
	3. SLC is the fourth college to launch a CECA academy, and this initiative is aimed at meeting essential skills shortages in the civil engineering sector. This transformative initiative for young people is the start of their journey in the construction industry and lengthy careers and opportunities await.
	4. James Jamison, Curriculum Manager for the Building Service Engineering area has led on this and has been supported by MacKenzie Construction, who have recently moved into the Technology Park.
	5. ***SkillsMiner Partnership***
	6. The College has teamed up with Skillsminer, the UK’s leading AI-driven skills platform, to revolutionise how students, job seekers, and employers connect. This partnership ensures education aligns with job market demands, addressing skill shortages in key sectors.
	7. By integrating Skillsminer’s data insights, the College can analyse qualification trends and emerging job opportunities, helping learners identify transferable skills and career paths. This initiative enhances employability, workforce development, and economic growth***.*** This could be a sector wide initiative and thank you to Chris Sumner for leading on this. More information will be shared with you as the project progresses.
6. **EQUALITIES**
	1. There are no new matters for people with protected characteristics or from areas of multiple deprivation which arise from consideration of the report.
7. **RISK**
	1. That the College does not keep up with sector reform and pace of change is too slow impacting on future business.
8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**
	1. Members are recommended to:
		1. note that the voluntary severance scheme will have now closed;
		2. note that the Scottish Funding Council visited the College in preparation for dissolution; and
		3. note the wider sector updates including the post school funding reform.