

Full Governing Body Committee meeting 25th October 2011, Committee Room, Ashington

	<p>Present: L Ions (Chair), D Moon, B Bedson, T Shirley, C Smith, R Casson, P Down, C Todd, P Langton</p> <p>In attendance: K Ramsey, K Allan, D Simpkin (note taker),</p> <p>In attendance for item 04 only: Jackie Fisher and Esme Winch, NCG</p>	
FGB/25Oct11/01	<p>Confirmation of eligibility and quorum</p> <p>The meeting was quorate. There were no eligibility issues.</p>	
FGB/25Oct11/02	<p>Apologies were received from:</p> <p>S Barlow, M Rossi, L Rickerby</p>	
FGB/25Oct11/03	<p>Discussion re merger with NCG</p> <p>J Fisher gave a verbal update on work undertaken over the summer in response to emerging estates issues at Northumberland College and her Boards request for a risk mitigation plan as part of the merger. She circulated a paper outlining proposals to mitigate risk whilst providing investment in learning in Northumberland, which had been recently agreed by the NCG Board . Jackie explained that NCG had undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An in-depth analysis of current provision using learner data and success rate reports • An analysis of current competitor activity • A curriculum planning workshop, with managers from Northumberland College • A full review of health and safety issues • Financial modelling of the options for provision in Northumberland • Research into current market values for the sites at Ashington and Kirkley Hall. <p>The way forward agreed by the NCG Board was an incremental solution based around sites in Ashington and Cramlington, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the merger between Northumberland College and NCG • Repayment of a loan • Sale of the Kirkley Hall site in order to invest in agricultural training facilities • Investment in Ashington to improve the campus and remove health & safety issues 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolition of construction/engineering workshops at Ashington to address major asbestos risks 	

- Purchase of a new Cramlington site and the establishment of construction/engineering workshops
- Transfer of non-farm based Kirkley Hall provision to Ashington and/or Cramlington sites.
- Establishment of units to deliver equine and agricultural provision attached to a farm or farms in Northumberland

This would in her view enable Northumberland College to deliver a modern and relevant curriculum plan aimed at consolidating and then extending provision

In relation to Land Based Provision at **Kirkley Hall**, Jackie explained that:

- Current provision consists of 440 full time equivalent learners with income of under £2m studying a range of land based subjects. Current provision is not of good quality and is significantly smaller than that in the top league of land based colleges as confirmed by a recent independent review commissioned by both Colleges undertaken by Chris Moody , Chief executive of Landex
- It may be possible to grow land based provision if very significant capital were injected but without SFA capital support for this the site is not viable
- Data analysis has shown that very few Northumberland learners travel to out of county provision and that current learners travel from locations evenly distributed across the County. 75% of learners are studying small animal care, horticulture, environmental conservation, and sport; these subjects can be delivered in a general FE college
- NCG concluded that a suitable building in Ashington or Cramlington could house a specialist rural unit for the following subjects:
 - Animal care and veterinary, levels 1-6
 - Horticulture (including arboriculture), levels 1-6
 - Environmental conservation, levels 1-3
- An equine and agricultural unit would need to accommodate around 100 learners; the best location would be attached to working farms with a Real Working Environment and classroom block in each location

With regards to **health & safety**, Jackie identified required expenditure at the Ashington site, relating to asbestos management; fixed wire testing; water hygiene control; and M&E infrastructure. The costs amounted to £2.412m over three financial years.

NCG would propose to relocate teaching at Kirkley Hall from unsuitable spaces to the Hall, and to close the site for teaching activity from 2012/13. Resulting work at Kirkley Hall was costed at £468k, falling in 2011/12.

Other Northumberland College sites: NCG have concluded that:

- Prudhoe is in good condition and would continue

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alnwick is in poor condition and would close • Berwick is in good condition and would continue and may expand. <p>NCG proposed capital investment of £16.679m between 2012 and 2016 (£12.3m in the first year of that period), to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remedial works and minor improvements to Ashington • Acquisition of freehold land at Cramlington • Capital cost of construction and engineering facility • Capital cost of new agricultural facility • IT equipment and routine capital <p>The model assumes that the Kirkley Hall site is sold in 2016, and that capital costs would be financed by a loan of £11.9m over a term of ten years.</p> <p>In conclusion, J Fisher recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretary of State be asked to approve the merger as soon as possible, with the merger taking effect on 1st September 2012. • In the interim period a management contract should be put in place between NCG and Northumberland College . <p>Discussion followed and T Shirley asked for the reasoning behind siting a new facility in Cramlington. J Fisher replied that following their research this was the optimal location to attract students; however the cost of transferring the whole of the Ashington campus to Cramlington was prohibitive as the Ashington site would be unlikely to find a buyer in the current market.</p> <p>J Fisher confirmed that a suitable site had been identified at Cramlington and a Construction and Engineering Facility could be operational by January 2013.</p> <p>B Bedson and D Moon asked about succession planning for the CEO of NCG and J Fisher responded that there were several potential successors within NCG.</p> <p>J Fisher and E Winch left the meeting at this point.</p>	
FGB/25Oct11/04	Merger Update Report (confidential item)	
FGB/25Oct11/05	<p>Policy on Observation of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment</p> <p>C Todd introduced this policy, previously circulated as Appendix 10. Linda Ions referred to a letter she had received from UCU branch officials stating that in their view consultation on the policy was incomplete and referring to amendments proposed by UCU.</p> <p>C Todd outlined the consultation that had taken place; explained why he believed that the planned changes were in the best interests of the College and its learners and did not agree to the amendments proposed by UCU; and that there was no requirement to have formal agreement of the policy with trade unions.</p>	

	Following discussion, the Corporation approved the policy and the Chair was asked to respond to UCU accordingly.	
FGB/25Oct11/06	Date and time of next meeting It was agreed to defer the remaining agenda items to an additional meeting, subsequently confirmed as Wednesday 2 nd November at 5.30pm	