Present: A Muirhead, Chairman, Motherwell College, K Fulton, Chairman, Cumbernauld College, M Cook, Vice-Chair, Cumbernauld College, R Smith, Vice-Chair, Motherwell College, M McGuire, Principal and Chief Executive, Motherwell College, H Urquhart, Principal (Acting), Cumbernauld College, M Allison, Teaching staff representative, Cumbernauld College, A Fisher, Support staff representative, Cumbernauld College and J Morrison, Support staff representative, Motherwell College.

In-attendance: J Kemp, Scottish Funding Council, S Drysdale, Outcome Agreement Manager, Scottish Funding Council, A Hughes, Project Manager, R Mullin, Scottish Government and A M Baillie, Secretary to the Committee.

1 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from L McTavish, Regional Lead, A Morgan, Vice-Chair, Cumbernauld College, J Chim, Project Co-ordinator, J Fitzgerald, Student representative, Cumbernauld College.

2 Declarations of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minute of previous meeting held on 17 June 2013

The Minute of the meeting held on 17 June 2013 was approved.

4 Matters arising

All matters arising had been actioned by the appropriate member of the Committee.

A Muirhead advised members that he would progress to agenda item 7, Chairs’ report, at this point of the meeting.

7 Chair’s Briefing

A Muirhead reported on a letter he had received from J Gray, Chair, Coatbridge College, to advise that, at a special meeting of the Coatbridge College Board of Management, a decision had been taken to seek to enter the process and merge by 01 April 2014. A Muirhead circulated a copy of the letter, together with his response, and advised that a communication had been relayed to Coatbridge that a discussion would be required with the Boards of Cumbernauld and Motherwell Colleges and advised that this had been carried out, in part. A Muirhead reassured the Committee there would be no disruption to the excellent progress which had been made to date with the merger process and that all arrangements implemented would not be undone.

R Mullin advised that he had attended part of the meeting of the Coatbridge Board and reported that the Board’s decision to rejoin the merger process had been unanimous. R Mullin also reported on discussions he had with L McTavish, Regional Lead, and reiterated A Muirhead’s statement that none of the work undertaken to date would be disrupted.
Chair’s Briefing contd

A lengthy and robust discussion followed at which various members of the Committee sought reassurance from the Funding Council and Government representatives that the inclusion of Coatbridge College would not disrupt the current merger process and that the members representing Coatbridge College on the Merger Committee would be proactive in advancing the 3-way college merger.

A Muirhead suggested that, in order to move forward, members would be invited to vote, by a show of hands, to ascertain whether Coatbridge College would re-join the merger process, in principle, and subject to a satisfactory outcome from the Due Diligence exercise and Cultural survey. Following the voting process, the majority of members agreed to the involvement of Coatbridge College. A Muirhead highlighted to the Committee that the correct decision had been taken and would be in the best interests to Lanarkshire for the future.

Cultural Review Report

Members noted and welcomed the report produced by R Mullin.

Legislation update

R Mullin tabled a summary paper and advised that the paper had been presented to the Coatbridge Board and he wished members of the Merger Committee to have sight of the paper also.

R Mullin reported on the legislation and explained the differences associated with “regional” colleges and “assigned” colleges and also advised that the New College Lanarkshire could be assigned to a Regional Strategic Body. R Mullin advised that there would be a consultation exercise undertaken prior to any decisions being implemented with regard to the legislation.

Staffing Structure (draft)

M McGuire tabled a draft paper presenting a proposed timescale for the implementation of a new senior structure and advised that the proposal would now be to progress with a 3-college structure as soon as possible. M McGuire advised that he would liaise with M Cook and A Muirhead, in the first instance, to progress a new draft senior structure prior to the commencement of a consultation process with staff. M Cook highlighted the importance of ensuring that staff are fully engaged in order for the process to move forward successfully.

Action: M McGuire to produce a draft 3-college senior structure and liaise with M Cook and A Muirhead prior to the consultation process progressing.

Voluntary Severance Scheme (draft)

A Hughes referred to the draft scheme, a copy of which had been circulated to members, and advised that he had liaised with M Cook in order to progress the draft VS scheme and sought comments from members. J Kemp highlighted that, in moving forward, it would be beneficial to have discussions with Coatbridge, in the near future, to involve them in the process and M McGuire advised that the same VS scheme should be offered to staff, across the 3 Colleges, simultaneously.

M McGuire sought the views from the staff representatives and all agreed that the best way to progress would be to remain with the current timescale for the VS scheme and also the proposed timeline for consultation on the draft structure.

M Cook sought clarification on the payback period, as required by the Funding Council, and J Kemp confirmed that the period would be one year.

A Muirhead advised that timing is crucial in moving forward and it was agreed that A Muirhead, K Fulton, M Cook, M McGuire and H Urquhart would meet, following tonight’s meeting, to agree how communications are progressed.

Action: M McGuire to progress a draft VS scheme to be agreed and issued to all 3 colleges in due course.
New Brand

H Urquhart advised that the next meeting of the Communications works stream would discuss and agree how to progress with the launch of the new brand for the New College Lanarkshire and the Committee would be advised on the decision in due course.

H Urquhart advised that the Cultural Review full report, produced by R Mullin, would be circulated to all staff and also placed on the website. R Mullin commented that, due to developments from tonight's meeting, the preference would be to put on hold the publicising of the document to allow R Mullin the opportunity to speak with Coatbridge regarding undertaking a survey with their staff as soon as possible and members agreed.

Action: H Urquhart to seek agreement at the next meeting of the Communications work stream regarding the launch of the new brand

Action: R Mullin to liaise with Coatbridge and arrange to undertake a cultural survey with staff

Communications update

H Urquhart reported on the negative press which had appeared recently regarding the misinformed closure of Cumbernauld College, following which, a communication had been circulated to advise that Cumbernauld would be operating as usual.

M Allison highlighted that staff in Cumbernauld had concerns that the negative press could have a detrimental effect on the number of students who would apply to Cumbernauld in the future.

H Urquhart advised that a joint meeting had taken place with the Communications and Information Systems work stream groups, which had proved to be very positive, and as a result there would be additional joint meetings arranged for the future.

H Urquhart advised that there would be an Information Sharing Day held at Cumbernauld College on 19 August 2013 for staff at both Cumbernauld and Motherwell.

H Urquhart advised that meetings had progressed with regard to the signage to be erected on the buildings and a planning application had been agreed and would be submitted the Council in due course.

H Urquhart reported that, to date, three Newsletters had been issued.

M McGuire advised that A Hughes and himself would arrange to hold staff meetings over the next couple of weeks at Cumbernauld and Motherwell Colleges in order to keep staff up-to-date on progress with the merger process.

Action: M McGuire and A Hughes to arrange staff meetings at Cumbernauld and Motherwell

Project Manager/Project Co-ordinator report

A Hughes extended an invitation to members to attend the Information Sharing Day on 19 August 2013 and A Hughes would email members with the details.

A Hughes reported that the work stream leads had been issued with work stream plans in order to provide an update on the information contained within the plans, which in turn would provide an overview of the areas where good progress had been made and those where more work would be required. A Hughes advised that, following the updated information received, a report would be produced and a copy would be circulated to members.

Action: A Hughes to circulate the details of the Information Sharing day to members.

Action: A Hughes to circulate a copy of the report, following the collation of information from each of the work streams.
AOB

S Drysdale sought clarification regarding the timescale of meetings in moving forward and A Muirhead advised that a clearer position would be known following tonight’s meeting.

A Muirhead thanked colleagues for their attendance and reminded members of their responsibility with regard to confidentiality.

Date of Next Meeting

Monday 09 September 2013 at 5.30pm in the Boardroom at Motherwell College
The Chair indicated that as this was the first meeting for colleagues from Coatbridge College an introduction around the table would be beneficial and each member introduced themselves accordingly.

1 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from R Smith, Vice-Chair, Motherwell College and J Kemp, Scottish Funding Council.

Declarations of Interest.

All College staff declared an interest with respect to agenda item 5.

3 Minute of previous meeting held on 12 August 2013

The Minute of the meeting held on 12 August 2013 was approved.

4 Matters arising

All matters arising had been actioned by the appropriate member of the Committee.

5 New College Lanarkshire

M McGuire advised that the papers associated with agenda item 5 would be tabled and each copy had been numbered and would be collected at the end of the discussion. M McGuire also advised that in order to give members adequate time to digest the information contained within the papers, there would be a twenty minute break.
New College Lanarkshire contd

(1) Organisational Review Framework

M McGuire introduced Paper 1 and advised that a Scottish Government Advisor had assisted with the preparation of the document. Following a lengthy discussion and questions on Paper 1, members agreed the paper as presented.

(2) Proposed Senior Structure

M McGuire introduced Paper 2 and advised that he had liaised with fellow Principals who had gone through a merger process and had also taken cognisance of other national senior organisational structures.

M McGuire advised that, in his opinion, the proposed structure should work well for New College Lanarkshire and would offer significant financial savings. M McGuire highlighted that the post of Assistant Principal Organisational Development reported directly into the Principal as this area of responsibility would be critical in moving forward. M McGuire referred members to the VP structure which included potential areas of responsibility and sought comments from members. T Keenan questioned whether there would be adequate resources in the structure to assist in taking forward New College Lanarkshire and M McGuire advised that the proposed structure presented would be a starting point and as the new College evolved there may be a requirement to revisit the structure at a future date. A Muirhead highlighted that the priority for New College Lanarkshire would be to deliver to its students.

G Boyd questioned the six academic heads in the structure and whether this would mean six departments and M McGuire advised that these would be larger faculties than the current departments and the curriculum review process may highlight a requirement to increase the number of posts and this would be addressed if required.

G Boyd commented that it would be an advantage to have subject specialists in the academic head posts and M McGuire confirmed that the individuals in these posts would be curricular experts.

L McTavish highlighted that there had been no detail in the paper as to where the senior team would be located and M McGuire advised that, in due course, this would be addressed.

M McGuire sought agreement that the content of the paper would be sufficient to be circulated to all staff in the three colleges for consultation and M Cook advised that the paper had a good balance of information and confirmed agreement for the paper to be circulated as presented. R Mullin commented that the paper had been very clearly written and highlighted that the document would be going out for consultation to staff and therefore could change.

M McGuire advised that he would be meeting with the HR staff of the three colleges prior to the paper being circulated for consultation. There would be a consultation email address set-up for staff to provide feedback, as well as information sessions being held in each of the three colleges and a frequently asked questions page would be also be put in place.

(3) Voluntary Severance Scheme

A Hughes introduced Paper 3 and advised that M Cook and a Scottish Government Advisor had assisted in producing the paper. A Hughes advised on the level of funding which would be made available from the Funding Council and the associated payback period.

L McTavish wished to commend colleagues for the inclusion of the information on the Strathclyde Pension Fund which would help to reassure staff.
(3) Voluntary Severance Scheme contd

C McCarthy sought clarification on the section of the document which referred to those staff whose application for voluntary severance would be successful and who would also have access to their pension and M Cook explained the process and the differences with each of the Pension Funds.

M McGuire sought agreement from members that the Papers presented, subject to some minor amendments, could be circulated to all staff in the three colleges and members agreed.

Action: M McGuire to liaise with the other two colleges to arrange circulation of the Papers simultaneously

6 Communications update

H Urquhart reported on the following developments which had taken place since the last meeting.

M McGuire had held staff briefings at Cumbernauld and Motherwell Colleges on 14 August 2013 to advise staff that Coatbridge College would now be part of the Merger process and a press release had also been issued.

Coatbridge College had now been incorporated into the brand and branding guidelines had been amended accordingly. The Communications work stream had discussed several options for the new brand launch and a campaign plan had now been progressed and the media would be engaged in the process which would go live from 01 October 2013.

A full Cultural Analysis report would be published and circulated to all three Colleges following the completion of the exercise with Coatbridge College.

There had been wide representation from all three Colleges at the Information sharing session which had taken place at Cumbernauld on 19 August 2013, during which, work stream leads had delivered presentations on developments to date within their groups. M Cook commented that the session had been very informative and was pleased that all three Colleges had been represented.

Good progress had been made with the Customer experience and admissions sub-groups and meetings would continue. The HR work stream had discussed a way forward with TUPE consultations and Cumbernauld had held initial discussions at a recent JNC meeting.

M McGuire would be holding staff information sessions at Motherwell on 16 and 19 September, Cumbernauld on 23 September and Coatbridge on 25 September 2013.

H Urquhart had attended an SFC Partnership for Change meeting which included the three Student Presidents from Coatbridge, Cumbernauld and South Lanarkshire Colleges and B Casey, Associate Director, Motherwell College. It was noted that arrangements were progressing for the election of a Student President for Motherwell and the process should be completed by the end of September 2013.

A further edition of the Merger Newsletter had been produced on 09 September 2013 and a new edition would follow in due course.
Project Manager/Project Co-ordinator Report

A Hughes circulated an updated paper on the Critical Tasks for Vesting Day and highlighted that a number of tasks had now been completed, including some major tasks associated with the Finance and HR work streams, although good progress had been made overall with each of the nine work stream groups.

A Muirhead thanked A Hughes and J Chim for their informative report.

Paper for Information: Merger of New College Lanarkshire and Coatbridge College - merger timeline.

S Drysdale advised that the updated paper now included actions which would be required to be undertaken by Coatbridge College prior to their vesting date of 01 April 2014.

M McGuire highlighted that cognisance would have to be taken of the timeline for the appointment of the new Shadow Board and A Muirhead advised that K Fulton and himself would progress this and R Mullin offered to assist in the process if required.

Action: A Muirhead and K Fulton to meet to progress discussions on the new Shadow Board.

AOB

M McGuire advised that there would now be a requirement for an updated full Business Case to be produced, to include Coatbridge College, and submitted to the Funding Council and R Mullin offered to assist with the process if required.

G Boyd advised on a meeting which had taken place, as part of the Lanarkshire Federation, and representatives from UNISON and EIS had been invited to attend but no representative from UNITE or the non-union staff member from Motherwell. A Muirhead highlighted that as the detail referred to the federation this should be discussed outwith the Merger Committee. L McTavish apologised for the oversight and assured colleagues that all those involved would be invited to any future meetings.

A Muirhead thanked colleagues for their attendance and reminded members of their responsibility with regard to confidentiality.

Date of Next Meeting

Monday 07 October 2013 at 5.30pm in the Boardroom at Motherwell College.