

Glasgow Kelvin College
Board of Management Meeting of 10 December 2025
Chair's Update Report

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of recent developments which are of particular interest to them and to provide an outline of the activities undertaken by the Chair since the last Board meeting.

2. Glasgow Colleges' Leadership Group (GCLG)

The Glasgow Leadership Group met on 6 October and are scheduled to meet again on 17 December. The draft minutes of the 6 October meeting are attached as an appendix to this report.

3. Graduation

I attended the graduations on 12th November which were an outstanding success. Maureen Burke MP gave an inspiring speech outlining her journey from working in factory in Easterhouse to Westminster which of course included a spell as a Board member at Glasgow Kelvin College.

4. College Funding

Members will be aware that Colleges were informed that they could expect flat cash funding for the next two years. Recent reports from SFC and Audit Scotland have highlighted the serious impacts this would have on the College sector.

As a result, in preparation for the Scottish Budget which will be published on 13 January, Colleges Scotland have produced a budget submission which calls on the Scottish Government to reverse years of underinvestment in the college sector.

Four funding scenarios are outlined, ranging from colleges receiving flat-cash funding – a real-terms cut because of inflation – to a much more sustainable level of investment which would allow colleges to thrive, offer more opportunities to more students, and secure jobs and campuses. The consequences of government choosing one scenario over the others is also outlined.

Scenario	Revenue Investment £/m	Capital Investment £/m
Decline	668.1	64.8
Diminished	728.2	67.4
Survivable	780.5	99.5
Sustainable	819.0	131.6

Decline	Flat cash settlement may cause enormous damage and may lead to college closures.
Diminished	Would alleviate some of the above risks but would not address the underfunding of colleges over the last few years.
Survivable	increased investment would be most welcome but would only represent recovery of 64% of the reduction in funding since the start of this parliamentary session.
Sustainable	Would represent a return to the level of funding which was available in 2021-2022 and would help colleges to deliver on the Scottish Government priorities.

Colleges Scotland have engaged with Ministers, Scottish Government, SFC and politicians from all parties on this submission and are quietly confident that the funding to colleges for 2026-2027 will fall somewhere between the black and red scenarios.

5. Key Activities

- Catch ups with Principal
- Meetings with Secretary to the Board, Vice Chair, Chair of L&T and VP Curriculum and Quality
- Meetings with new Chairs in Glasgow
- Colleges Scotland Chairs meeting
- Meetings with Anna from Leading Kind re Values
- Attended:
 - A&R Committee
 - L & T Committee

6. Resource Implications

There are no additional resource implications as a consequence of this report.

7. Equalities

No adverse impacts on individuals with protected characteristics have been identified as a consequence of this report.

8. Risk and Assurance

There are no new risks arising from the contents of this report.

9. Data Protection

No data protection issues are identified arising from this report.

10. Recommendation

Members are recommended to note the contents of this report.

11. Further Information

Members can obtain further information on the contents of this report from Ian Patrick, Chair of the Board of Management.

IP/Dec 25

Annex

Glasgow Colleges Leadership Group Minute

Minute of the meeting held on Monday 6 October 2025 at 1:30pm at Glasgow Kelvin College. 123 Flemington St, Glasgow

Sederunt

Ian Patrick, Interim Chair, Glasgow Kelvin College (in the Chair)
Joanna Campbell, Principal, Glasgow Kelvin College
Paul Little, Principal, City of Glasgow College
Chris Deery, Chair, City of Glasgow College
Jon Vincent, Principal, Clyde College
Sue Irving, Chair, Glasgow Clyde College

In attendance

Jeanette Evans, Vice Principal Operations, Glasgow Kelvin College (Item 5 only)
Robin Ashton, Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality, Glasgow Kelvin College (Item 6 only)
John Rafferty, Deputy Principal, Glasgow Clyde College (Item 6 only)
Linda McLeod, Scottish Funding Council

Minute

Heather Jackson, Secretary to the Board of Management, Glasgow Kelvin College

No apologies were received.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the fourth meeting of the Glasgow Leadership Group and extended a welcome to L McLeod who was attending from the Scottish Funding Council.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 30 June 2025

Members accepted the minute as an accurate record of the business conducted at the meeting held at the Riverside Campus of City of Glasgow College on 30 June 2025.

3. Matters Arising not on the Agenda

There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4. Live Actions from the Previous Meetings

(a) Dissolution of GCRB

L McLeod updated members on the £500k that had been retained by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) following the dissolution of GCRB. The SFC had ringfenced monies to mitigate against any risks or costs arising from the

dissolution and members noted that the monies had not been taken from allocations to the Colleges. The SFC hoped that there would not be a need for any further clawback. Pension liabilities and some bills had been settled, and a final decision was expected in November. Members noted that any clawback would need to be reflected in a material difference in the Financial Forecast Return (FFR). J Vincent requested a worked funding model be shared with the colleges along with detail on how this was allocated. The members also noted that the total monies allocated annually to GCRB was more than £500k.

P Little asked whether the funding situation regarding the £500k had been clarified with the Minister and L McLeod noted that MSPs had received further clarification, and this would be reiterated if necessary.

P Little also noted that the Scottish Government had stated that costs of dissolution would be covered by them when the Board had originally been set up. P Little asked who was tying up any loose ends from the dissolution, as City of Glasgow College had received various items of post. It was agreed that all items would be passed on to the SFC for resolution.

P Little noted that he was concerned that the SFC was overwhelmed with the implications and fallout following the issues at the University of Dundee and that they did not fully appreciate the nuances and detail of the finances surrounding the dissolution of the Glasgow Colleges Regional Board. L McLeod noted that the SFC were aware of the detail and agreed to provide further detail and clarification. L McLeod also noted that colleagues at the SFC had valued the opportunity to reengage with colleges as part of the OFAM meetings. This was echoed by members.

(b) Colleges Scotland

Members discussed membership of Colleges Scotland and agreed that they had concerns relating to membership fees, proposed amendments to the governance structure and their advocacy and representative role with the Scottish Government. J Vincent had written to the retiring Chair, on behalf of the group, and had received a positive response which acknowledged that they had previously been working cooperatively rather than in an advocacy role. This had been followed up more recently with the new CEO and members agreed that they had been happier with what had been proposed in terms of governance. Members agreed that Gavin Donoghue, the new CEO of Colleges Scotland should be invited to a future meeting.

Both Clyde and City College noted that they had rejoined Colleges Scotland. J Vincent noted a positive meeting with Colleges Scotland. J Campbell noted that the group needed to support the new CEO to find solutions and present a more positive, professional and mature picture of colleges in line with that presented by Universities Scotland. Members discussed the differences between the 2 sectors.

(c) SFC Funding of Glasgow Colleges

J Vincent reported that this matter had been passed to the Regional Finance and Resources Group for further investigation.

Members noted the differences in funding allocations, curriculum and nature of operating in Glasgow compared to the rest of Scotland. L McLeod noted that the

SFC were aware of these differences. P Little noted that many of the promised actions proposed in the past had not materialised and that there was no justification for a funding model that did not recognise the challenges of the biggest city in Scotland with a third of the students having the lowest funding allocation. Members agreed that the Chair of the SFC Board should be invited to a future meeting to discuss this as well as ways in which the group could support the priorities of the SFC.

5. Report from Regional Finances and Resources Group

J Evans updated members on actions from the Regional Finance and Resources Group. The Group had revisited their terms of reference and now took action notes rather than formal minutes. They were meeting face to face every 6 weeks with an initial focus on finance, the FFR, pensions, budgets, alternative sources of income and benchmarking. Members noted the work on benchmarking at Clyde College and agreed that they were keen to roll it out further. The next meeting would focus on People with HR representatives from all the colleges attending. Members noted that J Evans still chairs the Student Support Funds Subgroup, and it was agreed that they had made a significant impact across Glasgow. Members noted that the group also had a strong focus on sharing information and collaboration including work on net zero, sustainability, Martyn's Law and sustainability disclosure enhancement. I Patrick stated that the group didn't need to know the detail of the activities, but it was important to share impact. There was a discussion on how resources and knowledge could be shared across the Colleges.

J Vincent noted there was a view that the Glasgow Colleges can run more efficiently but this had been addressed over the last few years and that the benchmarking data showed how lean their operations were.

P Little noted that Colleges and Universities had been consistently bailed out across the country, but this had not been available to the Glasgow Colleges.

J Campbell reiterated the importance of robust data gathered through exercises like benchmarking to demonstrate where value can be driven from. All colleges need capital investment, and an individual and sector approach was needed to help identify the consequences of not investing and help develop solutions.

C Deery noted the importance of connecting the dots between finance and resources and audit and risk to support decisions and identify what impact this may have on students.

Members also noted that the Infrastructure Development Group (IDG) was recommencing although there was no money to pay for the works. J Campbell suggested that if the footprint was 10% less then perhaps, colleges needed to do less infrastructure development.

J Evans agreed that the Resources and Funding Group would look at the action in 4 (c) above and would report back to provide evidence in advance of the Chair of SFC being present at a meeting of GCLG.

Members thanked J Evans for the update.

6. Report from Regional Learning and Teaching Group

R Ashton and J Rafferty updated members on the work of the Regional Learning and Teaching Group. Representatives from the SFC and SDS (Skills Development Scotland) still attend the meetings. Focus at the last meeting had been on maritime skills, positive participation reports (1.5% lower than the national average). The group also receive an update from the SFC which gives them a richer feel at an operational level. Members noted that pass rates had significantly improved in the last year at all three colleges. There were different patterns of improvement across the colleges and the impact of a full year without industrial action had also made a significant difference on results.

7. Glasgow Region Student Withdrawal Analysis

R Ashton and J Rafferty presented the Glasgow region Student Withdrawal Analysis which looked at data from the three colleges and benchmarked with national trends. Members noted that health issues were the biggest reason for withdrawal. Further granular detail was needed across all Colleges.

Members noted that the response rate was 35% but that it was reasonable to extrapolate the data across the larger set. It was noted that around half of the withdrawals were for positive reasons including further study or moving into a job. However, it was not clear if students were leaving college to find jobs as a natural progression or whether there was a financial impetus.

J Rafferty noted that course dissatisfaction had also been impacted by industrial action and that industrial action had a bigger impact on results than Covid.

R Ashton noted that there had been a number of subject areas where further investigation was needed including sport, travel and tourism and social sciences. Members noted that both sport and travel and tourism had traditionally been entry gateways to other study for students and the universities were increasingly operating in the traditional FE social sciences market. Members noted that a small working group had been established to look at the specific issues impacting these group of students.

The group were also looking at evidence to support the impact on withdrawal of mental health and wellbeing issues and looking for other ways of measuring getting a job as a destination.

The group had met with the SQA (Scottish Qualifications Agency) and were looking at measuring national pass rates as well as whether products were still fit for purpose. The Members noted that SQA were also discussing setting up an FE Commission.

S Irving noted the value of the report and how it would be important to continue to measure and benchmark the data. R Ashton noted that the colleges were developing a dashboard to allow colleges to share data. Members also agreed that it would be useful to revise the metrics around the impact of industrial action and whether a job was positive or negative experience. Members noted that the metrics had changed in the past year around early withdrawal although it was also noted that this may result in later withdrawals in some cases.

P Little noted the importance of archiving these reports to showcase the value and importance of the work of the group.

P Little noted an ongoing concern about working class white males being left behind and the focus in Glasgow on 50% who have a degree whilst ignoring the long tail of underachievement in the city. Members agreed that Colleges alone can't fix this, but they have a huge role to play.

Members agreed that it would be a good idea to set up a regional student group.

Members thanked R Ashton and J Rafferty for their reports.

8. GCLG – Future Focus AY 25/26 and Beyond

I Patrick asked members to consider the future focus of the Group, how it will add value and what information should come to this group as opposed to the Principals Group. It was agreed that operational matters should remain the responsibility of the Principals Group.

J Vincent proposed that the group was still in a transitional phase and the agenda should reflect that. It was noted that there was rapid change in the sector including possible skills devolution and it was important that this group retain a strategic view. I Patrick suggested that Kevin Rush from Glasgow City Region could be invited to a future meeting.

S Irving noted that although the reports presented at the meeting had been interesting and they promoted a collaborative approach, they were operational, and the focus should be on strategic and partnership working. J Vincent also noted the time pressures and capacity issues on senior staff and that their time should be used judiciously.

P Little noted the emergence of a Glasgow region to ensure relevance and role. It was important to be careful to focus on key issues for Glasgow City including innovation, poverty and inward investment. He suggested that the economy, social economy and infrastructure should be considered as agenda items with relevant speakers invited. He noted that the group needed to be seen as a democratic and accountable group that presented a problem-solving opportunity for Principals and Chairs to share ideas in a safe space.

P Little left the meeting at 3:30pm

J Vincent proposed that the group was a forum for discussion. S Irving proposed that it would be a useful forum to share and collaborate on strategic plans. C Deery agreed that there were big themes and ideas that could be shared.

J Campbell noted that there was view externally that the group did not operate collaboratively, and it was important that they showed unity. She proposed that this could be achieved through a collaborative approach to the Tertiary Review, focusing on themes and what the College's group would like to get out of the review.

J Vincent proposed the following:

- Financial sustainability tied in with benchmarking and including a presentation from Ellucian (formerly Tribal)
- Glasgow issues including a session on students and student outcomes

- Skills

J Campbell suggested a session on redesigning the funding model noting this would also be useful for the SFC.

J Vincent also proposed that work on political alignment in the run up to the elections was vital. This could include a review of Colleges Scotland's' manifesto and what it means to the Group identifying key groups and messages and agreeing a strategy for communications. It was agreed that Gavin Donoghue be invited to this meeting to share his vision as well as how we could better work together and engage.

S Vincent proposed that this would be a good opportunity to look at how present a strong message about the sector and Glasgow's unique position alongside individual messages.

It was agreed that the next meeting would focus on political engagement and Gavin Donoghue from Colleges Scotland would be invited to attend.

9. Any other business

L McLeod noted that many of the discussions today had been recurring for the 10 years that she had been involved with the group and agreed to revisit them with colleagues at the SFC. She noted that the SFC was looking at collaborations across the sector (including lessons learnt from the pathfinder projects) and actions for SFC raised by recent Audit Scotland reports.

She reiterated the positive feedback from colleagues who had attended OFAM meetings and noted that there would be additional focus on governance and lessons learnt from the Gilles report and external governance reviews which would be followed up at future meetings.

L McLeod also agreed to get an update on skills priorities for a future meeting.

10. Date of Future Meetings

Monday 24 November 1.30pm Langside Campus, Glasgow Clyde College
Monday 2 February 1.30pm TBC
Monday 20 April 1.30pm Glasgow Kelvin College – Springburn Campus
Monday 15 June 1.30pm TBC