

Glasgow Kelvin College
Board of Management Meeting of 8 October 2025
Chair's Update Report
Report by Chair of the Board of Management

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 has been renamed the Glasgow Colleges Leadership Group. The group met on 30 June and are scheduled to meet again on 6 October. The draft minutes of the 30 June meeting are attached as an appendix to this report.

It had been previously agreed that the Chair would rotate on an annual basis, and it was agreed at the June that I would Chair GCLG for session 25-26.

3. Colleges Scotland

I attended the Chairs and Principals Forum on 23 September; 3 main items were covered:

a) Colleges Scotland Submission to Scottish Government with regard to forthcoming Scottish Government Budget.

This basically was plea for additional funding to all Colleges to deliver on Scottish Government priorities.

The general feeling was that a flat cash settlement would be disastrous but there was unlikely to be a significant uplift in the budget.

b) Colleges Scotland Election Manifesto

This document is going to be used by Colleges Scotland in their discussion with those responsible in the 6 main political parties for writing the manifesto for the

forthcoming Scottish Government Elections. Internally I hope to continue to support the Principal in her engagement with both local and national politicians.

c) Colleges Scotland Governance Structures

After considerable debate lasting most of this year a slimmed down Colleges Scotland Board has been formed. In addition, it was agreed that the College Principals Group would be responsible for leading and driving the sector. This is consistent with the Universities Scotland model.

4. Key Activities

- Meeting with Principal and Vice Chair to discuss Principal's objectives - Objectives on agenda
- Catch ups with Principal
- Meetings with Secretary to the Board
- Meeting with new Chairs in Glasgow
- CoG College 15th Anniversary Dinner
- Completed Board member 1-1 meetings
- Attended:
 - Board Strategy session
 - A&R Committee
 - F & R committee
 - Executive Committee

5. Resource Implications

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

6. Equalities

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

7. Risk and Assurance

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

8. Data Protection

No data protection issues are identified arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

Members are recommended to note the contents of this report.

10. Further Information

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

Appendix

Glasgow Colleges Leadership Group Minute

Minute of the meeting held on Monday 30 June 2025, at 2.00 pm at City of Glasgow College, Riverside Campus, 21 Thistle Street, Glasgow G5 9XB.

Sederunt

Dave Anderson, Chair, City of Glasgow College (in the Chair)
Joanna Campbell, Principal, Glasgow Kelvin College
Paul Little, Principal, City of Glasgow College
David Newall, Chair, Clyde College
Ian Patrick, Chair, Glasgow Kelvin College
Jon Vincent, Principal, Clyde College

In attendance

Andrew Dickson, Chief Financial Officer, City of Glasgow College
Sarah Kirkpatrick, Scottish Funding Council

Minute

Ann Butcher, City of Glasgow College

No apologies were received.

1. Welcome

D Anderson welcomed members to the third meeting of the Glasgow Leadership Group and extended a welcome to S Kirkpatrick who was attending from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

2. Minute of the Previous Meeting held on 9 April 2025 held via MS Teams

Members accepted the minute as an accurate record of the business conducted at the meeting held at the Springburn Campus of Glasgow Kelvin College on 9 April 2025.

Matters Arising – Not on the Agenda

Discussion on rotation of the Chair was deferred until the end of the meeting.

Members agreed to rename the group as the “Glasgow Colleges Leadership Group” (GCLG).

I Patrick stated that dissolution of the Glasgow Colleges’ Regional Board (GCRB) was on track for 31 July 2025, following Parliamentary approval, noting that no delays are anticipated.

3. Matters Arising:

a. Response letter to J Brasted of SFC regarding GCRB retained funds.

I Patrick's letter to Dr J Brasted was submitted under item 3(a). To date no response has been received.

I Patrick advised that during the Education, Children and Young People Committee on 28 May 2025 a question was asked of the Minister regarding retention of £500k from the three colleges' funding allocations for 2025-26. It was confirmed that this sum had been retained in case any unfunded commitments arose as a result of the dissolution of GCRB, such as pension costs. As the funding allocation to colleges has now been announced, he had not followed this up any further, but he expressed disappointment that several months later he had still not received a response from the SFC to his letter.

S Kirkpatrick apologised for the delayed response, noting that the SFC had been heavily involved in dealing with the University of Dundee funding crisis and that some key staff had been absent recently on annual leave. She advised that work on pension costs and other GCRB liabilities has not been straightforward. It is expected that a clearer position will be available after J Brasted returns from leave next week.

Members expressed their concerns that the SFC appeared to be focused on managing the Dundee University crisis to the exclusion of addressing the challenges experienced in the college sector. They noted that the lack of a response regarding the allocation of college funding reinforced the perception that all attention was being directed towards Dundee and other Universities.

S Kirkpatrick noted that although the Dundee University crisis had been all-consuming for key SFC staff, the report has now been published and while work is still ongoing, it has passed the critical watershed point. She reassured the meeting that normal operations would soon return and confirmed that work with other colleges is continuing and that other important priorities are not being excluded.

D Anderson thanked S Fitzpatrick for this reassurance and looked forward to positive collaboration with the SFC at future meetings.

b. Update on early dropout rates project

J Vincent advised that due to the timing of meetings, there was no update available from the Glasgow Colleges Group (GCG) Learning and Teaching Group about progress on the student retention strategy. He has contacted the Chair and will circulate an update as soon as it is available.

J Vincent further informed the meeting that the GCG Learning and Teaching Group has updated its Terms of Reference to include learner support. They have also proposed setting up a sub-group to facilitate meetings with students' associations and relevant support staff across all 3 colleges. The benefits of the proposed approach were discussed; it was agreed that the proposals should be supported, and that a review of the arrangements should be undertaken after one yearly cycle. It was noted that the Stakeholder Forum would provide a direct opportunity for student engagement with the GCLG.

Members were further advised that the GCG Sustainability Group has proposed revising its name to 'GCG Finance and Operations Group'. As this Group is not an operational one, it was suggested that the title 'GCG Finance and Resources Group' would be more appropriate. This proposal will be shared with the Group.

Actions:

- **J Vincent to contact Chair of GCG Learning and Teaching Group and circulate an update when available.**

4. Discussion with SFC Representatives

Skills Development Scotland

D Anderson asked how the Skills Development Unit would be integrated within the SFC, particularly in relation to skills analysis at the Scottish level and its relationship with regional skills planning. S Kirkpatrick confirmed that S Drysdale, Assistant Director of Skills, is working with the Scottish Government (SG) to ensure the SFC plays an active role in skills planning and is discussing how this will work in the initial stages. Members noted that further clarity is awaited.

D Anderson emphasised that Glasgow's region economy has well established links with key employers and suggested identifying regional representatives when considering skills matters. S Kirkpatrick confirmed that regional approaches will be taken into account. Members proposed that S Drysdale be invited to a future GCLG meeting to provide an update on the emerging proposals at the earliest opportunity.

Actions:

- **S Drysdale to be invited to a future GCLG meeting.**

SFC Priorities

While acknowledging the challenges presented by the current unprecedented funding constraints, S Kirkpatrick provided an update on the current SFC priorities. She reminded members that the

previous Outcome Agreement reporting process, which was often seen as overly bureaucratic and duplicative, has now been replaced following an extensive exercise. The new Framework sets clear expectations across key outcomes and introduces new monitoring arrangements, including contextual commentary on progress. This includes the Self Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP) required under 'Student Experience and Quality'. S Kirkpatrick said that significant work has been undertaken in preparation for its implementation this year and that it will be reviewed towards the end of 2025/early 2026.

J Campbell suggested that it would be helpful to be able to benchmark data against other colleges within the sector for the purpose of comparison. This would help in understanding each College's current positions and identify potential areas for improvement. She mentioned potential changes to governance arrangements in light of the Gillies report, noting that governance within the college sector was already robust.

S Kirkpatrick said that the SFC holds significant amounts of data, and that the new data team led by M Boyle is currently recruiting new staff and working to improve this function while acknowledging this remains a work in progress. She added that due to data sharing regulations there can be a time lag in releasing information. J Vincent added that while some delay is understandable, the length of the delay and the way the information is presented in Scotland was poor in comparison with the rest of the UK. I Patrick agreed that data provided late is of little value. J Campbell suggested considering the use of third parties for financial analysis purposes advocating that an independent third-party mechanism could be beneficial. D Anderson added, in light of the University of Dundee crisis, that timely access to information was essential to allow Board Members to make informed decisions, noting the common view of members that this was essential.

P Little highlighted the importance of considering context with the data information provided. Referring to the SEAP, S Kirkpatrick assured that outcome managers review this information in detail, both at individual level and through benchmarking. P Little added that he was content with the SEAP but noted that further work was needed to provide context around progress on all outcomes. S Kirkpatrick acknowledged his frustration but explained that system related issues sometimes made this challenging.

Regarding governance, S Kirkpatrick informed colleagues that Externally Facilitated Effectiveness Reviews (EFERs) would be examined, and any necessary remedial actions identified. Members highlighted that differences in EFER models meant meaningful comparisons could not easily be made and that the variations in governance between universities and colleges made it difficult to share learning. P Little suggested that it would be worthwhile for each institution to have a full-time governance professional, providing

independence and ensuring the sharing of good practice with peers. J Campbell further suggested that the role of those carrying out EFERs should be reviewed and highlighted that senior executives should not also act as governance professionals as this was not permitted under the Code of Good Governance.

5. Dissolution of GCRB: Outstanding issues including Colleges Scotland subscriptions

J Vincent informed members that in the light of the dissolution of GCRB subscriptions to Colleges Scotland (CS), had been discussed by the Glasgow Principal's Group (GPG). Noting significant CS failings and the fact that the governance and committee review was still ongoing, it was suggested that the GCLG send a joint letter to CS highlighting their concerns and expectations about progress in resolving these. Members shared advice from individual college perspectives and emphasised the importance of a continued relationship between CS and the Glasgow region which represents almost a quarter of the sector.

Members noted it would take time for the new CS CEO to address necessary changes, and that subscription payments for 2025-26 should continue. It was agreed that the CEO of CS be invited to attend a GCLG meeting in around six months' time to discuss any remaining concerns and future expectations. J Vincent agreed to compile a note of GPG concerns and extend an invitation to the CEO of CS to come to a future GCLG meeting.

Actions:

- **Send letter to CS highlighting GCLG concerns with the expectation that progress would be made.**
- **Invite CS CEO to attend a future GCLG meeting.**

Tripartite Alignment Group

J Campbell provided an update on the Tripartite Alignment Group meeting held in June 2025, where discussions focused on asset disposals, capital reinvestment and the new funding model. Colleges expressed frustration about the need for the SG and SFC to consider a further round of feedback from colleges and wished to be able to move forward at greater pace. The SG also discussed the importance of colleges being able to diversify income streams while maintaining core delivery. S Hewitt will work with the college sector to develop a paper on this.

Colleges requested the return of Flexible Workforce Development Funding and wished to see additional funding provision better aligned with key economic sectors.

Members raised concerns about the new transformation framework, highlighting the ongoing underinvestment in the College sector and the challenges of bridging financial gaps through commercial activities.

A Dickson attended the meeting.

6. Report back on issues being considered by Glasgow Sustainability Group

a. SFC Funding for Glasgow Colleges
b. Impact of Employers NI

A Dickson provided a detailed breakdown of the Glasgow colleges SFC funding for 2025-26 which reflects the changes to the teaching funding allocation model and includes mitigations for lecturers pay award and pension costs. The new funding allocation model had not been beneficial to colleges and when inflationary pressures are accounted for there will be an overall reduction in core funding compared to 2024-25. The core grant funding amounts for lecturers' pay and pension increases were noted.

In addition to the funding allocations, reimbursement for Employers National Insurance Contributions (NIC) for Glasgow colleges was reported between 46-48% despite the SG announcing that 60% of these costs would be refunded.

P Little expressed concerns that the structural funding for tertiary education was inaccurate, noting that across the sector colleges are projecting deficit positions over the next 3 years with the majority running out of cash. J Vincent added that the SFC's expectations around Financial Forecast Return (FFR) reporting and the requirement to deliver a balanced budget were challenging, highlighting that the actions needed to achieve this were unaffordable.

Members advised A Dickson about the proposed renaming of the GCG Finance and Sustainability Group to become the Finance and Resources Group which he agreed to take back to its members for consideration.

Actions:

- **Advise GCG Finance and Sustainability Group of proposed name change.**

A Dickson left the meeting.

c. Sectoral Funding Opportunities (Renewables, Construction, social Care)

No new funding bid opportunities were reported. However, members

noted that a number of apprenticeship funding opportunities had gone directly to the private sector and were not made available to the college sector.

7. Report on Stakeholder and Regional Partner Relationships

A schematic diagram showing various existing stakeholder groups was submitted under item 7. Members discussed how partnership relationships should be developed as GCLG moves forward emphasising that any new groups would need to add value to existing structures, align with the regional economy and avoid overlapping with existing college structures. It was also noted that while regional discussions were necessary to keep pace with changing labour market needs, it was important also to avoid creating an excessive number of meetings.

It was suggested that stakeholder representatives (including staff, student and trade union members) be invited to attend GCLG as and when appropriate to discuss the needs of the sector as part of a forward agenda plan. It was highlighted that the GCLG is not acting as a governance mechanism but rather as a collaborative forum to consider the best interests of the city and wider region. It was also noted that this is not a decision-making forum for matters that should rightly be considered by individual college governing bodies.

Actions:

- **Invite stakeholder representatives to future GCLG meetings as appropriate.**

8. Report back on Parliamentary Committee Hearing on tertiary Education Bill

J Vincent updated the group on the recent parliamentary committee hearing on the tertiary education bill and related discussions on the transfer of national training programmes from Skills Development Scotland to the SFC, noting that concerns were raised about the financial and operational risks of this move. Risks associated with the proposal for SFC to commission provision through a competitive tendering process with colleges and private training providers were also raised. Members of the committee had expressed some scepticism about transferring responsibility for FE student support funding from the SFC to the Student Awards Agency Scotland.

J Campbell reported on the evidence provided to the committee for increased investment to ensure the financial sustainability of colleges.

9. Report on Immigration Roundtable with First Minister (FM)

A restricted copy of the Immigration White Paper – Scotland's Position was submitted under item 9. P Little reported on the FM's recent Immigration Roundtable. The impact of the UK immigration changes particularly relating to international student recruitment was noted. This paper was restricted from further circulation.

10. Report on Tertiary Funding Conference RSE

A restricted paper outlining urgent and strategic interventions for funding Scotland's Colleges was submitted under item 10. P Little provided an update on the recent RSE Tertiary Funding Conference in May 2025 which brought together policy makers and sector leaders to explore future funding models for Scotland's tertiary education sector. Discussion focused primarily on issues of financial sustainability and research funding for universities.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

Availability for the next meeting will be confirmed for a Monday afternoon in late September or early October.

In line with the agreement for the chairing role to rotate annually, it was agreed that subject to the current appointment process I Patrick would Chair the group from the start of AY 2025-26.

Actions:

- **Confirm availability for the next meeting.**

Review of Meeting

Members recognised the desire to have regular attendance from appropriate SFC staff.

Actions:

- **I Patrick to liaise with L McLeod, Assistant Director, SFC to ensure regular attendance as appropriate.**

Noting that D Newall was standing down as Chair of Glasgow Clyde College, D Anderson thanked him for his personal support over the past year and his key contribution to Glasgow Clyde College and the sector for over 9 years and wished him well for the future. I Patrick echoed this, noting that he had been a great help and a source of wise counsel, both personally and for the wider group. His service to Clyde College has been immense and he was sure that J Vincent appreciated all that he had done. He will be greatly missed, and he thanked him again for his support over the years.

D Newall shared that he was sad to be leaving having enjoyed working with Clyde College and this Group, which he considered a really positive experience. He expressed his hope that the remaining Chairs would continue in post to carry this strong Group forward. He also noted that he had valued working alongside the three Principals and hoped they would continue to work well together in the future.