

Board Meeting

Date of Meeting	Monday 29 April 2024
Paper Title	Learning, Teaching and Partnerships Update
Agenda Item	10
Paper Number	BM3-D
Responsible Officer	Martin Boyle, Executive Director
Status	Disclosable
Action	For noting

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This paper provides an updated on various elements of curriculum and partnership activity at regional and national levels which have some degree of impact on the delivery of the Glasgow college system.
- 1.2 It also provides an overview of engagement activity undertaken by GCRB during this period in provision of a coherent college system for Glasgow.
- 1.3 Some elements provide information on Graeme Dey, Minister for HE, FE and Minister for Veterans' update letter to the Education, Children and Young People Committee, with a view to progressing James Withers' *Fit for the Future: developing a post-school learning system to fuel economic transformation*, while also seeking to provide an overview of more regional activity.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Board is invited to **note** the update in relation to a range of issues of importance to the Glasgow college region.

3. Report

3.1 Developing a national approach to skills planning and strengthening regional approaches

The Minister has confirmed the following:

“Significant work has started on the commitment we have made for the Scottish Government to take responsibility for skills planning at national level and I welcome the constructive engagement from across the system on this matter. I have led several discussions with Ministerial colleagues, employers, colleges, universities and other stakeholders about how we should approach skills planning in the future.

“My officials are aiming to complete an exercise this summer to develop a better understanding of the specific skills needs across the economy and how we can address them, particularly through the education and skills system. This exercise will inform the detailed design of new national skills planning processes by the end of this year.

“My officials have also commenced work on determining how skills planning could become more effective at regional levels, so that key stakeholders at local levels can better respond to skills needs according to regional ambitions, whilst remaining aligned with national priorities. In doing so, I have had initial engagement with the Regional Economic Partnership Network. My officials are gathering views from colleges and Regional Economic Partnerships on a future approach, and to identify good practices already in place which we can build on. I will set out further information for partners on our approach towards regional skills planning later in the year.”

3.2 At a national level, GCRB continues to have engagement meetings with the Minister and officials to support this government work and to explore opportunities in the Glasgow region.

3.3 At a regional level, GCRB attends meetings including the Skills Led Region workstream with OECD and SDS, meetings with the region’s local authority Education Directors, the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership strategic partnership group, the Local Employability Partnership, as well as with MSPs representative of the region.

3.4 This activity, alongside regular engagement with Scottish Funding Council continues to inform planning at a regional level.

College Partnership West

3.5 As part of progressing the effectiveness of regional curriculum and economic planning, GCRB convened a meeting of the chairs and principals of the colleges in the Glasgow Economic Region (including the three Glasgow colleges, West College Scotland, New College Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire College).

3.6 It was agreed that the executive leads of the seven organisations (six colleges and GCRB) would lead the project, and ‘College Partnership West’ was formed to explore opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

3.7 To date this has included a successful bid to InnovateUK for the first ever round of funding to colleges to create innovation centres. A total of £1.2million was invested in this first wave, with the possibility of expansion to come.

- 3.8** It is worth noting that the Glasgow City Region has expressed an interest to Scottish Government in coordinating regional skills planning and investment, and this may require consideration of GCRB given its current remit and dependent on Ministerial direction.
- 3.9** Derek Smeall, Principal of Glasgow Kelvin College, is current chair of the College Partnership West group, and may wish to provide a verbal update to board.

Simplification of the post-school funding body landscape

- 3.10** The Minister has reaffirmed his commitment to ‘simplify the post-school funding body landscape, including understanding the options for a single funding body’.
- 3.11** The Minister confirmed: “As a first step I signalled the intention to bring together funding for student support into one place and funding for apprenticeship provision into one place. My officials have been working on the strategic business case for simplification of the funding body landscape, following HM Treasury Green Book principles.”
- 3.12** “Simplification of the funding body landscape is one of the key enablers for reform and improvement across a range of priority areas. Delivering this aspect of reform is a clear signal of Ministers’ wider commitment and enables different choices to be made on funding for provision and student support – ensuring that more of the investment that we make is directly benefitting learners and employers. I expect to be able to share the detail of the shortlisted options with the Committee shortly, and to set out the next steps we will take to deliver on this commitment.”
- 3.13** At a regional level, the GCRB chair has updated board at this meeting on the relevant elements of organisational review which impact upon GCRB.

Student Support

- 3.14** The Minister has confirmed the current position regarding student support: “Work is underway to review the support available for those studying part time, which we committed to in the 2023-23 Programme for Government. We have already delivered on our PFG commitment to increase the HE student support package to the student equivalent of the Living Wage.
- 3.15** “Recognising that there is disparity in support on offer to students in FE and HE, officials are looking at these differences and considering options on how to address this in a way that is fair but also sustainable.”
- 3.16** At a regional level, the GCRB Finance and Resources Director continues to work with the relevant senior executives at the Glasgow colleges to support a project exploring student support approaches at the Glasgow colleges to provide a consistent and effective approach to funding and distribution.
- 3.17** In addition, GCRB continues to seek approaches to improve mental health support for learners at Glasgow colleges. In addition to developing an updated Mental Health Matters publication for World Mental Health Day, non-executive board member Moira Connelly is supporting the executive to engage with the NHS to explore options for the future.

Future Development of Apprenticeships

- 3.18** The Minister also confirmed that the Apprenticeship family of qualifications is being carefully considered: “My officials are looking at what a future model for apprenticeship delivery could look like, including the role of colleges, independent training providers and employers. We know that the current procurement model for Modern Apprenticeships is complex and resource intensive, so we want to explore alternative options with stakeholders to identify how this process can be streamlined and remain robust.
- 3.19** “Graduate Apprenticeships have great potential and scope for further development, so I have asked my officials to set up a Graduate Apprenticeship Enhancement Group to consider how we can expand Graduate Apprenticeships in both volume and the range of occupational areas. Ensuring that Graduate Apprenticeships support our widening access ambitions will be an important part of this work.
- 3.20** “Foundation Apprenticeships have a strong role in preparing senior phase pupils for work and future learning. We know that there is some work required on the design of Foundation Apprenticeships to improve consistency of outcomes. The Foundation Apprenticeship Enhancement Group is working with representatives from across the landscape to identify options for improvement and I look forward to seeing the results from that work later in the year.”
- 3.21** At a regional level, the issues surrounding Foundation Apprenticeships have been discussed at committees, Glasgow Colleges Group, Glasgow Colleges Group Learning and Teaching and also with the local authority Directors of Education.
- 3.22** A paper by Vice Principals, Learning and Teaching was shared with the Performance and Resources Committee of GCRB and a working group is considering future options. I would recommend that these options be brought to GCRB to ensure a coherent, strategic approach to the future planning and delivery of this product.

Other elements

- 3.23** The Minister has also provided updates on developing a coherent national careers advice offering, ensuring enhanced employer engagement, community learning and development, and Fair Work.
- 3.24** GCRB has continued to engage with Glasgow City Council on progression of the Just Transition and the City of Learning projects, ensuring that the Glasgow college system is represented in these spaces. In some instances we remain in a position of awaiting input from colleges and will continue to seek responses to further these important projects.

4. Risk and Compliance Analysis

4.1 The various elements covered present risks to GCRB in potential impact on the delivery of a sustainable, effective and coherent college system for Glasgow.

5. Financial and Resource Analysis

5.1 There are no immediate financial and resource implications associated with this paper.

6. Equalities Implications

6.1 There are no immediate additional equalities implications associated with this paper, however several elements may have an impact on access and provision of education in Glasgow.

7. Learner Implications

7.1 There are no immediate additional learner implications, however the effective, coherent provision of a Glasgow college curriculum which is effectively aligned to learner, community and business needs plays a significant role in supporting our learners.