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## Performance and Resources Committee

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| Date of Meeting     | Wednesday 27 September 2023               |
| Paper Title         | Evaluation of Programme of Action 2022-23 |
| Agenda Item         | 9   |
| Paper Number        | PRC1-D                                    |
| Responsible Officer | Martin Boyle, Executive Director          |
| Status              | Disclosable                               |
| Action              | For noting                                |

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1** This paper provides an overview of projects supported via the Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board's Programme of Action. There is an overview of activity undertaken in 2022-23, much of which is planned to be on-going in 2024.
- 1.2** Regional investment contained within the GCRB Programme of Action seeks to ensure that activity is:
- Student-focused, delivering direct benefit to students within the Glasgow college system, and building coherent, sustainable approaches, or;
  - Strategic activity which furthers the strategic effectiveness of the Glasgow college system, particularly in relation to regional and national drivers and priorities.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1** Committee is invited to **note** the update in relation to the 2022-23 update on the regional Programme of Action.

### 3. Background

- 3.1** The Programme of Action (POA) is Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board's limited investment opportunity in projects and activity which seek to deliver coordinated regional benefits, to foster effective cooperation, to attract additional funding or leverage greater impact than individual approaches. In addition, POA projects have a clear focus on seeking to provide clear benefits to learners within the Glasgow college system, either directly or via activity which safeguards their learning.
- 3.2** Reporting and monitoring of active projects is led via annual reporting from all project leads to the GCRB Executive Director. This report provides a brief overview of activity undertaken in 2022-2023. Committee is also invited to comment on any initial opportunities for potential focus in subsequent allocations, should circumstances permit.

### 4. Report

- 4.1** The following projects were identified as priorities for the 2022-2023 session, and included in the Glasgow Region Outcome Agreement 2022-2023:

**Action for Children:** For over 60 years, Action for Children has been working with young people and their families who are on the edge of crisis to meet their immediate needs, to ease mounting pressures and support them to access opportunities to change their lives for the better. Their services are primarily located in communities ranked in the top 20% most deprived areas on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The families they support have low or insecure incomes and rarely have the resources to see them through difficulties. Their services support a range of people experiencing poverty and/or trauma including: fostering and residential resources to find children safe homes; support for those that have been abused, neglected or find themselves homeless; projects that give young people the tools to look after their mental wellbeing; residential breaks and support for young people with disabilities and their families; employability support for young people who are not in education, employment or training and support for young people who offend or are at risk of offending. Action for Children's STAY project works to support college students who are at greatest risk of withdrawal, non-attainment and poor transition, e.g. care experienced students, young carers, young people from the most deprived SIMD areas and those who have experienced an adverse childhood.

This project evidences very strong alignment with the strategic aims of the Glasgow college region, and an increase in funding is allocated in this year to support Action for Children to expand their services and to unlock greater match funding in partnership with the Robertson Trust.

**Update:** The STAY mentoring service works alongside and in collaboration with the traditional support services provided by the colleges, to provide wider holistic support to students. Much of this additional support was put in place as a response to the rise in the number of Care Experienced students who were attending College due to the introduction of the Care Experienced student Bursary (CESB). 22/23 saw an expansion to the partnership delivered in partnership to work with GCRB, the Robertson Trust, and Glasgow City Council's Towards Better Futures initiative and Action for Children, with more effective integration into college services. Nicki Campbell, team leader, advice and guidance at Glasgow Kelvin College said: "Since Glasgow Kelvin College began working

with Action for Children on the STAY project it has evolved and has become an essential part of our service delivery. The STAY Workers have been invaluable in plugging the gap between college support and external support. The students feel seamlessly supported...meaning that don't feel like they are being passed on."

**Young Enterprise Scotland:** The Bridge 2 Business scheme is Young Enterprise Scotland's Further Education programme, and national funding direct from Scottish Government is processed via GCRB for delivery of the programme to nine colleges across Scotland, including all three Glasgow colleges. In addition to this standard funding, GCRB was able to directly support the Bridge 2 Business+ offer in 2021-22, and support for this enhanced model is supported again in 2022-23 to allow it to be more fully rolled out and expanded to a wider cohort of learners in Glasgow. The programme seeks to inspire, connect and support learners in developing a wider practical understanding of business, enterprise and entrepreneurialism. Support for the enhanced offer will allow Glasgow colleges to benefit from the support of a dedicated Programme Executive, and unlock various opportunities enterprise initiatives, social enterprise challenges, workshops, cross-colleges link opportunities, support and mentoring. In 2022-23 we will look to support greater interaction with learners as well as seeking to bring enterprise and entrepreneur opportunities to learners at lower SCQF levels and greater need profiles.

**Update:** The Bridge 2 Business scheme's expansion continues to be supported with all three colleges in Glasgow now having access to the Bridge 2 Business + model, with greater mentoring, projects, guest speakers and a wider range of activity. This has been most successful where lecturers and departments have fully engaged in integrating the experience into learning and teaching. Young Enterprise Scotland also organised a visit to Barcelona which was well attended by Glasgow college learners, and have opened an incubator space on the south side of Glasgow which is now promoted to Glasgow college learners and graduates. Further update to follow.

**ESOL:** English for Speakers of Other Languages is of critical importance in Glasgow, where we have by far Scotland's largest cohort of learners as well as significant additional demand. ESOL is seen as a vitally important element of reaching learners who are often in Glasgow's most deprived communities and with limited or no access to Further Education. It is seen as an important stage in creating opportunities, and in ensuring that Further Education plays a key role in supporting transitions into learning and work. ESOL funding for the Glasgow college system is provided by GCRB to Glasgow Clyde College, and this has created an effect forum for strategic planning and operational delivery, with membership from all three of Glasgow's colleges as well as local authorities, third sector and other delivering agencies and partners. The group is currently working on evolving the offer and partnership to provide a more effective system, and it is proposed that funding is maintained to ensure this effective partnership and evolution is able to continue.

**Update:** The ESOL programme continues to be effectively administered, convened and guided via Glasgow Clyde College, with a forum including membership from City of Glasgow College, Glasgow Kelvin College, local councils, Glasgow Life and WEA. This approach continues to deliver a coordinated response to a complex challenge – with significant demand which outstrips funding, and a shifting demographic.

Via the ESOL Forum the partnership continues to closely monitor activity, to plan and deliver new programmes and approaches, and to coordinate activity. Activity continues

to offer entry-level and 'emergency' support through to SQA accredited qualifications, supports teacher development, and has been shown to be responsive in meeting needs against a complex background.

**Curriculum and Strategic Planning:** In order to ensure that the strategic objectives of the region are progressed, a Curriculum and Strategic Planning allocation is made, to facilitate greater strategic research and development activity at a regional level. This will ensure that activity which has been impacted the Covid-19 pandemic and Glasgow region review be given new momentum. This work will ensure that national and regional priorities be progressed, and that external partnership and engagement is increased in 2022-23. Skills development, innovation and creativity, progression of targeted qualifications, pan-regional partnership and planning, and coherent learner journey development will form core drivers for directing this activity, as will delivery of greater partnership working with agencies such as Skills Development Scotland. In 2022-23 this will primarily involve developing baseline data in estates and resources to support SFC's national estates strategy, progression of stakeholder mapping and engagement in tandem with the Economic recovery Group, and a renewed look at the Glasgow curriculum and effective skills alignment.

**Update:** GCRB worked with College Development Network and their Economic Recovery Group project to convene a high-level strategic discussion which included GCRB, and executive and governance leads representing the three Glasgow college as well as the three colleges (New College Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire College, and West College Scotland) who form the college system of the wider Glasgow economic region. A wide range of views, opportunities and options were considered, and it was agreed that the executive lead for each of the seven organisations would convene to further explore. This group is now functioning, currently under the name 'College Partnership West' and exploring future opportunities on a project-led basis. In the meantime, the ERG group will complete a report to CDN outlining the initial work undertaken on this project.

In other elements of curriculum and strategic planning:

- GCRB completed a new strategic regional document to direct activity in the current period, and an in-year operational plan to direct 23-24 work.
- GCRB has worked with colleges undertaking staff restructures and other changes in the delivery of a reduced Credit target, seeking to understand curriculum changes and the impact on delivery. This continues to be reported to SFC, while the Glasgow College Group's Learning and Teaching Committee is used as a cross-organisation opportunity to coordinate activity wherever possible.
- Initial discussions and work have commenced with various groups, including Innovate UK and Glasgow City Council to progress focused work on new curriculum approaches, in areas such as innovative practice and green skills aligned to Glasgow's Just Transition plan.

**Mental Health and Wellbeing:** Regional investment in this area has enabled GCRB to facilitate partnership working, deliver training in colleges, and support provision of online support via an online system. Much of this activity is now embedded across the colleges, and is more fully served by direct, specific funding from SFC, so the time is right to explore the evolution of regional opportunities in this space. GCRB will provide

assistance in colleges exploring an improved online support offer. In addition, we will work with the Glasgow Colleges' Student Executives to provide support to a regional mental health and wellbeing event. In addition, we will convene regional and national experts to identify additional activity which can potentially be piloted in Glasgow to make positive change in this vital area.

**Update:** During 2022-2023 there was a lack of clarity and stability in terms of future funding for mental health support in colleges. Therefore, a plan was developed to invest in this area from the Programme of Action 2023-24, and this is now being implemented. Pressures on Student Association activity meant that it was not possible to deliver additional events, but discussions have been on-going with NHS Greater Glasgow to explore further pilot opportunities and projects, and to learn from practice in Glasgow's universities.

**Climate Change and Sustainability:** This project will continue into 2022-23 academic year, ensuring that the Project Manager (Environment and Sustainability) post is able to continue. During this time, the Regional Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy will continue to be delivered, linked to college strategies and the national roadmap for FE colleges. In addition, the cross-colleges working model will be embedded and sustained, learning and teaching opportunities will be expanded in collaboration with the colleges, and process and activity will be developed and delivered to identify and pursue external funding opportunities and wider partnerships.

Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board and the Glasgow colleges recognise the climate emergency and seek to continue to lead by example in a number of ways. This includes our regional commitment to the development and delivery of the Glasgow regional climate action strategy and associated roadmap, our commitment to the national Colleges' Climate Commitment, our partnership and membership of EAUC, and in a wide range of projects and commitments right across the Glasgow college system.

**Update:** A review of 2022-2023 activity has been completed, and it being used to map activity in 2023-2024. A number of college departures have led to a diminished number of staff across the colleges contributing to the cross-organisations Regional Environmental Group, and this has slowed collaborative activity in some area, particularly where colleges have their own strategies. The remaining members continue to collaborate where possible, and this may be sufficient. Colleges may, however, wish to consider further relevant membership to drive progress.

Progress has been most effective in direct partnership work with individual colleges, where the Project Manager (Environment and Sustainability) resource is being effectively used and regularly contributing to activity in colleges. This is particularly true at curriculum level where effective relationship building has led to a wide range of projects.

The development and delivery of a significant survey of both staff and students was also planned and delivered in 2022-23, and this provides useful baseline data for continued work with the colleges, EAUC, and CDN. In addition, partnership engagement and work with Glasgow City Council is increasing, and is likely to lead to positive outcomes for the Glasgow colleges.

A review document is provided by the Project Manager for this committee in the following paper.

## **5. Risk and Compliance Analysis**

- 5.1** There are no specific risks associated with this report. The delivery of the regional Programme of Action addresses key elements of the strategic plan and mitigates some of the regional risks. Specific risks are monitored via each individual project.

## **6. Financial and Resource Analysis**

- 6.1** The financial implications associated with the 2022-23 budget are set out in the associated report on the GCRB budget, which includes funding for the Programme of Action. This budget is monitored throughout the year, and reported to committee and board.

## **7. Equalities Implications**

- 7.1** There are no equalities implications as a direct result of this report. The Programme of Action is intended to provide a positive impact on equalities in the region, including the provision of targeted programmes.

## **8. Learner Implications**

- 8.1** The resources utilised for the purpose of GCRB, and the regional Programme of Action, contribute to the achievement of the agreed learner outcomes in 2022-23.