

Performance & Resources Committee Meeting

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 9 June 2021
Paper Title	Outcome Agreement Draft Update – 2021-2022
Agenda Item	11
Paper Number	PRC5-F
Responsible Officer	Martin Boyle, Executive Director
Recommended Status	Disclosable
Action	For Consideration and Decision

1. Report Purpose

- 1.1. This report is intended to provide committee with an update on development work towards completion of an Outcome Agreement 2021-2022, and associated regional Programme of Action.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Committee is invited to:

- **discuss** and **note** the contents of this progress report; and
- **consider** options for delegation of authority to better facilitate in-year reallocation of credits and funding between Glasgow colleges, in line with the detailed consideration in the paper PRC5-I *Review of Decision-Making Arrangements outwith Meetings Cycle*.

3. Outcome Agreement 2021-22 Progress Report

A) Introduction and Context

- 3.1. As per the report to the Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board (GCRB) on 19 April 2021, Scottish Funding Council (SFC) have not yet confirmed the format of the Outcome Agreement process for 2021-2022, nor for future sessions. It is expected that the previous Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) format will be altered as part of the current review of the Scottish tertiary system, and early drafts of potential future models have previously been shared with board. It is expected that guidance for a version of this new 'Outcomes and Impacts Agreement' will be shared with Scotland's colleges in coming weeks, with completion potentially around September/October 2021.

- 3.2. In the interim, the GCRB Executive has taken the view that timeous, efficient and effective allocation of funding to Glasgow's colleges is the key priority, and that an approach of clarity, consistency and minimal change has been appropriate. Alongside this, it has been important to ensure that progress is made towards the effective review of the Glasgow college system. To that end, work has continued to draft an indicative Outcome Agreement, in which we have sought to ensure consistency with the previous 2020-21 Outcome Agreement, while taking recognition of a complex and changing landscape with significant new challenges and associated new interventions.

- 3.3.** It should be noted that key college performance targets are included in the Final Funding Allocations 2021-2022, and are set out in tables 3 and 3A of the final allocations papers included for this committee.
- 3.4.** The 2020-21 Outcome Agreement for the Glasgow College Region was an ambitious, broad articulation of college activity across the city region, and we have sought to maintain this. Our region encompasses the local authority areas of Glasgow City, East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire and City of Glasgow College, Glasgow Clyde College and Glasgow Kelvin College are assigned colleges within the Glasgow College Region.
- 3.5.** GCRB is responsible for ensuring that college provision across the Glasgow region is coherent and aligned to regional and national strategy priorities, and that it reflects the needs of the regional economy and communities. GCRB allocates funding to colleges within the region to enable delivery of national and regional strategies and priorities, and it monitors the achievement of strategic goals and college performance.
- 3.6.** GCRB develops, on an annual basis, an Outcome Agreement which sets out how the funding allocated by the Scottish Funding Council will be used to fund an outstanding regional learning system which promotes a more equal society, a more successful economy, high-performing institutions and greater innovation in the economy. This document restates the ambition of the Glasgow Region Outcome Agreement for 2020-21, which contained:
- A Programme of Action which sets out at a high-level regional commitments and planned outcomes for that academic year, reflecting GCRB's position as a Regional Strategic Body responsible for planning and funding college delivery.
 - A mapping of planned outcomes to SFC strategic priorities demonstrating the strong alignment, and contribution, of GCRB's action to national goals.
 - Information on regional commitments and planned outcomes for a range of cross cutting themes.
 - An equality impact assessment of planned actions, providing assurance that we should proceed to implement the Glasgow 2020-21 Programme of Action.
 - Links to other strategic and planning, and targets for the years 2020-21 to 2022-23 for all national performance measures.
- 3.7.** This Outcome Agreement was the result of an extensive stakeholder engagement process, including with students and staff and their representative bodies, local authorities, employers and other partners.
- 3.8.** Its core ambition is the continuation of our mission to build Scotland's most inclusive, most responsive, and most effective regional college system in Glasgow.
- 3.9.** This means a regional college system where more Glasgow residents can enter employment with the skills and qualifications they need, providing learning opportunities at all stages of their careers, helping them to prosper and avoid in-work poverty, building flexible skills and contributing to Glasgow's growing, changing economy.
- 3.10.** Our vision is that we create a college region in which:
- Our institutions are high performing, financially sustainable and working collaboratively to deliver an enhanced impact;
 - Our curriculum widens access, draws in people from under-represented groups and reaches those who can benefit most from college learning;
 - High levels of learners attain qualifications, report satisfaction and can progress successfully onto employment or further study;
 - Our colleges provide all Glasgow's learners access to the full regional curriculum, with seamless pathways from school, between the colleges, and onto university or employment;

- We can prove that our regional curriculum meets current and future skills needs and is effectively supporting inclusive economic growth;
 - Our combined regional curriculum is efficiently coordinated without unnecessary gaps or overlaps in its provision; and
 - Innovation is encouraged in all areas of our service delivery; contributing to improved workplace productivity and to regional and national prosperity.
- 3.11.** While it is important to restate this mission and vision for the pending 2021-2022, we recognise that the national and regional context has changed considerably, and here we seek to recognise this change against our continued progress. In the context, discussed below, we have sought to maintain a clear focus on:
- The delivery of outcomes and impact for students.
 - Ensuring outline of contributions to a more focused set of priority issues.

B) Context: COVID-19, Regional and National Review

- 3.12.** As we seek to plan for the future position of the Glasgow college system, it is vitally important to reflect that it is a position, and indeed a world, which has radically changed since the initial development of the Regional Outcome Agreement.
- 3.13.** The Glasgow colleges are operating in an extraordinary context, but it is one in which it is important to be brave, forward-thinking, creative, and focused on benefiting our learners and communities as we build the colleges of the future.
- 3.14.** Through all of our actions as a region we have sought to keep the health and well-being of all of our students and staff at the heart of our decision-making while retaining our very real commitment to ambition for the region, its students, colleges and stakeholders.
- 3.15.** In addition to the continuing challenges of COVID-19, we recognise that Glasgow continues to operate within a unique context with three colleges and a Regional Strategic Body, and that much of our future activity is the subject of Scottish Funding Council's national A Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability in Further and Higher Education. In addition, the national review delivered the Review of Regional Strategic Bodies – Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board and a significant amount of 2020-21 activity for the region has been on the planning an initial delivery of a process designed to deliver the recommendations of this review.
- 3.16.** Taken in the round, the activity of the Glasgow colleges has sought to meet all of these challenges head on, and the financial allocation and proposed work towards an Outcome Agreement is intended to provide a stable and clear context for 2021-22.
- 3.17.** In general terms we have continued to deliver the planned curriculum across the region to ensure a minimal-risk model, and this approach will continue. However, there is significant activity across the three colleges which are a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the emerging impact on our learners, communities and industries, and this work will continue, working in collaboration with regional partners including local authorities.
- 3.18.** Short online courses and so-called 'micro-credentials' allow people to access the wealth of college learning and teaching resources to develop new skills, from CV and interview preparation through to embracing new digital technologies to ensure that college learners are work-ready and able to progress into a complex and unstable landscape.
- 3.19.** Colleges will continue with interventions including new pre-Apprenticeship qualifications, activity under the Young Persons' Guarantee and National Transition Training Fund programmes, and fast-track activity to ensure that we strike a balance between maintaining provision and seeking to provide new education opportunities to address new and emerging needs.

- 3.20.** While it is impossible to underplay the genuine impact of the pandemic on learning and teaching, the Glasgow colleges have a clear shared regional focus on supporting individual learners and their communities as a key step in supporting the region and nation's economic recovery.
- 3.21.** The current focus is on seeking to ensure that the highest possible number of deferred and current students are able to complete their studies and/or progress to their intended next point, while supporting our colleges to have a responsive curriculum which places our learners, communities and the economic recovery of the region and nation at its heart. In doing this, we seek to continue to support and build a world-class, inclusive, responsive and caring college system which supports Scotland's ambition to be a world-leading sector and places Glasgow as a leader. Bold, collaborative, progressive and ambitious approaches are required alongside the continued stability and we seek to maintain this balanced approach to current stability and future ambition.

C) Key Priorities and Commitments

- 3.22.** Given the renewed focus in the SFC Funding Allocation 2021-22, the following areas may be anticipated for inclusion in Outcome Agreement activity and reporting.
- 3.23.** These national policy drivers are translated into a key set of funded activities for 2021-2022, and were reported to board in April 2021. While this does not provide an exhaustive list of all funding it seeks to provide an overview of the scope and scale of this activity linked directly to SFC funding allocations, and therefore reporting:
- **Deferred Students:** allow students whose studies have been disrupted by COVID-19 to complete their courses and move onto further study or employment
 - **Foundation Apprenticeships:** From AY 2021-22 SFC take over the funding of Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) delivered directly through Scotland's colleges, and it is a stated national policy to protect, promote and deliver FAs as a core part of the college system.
 - **Digital Learning:** There is a national expectation of a transition towards the provision of increased digital learning, and additional funding, monitoring and recording activity will follow.
 - **Mental Health:** Funding has been provided to deliver additional mental health services to staff and students due to the impact of COVID-19, and this will remain a key focus on OA and POA activity.
 - **AY 2021-22 activity targets:** The Scottish Government has reaffirmed its commitment to maintain the circa 116k Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) volume target for college student places in AY 2021-22, and core activity will be broadly stable.
 - **European Social Fund credits:** 2021-22 is the final year of the European Social Fund (ESF) programme for colleges. In order to ease the transition to AY 2022-23 when ESF funding will no longer be available, the balance between core credits and ESF credits has been adjusted. As a result of this rebalancing each college will have the same proportion of ESF credits in addition to their core credits and, therefore, the reduction in additional ESF credits in AY 2022-23 will be equal across the sector.
 - **Credits for deferred students:** An additional 33,488 credits have been allocated to support deferred students sector wide; an increase of 1.9% at a sector level, and an increase of between 1.8% and 2.7% for individual colleges.
 - **College/university articulation places:** Streamlining the learner journey by encouraging articulation between colleges and universities remains a priority.
 - **Student Support:** The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on students in terms of disruption to their education and, in many cases, financial hardship. Given the uncertainties around the number of students yet to complete courses and full return to campus teaching there may well be a need to provide additional student support. SFC have therefore identified £3.8 million contingency funding that can be deployed if necessary.
 - **European Social Funding:** SFC continues its commitment to provide funding for the sector's participation in the ESF programme 'Developing Scotland's Workforce' in AY 2021-22, which is the final year of the programme for colleges. SFC have budgeted for the full amount of funding (c. £13 million nationally) associated with college ESF activity in AY 2021-22. This reflects the risks associated with 'match-funding' claims for ESF from the Scottish Government.

- **Flexible Workforce Development Fund:** The Scottish Government and SFC remain committed to enabling UK Apprenticeship Levy-paying employers, and their employees, to benefit from training and up-skilling delivered through the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF), and this was extended to SMEs (and independent training providers via SDS) in AY 2020-21. AY 2021-22 will be the fifth year of the FWDF which was set-up as a pilot programme in AY 2017-18. Its purpose is to provide employers with training opportunities to support inclusive growth through up-skilling/re-skilling employees (originally in response to feedback from the Scottish Government’s consultation on the introduction of the UK Government Apprenticeship Levy).
- **Skills-based courses:** A budget of £10 million has been set aside to be used for short skills-based courses. SFC is continuing to work with the Scottish Government on the use and distribution of this funding, although it is anticipated that it will allow the continuation of the provision currently supported through the Young Person’s Guarantee and National Transition Training Fund in AY 2020-21 into 2021-22.
- **Funding for Counsellors:** As part of its Programme for Government in responding to mental ill-health, the Scottish Government committed to providing more than 80 additional counsellors in FE and HE over a four year period from AY 2019-20.
- **Access to free sanitary provision:** A further year’s funding for the provision of free sanitary products in colleges is expected to be announced in due course, with on-going support from Scottish Government for 2021-22.

D) *Contribution to economic recovery and social renewal*

- 3.24.** Glasgow is Scotland’s largest city region, serving a significant population as well as learners who travel into the city from beyond. Serving just under one quarter of the Scottish college system, we recognise the vital role that Glasgow’s colleges will play in contributing to economic recovery and social renewal.
- 3.25.** The Glasgow colleges have long been immersed in the key role of widening access and participation to learning, and we continue to work in close collaboration with partners across various local authorities to provide opportunities for progressing learners, as well as contributing to the planning of regional responses.
- 3.26.** Members of GCRB and the college are members of key community planning, regional strategic response and specific response groups with local authorities, and we will continue to ensure that the work of meeting the needs of learners and communities is at the heart of our activity.
- 3.27.** In addition, we continue to provide a coherent regional response to future planning by coordinating regional planning group meetings.
- 3.28.** The ambition to provide new courses which are responsive to emerging needs is clearly stated by all of our colleges, as is the central commitment to providing real, lasting positive social impact at the heart of our communities.
- 3.29.** In particular, new short courses and fast-track qualifications have been launched which have a focus on employability skills, digital skills, and/or targeted qualifications in key regional sectors in line with most recent job market data delivery by our partners at Skills Development Scotland, with this data being analysed as part of the planning process at college and board level.
- 3.30.** The Glasgow colleges continue to provide opportunity in work-based learning, and its provision is one of the priority areas which will be increased as colleges reopen to increased levels of activity. It is inevitable that this area is one which has had severe impact as industry, education and society have lived through lockdown, though we continue to seek to address access to work-based in education in areas such as care, engineering and construction, and maritime.

E) *Economic Recovery and Social Renewal*

- 3.31.** Across the Glasgow college region, in-depth labour market intelligence is developed in conjunction with work from Skills Development Scotland as well as local authorities and key industry partners across a variety of sectors. This has been carefully analysed at college level and high-level partnership review is included at the Glasgow Colleges Group cross-colleges meetings. In addition, the Glasgow colleges and GCRB have engaged with Glasgow City Council and associated partners including Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and the voluntary sector to identify new interventions for 2021-22 which include pathways into education from secondary school as well as from placements funded by other interventions within the region. In addition, the colleges continue to develop a suite of interventions which are industry specific as well courses with focus on meta-skills, work-readiness and digital skills.
- 3.32.** Health and wellbeing has been a key priority, with colleges moving at pace to provide digital equipment to ensure home access. In addition, individual colleges and the region have continued to support mental health support via counselling teams, continued professional development for lecturers in conjunction with Charlie Waller Trust, and provision of the online mental health and community support platform Togetherall.
- 3.33.** Cross-regional collaborative groups continue across Glasgow, in areas including cross-college equalities group, marketing and communications group, ESOL partnership including other key stakeholders.
- 3.34.** The regional Programme of Action continues across Glasgow, with partnership work designed to have positive impact on student activity, including targeted activity for mental health support, care-experienced students, students from SIMD-specific areas and ESOL.
- 3.35.** Glasgow is also delivering on a renewed commitment to having a positive impact on the climate emergency. The regional board has created a new Environment Sustainability Manager to develop a new regional strategy, work in collaboration with colleagues across the colleges, support the Student Associations, and develop sustainable partnerships at a regional and national level.
- 3.36.** This work will continue as we develop a document in line with SFC's forthcoming guidelines, in line with the current financial allocation, while noting that the 'emergency year's position has led to a process which is not operating within its normal cycle.

4. Programme of Action 2021-2022

- 4.1.** As a key strategic driver of the Glasgow college system's focus and ambitions, the Programme of Action has been designed to have a positive, targeted impact on our learners, their communities, and colleges. The 2021-2022 programme is proposed as follows:

Commitment	Regional output/outcome	Progress Update
<p>Deliver a support service for care experienced young people (Budget £60,000)</p>	<p>Regional care-experienced support service established across the three colleges, with Action for Children staff working alongside college student support staff to provide additional support both in college and off site, for care experienced learners.</p>	<p>The project commenced in August 2019 and is co-funded, and delivered by, Action for Children. The contract for services is in place and the regional costs are £60,000 (together with additional matched funding of a similar amount).</p> <p>We continue to work closely with Action for Children to identify ways in which we can enhance and support this programme.</p>
<p>Young Enterprise Scotland - Bridge 2 Business (£201,425 via SFC strategic funds)</p>	<p>The Bridge 2 Business programme provides colleges students with opportunities to engage with entrepreneurial role models. It also provides a range of services to inspire and support college students into business.</p>	<p>The project has operated successfully for a number of years. A bid for strategic funding has been submitted to SFC for 2021-22.</p> <p>In addition, for 2021-2022 we will seek to enhance the Bridge 2 Business programme with associated savings from the environment and sustainability programme to offer all Glasgow colleges the B2B + offering.</p>
<p>Empower our ESOL Partnership (£96,348)</p>	<p>Leadership of the city-wide ESOL network, management and continued development of the city-wide ESOL register, and delivery by community partners of access provision.</p>	<p>Glasgow Clyde College is delivering the regional ESOL project in 2021-22. This funding is supplemented by in-kind resources provided by local authority, and community, partners. The ESOL Register (which forms an important component of the ESOL project) has been the subject of a review which has recommended a number of improvements, working across all Glasgow colleges and associated key regional partners.</p>
<p>Mental health, welfare and wellbeing (£20,000)</p>	<p>Following previous POA work, TogetherAll online support access was provided, training sessions delivered and a Code of Practice developed for sharing with the colleges as well as adoption by GCRB.</p>	<p>Given the continued, and indeed growing, importance of this area of activity, it is intended that GCRB continues to support on-going activity in this area, including support for CPD sessions across colleges delivered in partnership with Charlie Waller Trust, delivery of a self-diagnostic tool which colleges may wish to make use of in their own mental health activity. In addition, exploring options for challenge fund activity. Working in collaboration with Glasgow colleges and Student Associations, seeking additional partnership work and enhancement.</p>

Regional Review (£70,000)	The Glasgow college region review seeks to meet the recommended guidance of the SFC Review of RSBs to provide an ambitious, forward-thinking future model for Glasgow.	A funding resource is set aside as part of the Programme of Action to ensure that relevant activity is able to progress. This is likely to include funding for development and research, formal contributions and consultancy, legal and other advice to provide full, developed information to board.
Sustainability (£100,000)	The project provides a collaborative approach to the Climate Change emergency. In doing so it will seek to support projects within individual colleges and throughout the Glasgow College Region.	Environment and sustainability remains a key priority for the sector, with increased strategic work including SFC and CDN. This fund will be used to recruit a lead 'project manager' to coordinate the Glasgow response, develop a Glasgow college system strategy and coordinate activity. As above, the Bridge 2 Business project will also be used to enhance activity.

5. Risk Analysis

- 5.1. This paper addresses *GCRB Risk 009: Failure to achieve the targets set out in the Regional Outcome Agreement lessens our ability to meet regional needs.*

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1. The Regional Outcome Agreement support the ambition to improve access to the region's colleges, and as such has a significant impact on access, inclusion and equalities. A number of KPIs, as well as associated college and regional interventions, including POA focus, are designed to improve access to college level education for individuals identified from across the range of protected characteristics.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. There are no specific legal implications associated with this paper.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. If the region as a whole does not achieve its planned activity target this could have a negative financial impact on future levels of funding.

9. Strategic Plan Implications

- 9.1. This report provides progress update on the development of an interim Outcome Agreement position and actions taken to support achievement of targets informed by the regional strategy and national policy drivers.