

## Performance & Resources Committee Meeting

Date of Meeting	Monday 15 August 2016
Paper Title	Scottish Funding Council Post Merger Evaluation Reports for Glasgow Clyde College and Glasgow Kelvin College
Agenda Item	9
Paper Number	PRC1-E
Responsible Officer	Robin Ashton, Executive Director
Status	Disclosable
Action	For Noting

### 1. Report Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide for information the Scottish Funding Council Post Merger Evaluation Reports for Glasgow Clyde College and Glasgow Kelvin College.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Committee is invited to:

- **note** the Scottish Funding Council Post Merger Evaluation Reports for Glasgow Kelvin College and Glasgow Clyde College;
- **note** the significant evidence provided within these SFC reports that the mergers have improved opportunities, experiences and outcomes for learners, staff and stakeholders and support achievement of Regional Outcome Agreement aims;
- **note** the ongoing merger and regionalisation related challenges for Glasgow Kelvin College and Glasgow Clyde College identified by the SFC; and
- **request** the Executive Director to arrange consideration of these reports at the next meeting of the GCRB Board.

### 3. Background

- 3.1. In autumn 2015 the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) began a round of post-merger evaluations of the colleges that merged in the academic year 2013/14. In most cases these evaluations were scheduled to take place two years after the merger.
- 3.2. SFC stated that in carrying out the evaluations across the sector they would pay particular attention to the Audit Scotland Good Practice Guide: Learning the lessons of public body mergers.
- 3.3. The purpose of the merger evaluations were to provide evidence of progress in delivering the intended high level benefits of the mergers and to identify lessons learned that support further organisational development and wider learning for the sector.

- 3.4. Key steps in developing the post-merger evaluations included the submission by the college of a self-evaluation report, an SFC review of evidence (including performance indicators), and SFC arranged discussion sessions/meetings with students, staff, senior managers, the Board of Management and other key stakeholders.
- 3.5. The SFC post-merger evaluation reports were shared with the Scottish Government and the colleges prior to being published on the SFC website.

#### 4. SFC post-merger evaluations of Glasgow Clyde College and Glasgow Kelvin College

- 4.1. The full SFC post-merger evaluation reports for Glasgow Clyde College and Glasgow Kelvin College are attached as annexes to this report.
- 4.2. The reports consider the impact of merger on a range of aspects of college delivery including:
  - efficiencies and benefits of scale;
  - improved outcomes for students;
  - curriculum coherence, progression opportunities and high quality learning and teaching;
  - stronger focus on vocational and employment skills and meeting industry needs;
  - financial efficiencies and savings;
  - effective leadership and governance;
  - communications and staff engagement;
  - organisational development and culture change;
  - systems development integration; and
  - student/learner engagement
- 4.3. The following are conclusions drawn by the SFC and the assigned colleges on the outcomes of the two mergers:

##### Glasgow Clyde College

- SFC considers that this merger has been implemented well in the context of the challenging governance issues in the second year of the merger. It can be regarded as a success in terms of the college's achievements thus far. SFC heard overwhelmingly positive feedback about what Glasgow Clyde College has to offer students flowing from in its partnerships with schools, universities, the local community, employers and other key stakeholders. These connections are all working to enhance the learner / student experience. Employers and other stakeholders provided testimonies that it operates effectively as a college of scale with a more distinctive brand and an excellent reputation for skills development. The view shared by all is that the staff are professional and place a high priority on engagement with employers and delivering for students.
- Despite the challenging context referred to, SFC considers that the success in implementing the merger is a result of the ongoing efforts of the Principal and a strong senior management team, the highly committed teaching and support staff across the college who continued to prioritise the learner experience during the challenging early post-merger period and beyond.
- SFC will continue to work closely with Glasgow Clyde College on a range of issues where it is appropriate for SFC to do so. In addition SFC will continue to work with GCRB to review the college's contribution to delivering the key elements of

the Glasgow Region Outcome Agreement and to ensure the college addresses the current challenges related to its financial position.

#### Glasgow Kelvin College

- SFC considers that this merger has been implemented well given the challenging context pre and post-merger. It can be regarded as a success in terms of the College's achievements for students, stakeholders and staff. There was a consensus view that the College has been successful in taking the best parts of the legacy colleges in developing the new institutions but it has also raised the bar in what it expected in terms of the student experience and outcomes for learners.
- Despite the challenging context referred to, SFC considers that the success in implementing the merger is a result of the ongoing efforts of the Principal and a strong senior management team, the highly committed teaching and support staff across the College who continued to prioritise the learner experience during the challenging early post-merger period and beyond, and the Board of Management who have been resolute in their vision and strategic leadership of the College. However, the College's financial position remains an ongoing concern.
- SFC have taken account of recent discussions with Education Scotland about the College's progress in delivery against the post-review Action Plan and SFC are reassured that the College is making continued improvement and working to address the main points that resulted in the earlier judgement. SFC will continue to work with Glasgow Kelvin College in collaboration with Education Scotland to ensure the College fully realises the benefits of the merger for students, staff and other stakeholders
- SFC will continue to work closely with Glasgow Kelvin College on a range of issues. This includes working in collaboration with Education Scotland to ensure the College fully addresses the issues raised as part of the 'limited effectiveness' judgement. In addition SFC will continue to work with GCRB to review the College's contribution to delivering the key elements of the Glasgow Region Outcome Agreement and to ensure the College addresses the current challenges related to its financial position.

**4.4.** The SFC evaluations also highlight ongoing merger and regionalisation related challenges and issues. Common themes across the reports include improving communication between college managers and staff, creating greater consistency in the quality of learning and teaching, and further developing the contribution of Student Associations to the life and work of the colleges.

**4.5.** It is suggested that due to the significance of the structural change evaluated by these SFC merger reports, the Executive Director should arrange consideration of these SFC reports at the next meeting of the GCRB Board.

## **5. Risk Analysis**

**5.1.** The SFC conclude that overall they consider both college mergers to have been implemented well and can be regarded as a successful. Therefore, no significant risks are identified.

## **6. Legal Implications**

**6.1.** There are no specific legal implications arising from this paper.

## **7. Financial Implications**

**7.1.** The SFC merger report for Glasgow Kelvin College highlights challenges to its financial sustainability. However, the SFC report that they are reassured that despite the unique set of challenges the college faces (including a 19% reduction in income as part of regional reconfiguration of the curriculum delivery in the context of the City of Glasgow new build) it has good financial management and procedures in place and there is consistency in financial returns to SFC. SFC also record that it is their view that the college Board has clear oversight of the task required by the College to turnaround its financial position and a clear underpinning strategy for the future.

## **8. Regional Outcome Agreement Implications**

**8.1.** The two reports provide substantial evidence that the mergers of Glasgow Clyde College and Glasgow Kelvin College have significantly supported the achievement of Regional Outcome Aims to provide the right earning in the right place, to widen regional access and participation and to improve the quality of learning and progression opportunities provided by Glasgow colleges.