

Board Meeting

Date of Meeting	Monday, 27 January 2020
Paper Title	Sustainability and the Climate Emergency - Presentation
Agenda Item	13
Paper Number	BM2-0
Responsible Officer	Jim Godfrey, Interim Executive Director
Status	Disclosable
Action	For Information

1. Report Purpose

- 1.1. Provide context to the Sustainability and the Climate Emergency – Presentation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Board is invited to:

- **note** this report and **invite** Lisa Clark to provide a detailed presentation on this topic;
- **agree** to recruit a full-time regional lead for climate change;
- **delegate** authority to the Interim Executive Director to work in conjunction with college colleagues to progress the recruitment process.

3. Background

- 3.1. During 2019, momentum has been building for action to be taken in respect of the Climate Change emergency both in terms of political declarations (such as the one made by the Scottish Government) but also in terms of support for direct action (such as Extinction Rebellion).
- 3.2. The Ministerial Letter of Guidance (published July 2019) increased the pressure on the sector to respond to the environmental challenges. SFC was invited “...to work with colleges and universities to develop a more ambitious agenda on climate change”. The letter asks that the SFC gives “...urgent consideration of how you can support the Scottish economy to decarbonise at pace.”
- 3.3. The further impetus for change comes in the form of the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) event that will take place in Glasgow in November 2020. The UN Climate Change conference will bring together world leaders to discuss how to tackle the global impact of climate change.

4. Report

- 4.1.** Discussions took place with colleagues as to how the region might respond to this agenda. This included discussions with individual principals and meetings with student presidents. A consensus emerged that this is an area that we should work together collaboratively to develop a regional approach.
- 4.2.** Around the same time, Glasgow Kelvin College provided an overview of the excellent work that they had been doing in this area. On 13 January 2020, a meeting was convened of the college leads for sustainability/climate change. There was support for a shared approach that would could benefit the region e.g. the ability to access additional external resources. Whilst the precise nature of the post is still being developed, there is support for a shared resource that can further develop overall college environmental plans to the benefit of the region as a whole. A similar endorsement was received from at a meeting of Chairs, Principals and the Interim Executive Director on 15 January 2020.
- 4.3.** Members will note that the Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) for 2020-21 appears as a separate item on this agenda. Contained within the ROA is the proposal to include the topic of Climate Change/Sustainability within our regional programme of action.
- 4.4.** One of the ideas, supported by the Colleges, is that there could be a shared regional lead for Climate Change (perhaps this may operate along similar lines to the shared post of Data Protection Officer). The cost of such a post would be met from the regional programme budget.
- 4.5.** One option would be to wait until the start of the next academic year. However, this was considered to be an unnecessary delay and reduce our ability to make a difference. The alternative would be to respond in a pro-active manner. For example, we could utilise some of the underspend in the current financial year¹ to take action sooner.
- 4.6.** The Board is invited to consider the opportunity to re-allocate savings (that have been realised in the current year) to meet the cost of this opportunity. The presentation by Lisa Clark will give an overview of work that has already taken place and provide an indication of what is possible in the future.

5. Risk Analysis

- 5.1.** There are no risks associated with this report.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1.** There are no equalities implications as a direct result of this report.

¹ For example, a saving of £72,000 in staff costs was reported to the Performance and Resources Committee in December 2019. This has been realised as a result of the interim arrangements within GCRB during 2019-20.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1.** There are no specific legal implications associated with this report. However, the appointment of a Regional Lead for Climate Change will assist the colleges to meet their climate change duties.

8. Resource Implications

- 8.1.** The cost of the post is to be determined by the Interim Executive Director working in conjunction with the three college leads. The total cost will not exceed the annual amount allocated by the Board in the draft Regional Outcome Agreement for 2020-21.
- 8.2.** Commencing a recruitment process before the start of the next academic year will have a limited financial impact. For budgetary purposes, a maximum cost of £20,000 would apply.
- 8.3.** It is expected that the Regional Lead would enable the colleges to access additional sources of external funding. This would be expected to have a positive financial benefit to the Glasgow College Region.

9. Strategic Plan Implications

- 9.1.** The Executive Director is responsible for implementation of the Glasgow Region Strategic Plan for College Education 2017-2022. The information contained within this report, and the presentation by Lisa Clark, is consistent with the Strategic Plan. The commitment to developing the regional approach to Climate Change is also consistent with Government policy.
- 9.2.** Perhaps the most important aspect is that it is something that has support from a wide range of stakeholders and assists all concerned in showing real commitment to our corporate social responsibility across the region.