

GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE**Learning and Teaching Committee – 06 May 2026****Skills Planning Reform – Scottish Government Developments****Report by Vice Principal Education, Skills and Student Success****1. Introduction**

This report provides members with an update on national developments in skills planning being led by the Scottish Government (SG), following the Independent Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape (Withers Review). The reforms represent a significant shift towards a more strategic, evidence led and nationally coordinated approach to skills planning, with strengthened regional arrangements.

The Scottish Government is currently consulting with stakeholders on key elements of the future skills planning model, including the approach to setting strategic direction for skills planning and the identification of priority sectors for detailed skills needs assessment.

2. Skills Planning Reform – Update on Scottish Government Developments**2.1 National Context and Case for Change**

The Withers Review identified weaknesses in Scotland's existing approach to skills planning, noting limited national prioritisation, unclear roles and responsibilities across public bodies, and insufficient alignment between skills provision and Scotland's long term economic, social and environmental priorities. In response, the Scottish Government has committed to introducing a new government led national skills planning approach, alongside strengthened regional skills planning, with the objective of ensuring post school provision becomes more responsive to Scotland's strategic skills needs.

This reform programme also aligns with wider post school education and skills reforms, including funding body simplification, apprenticeship reform, and the introduction of a National Funding Strategy through the Tertiary Education and Training (Funding and Governance) framework.

2.2 Overview of the New Skills Planning Model

The Scottish Government, working with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), has agreed a new national skills planning model comprising five linked stages:

- Strategic Direction for Skills Planning – identifying sectors of strategic national importance where skills shortages are most critical
- Skills Needs Assessment – enhanced analytical work led by SDS to identify priority technical and professional skills within those sectors
- Skills Prioritisation – a national process to confirm priority skills for Scotland
- Setting Expectations – translation of national and regional priorities into expectations for the post school education and skills system

- Provision Planning and Reporting – enhanced planning and assurance arrangements led by SFC to support delivery of priority skills provision

The model is being implemented on an iterative basis, recognising the need to align with parallel reforms and to build capacity across the system.

2.3 Identification of Priority Sectors – Current Position

As the first step in the model, the Scottish Government has undertaken analysis to identify those sectors where Skills Needs Assessments should be prioritised. This work has drawn on labour market evidence, skills shortage data, future workforce demand, and alignment with national and regional priorities. Following this analysis, the Scottish Government has identified five broad sectors for initial focus:

- Construction
- Engineering
- Digital
- Energy
- Financial, Professional and Business Services

These sectors have been selected on the basis that they show evidence of current and/or future skills shortages, are closely aligned to Scotland's strategic ambitions (including economic growth and the transition to net zero), and are likely to generate insights with relevance across multiple parts of the economy.

The Scottish Government has confirmed that other established national priorities, including Health, Education and Social Care, will continue to be addressed through existing workforce planning and policy mechanisms and will be considered alongside future skills prioritisation.

2.4 Strengthening Regional Skills Planning

A central feature of the reforms is the strengthening of regional skills planning arrangements. Regions will continue to identify their own priority skills needs, informed by local economic strategies and employer demand. The national model is intended to complement, rather than replace, regional planning, with improved alignment between national priorities, regional intelligence and institutional curriculum planning.

Colleges are identified within the emerging model as key partners in regional skills planning, with an expectation of active engagement in shaping and responding to regional priorities.

2.5 Implications for Glasgow Kelvin College

The skills planning reforms signal an increased emphasis on national and regional alignment of curriculum provision with identified priority skills, supported by clearer expectations and enhanced planning and reporting arrangements led by SFC. While detailed impacts on funding, provision planning and accountability arrangements are still under development, it is anticipated that colleges will be expected to demonstrate increasing alignment between curriculum planning, regional skills priorities and national skills direction.

The College is already actively engaged in regional skills planning activity across the Glasgow City Region, and further updates will be brought to Committee as the national model is finalised and implementation arrangements become clearer.

3. Resource Implications

There are no immediate resource implications arising directly from this report. However, in the medium term, implementation of the new skills planning arrangements may have implications for curriculum planning processes, data requirements and engagement activity.

4. Impact on Students

The reforms are intended to improve alignment between learning provision, labour market needs and progression opportunities, supporting positive outcomes for learners and improved employability.

5. Risk and Assurance

There are no immediate risks identified for the College arising directly from this update. The emerging national framework is intended to provide greater system level assurance on the coherence and relevance of skills provision.

6. Equality

There are no direct equality implications arising directly from this report. However, equality and inclusion considerations are identified within the national model as an important dimension of future skills prioritisation and provision policy.

7. Data Protection

There are no data protection implications arising directly from this report

8. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- i. Note the emerging Scottish Government approach to skills planning reform; and
- ii. Note that further updates on implications for the College will be brought to Committee as national arrangements are finalised.

9. Further Information

Members can obtain additional information on the contents of this report from Robin Ashton, Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality Enhancement.

Glasgow Kelvin College
RA
13/04/2026