

Review of the Regional Strategic Bodies within the Glasgow and Lanarkshire college regions

Consultation Analysis

December 2024

Contents

List of abbreviations	3
About this report	3
Background.....	4
Overview of respondents	5
Analysis.....	6
Question 1.....	6
Question 2.....	7
Question 3.....	8
Question 4.....	8
Question 5.....	9
Question 6.....	9
Question 7.....	10
Question 8.....	11
Question 9.....	12
Question 10.....	12
Question 11.....	13
Question 12.....	13
Question 13.....	14
Question 14.....	15
Question 15.....	15
Question 16.....	16
Next steps.....	17
Annex A – List of organisations that responded to the consultation	18

List of abbreviations

EIS-FELA - Educational Institute of Scotland Further Education Lecturers Association

RSB - Regional Strategic Body

SFC - Scottish Funding Council

About this report

This report provides an analysis of responses to the Scottish Government's consultation on the "[Review of Regional Strategic Bodies within the Glasgow and Lanarkshire college regions](#)" which ran from 17 June to 20 September 2024. The consultation paper can be accessed here:

[Review of the Regional Strategic Bodies within the Glasgow and Lanarkshire college regions - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#)

Background

1. The Scottish Government's "Review of Regional Strategic Bodies within the Glasgow and Lanarkshire college regions" consultation included proposals to reform the governance structures and regional planning arrangements in the Glasgow and Lanarkshire college regions.
2. The two proposals within the consultation were to dissolve the Glasgow and Lanarkshire Regional Strategic Bodies, and to introduce alternative collaborative forums to allow for regional planning within the Glasgow and Lanarkshire college regions.
3. The Glasgow and Lanarkshire Regional Strategic Bodies were introduced as part of the college regionalisation work and have been able to use existing provisions within the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) 2005 Act to exercise powers with a view to securing coherent provision of a high quality of fundable further and higher education in the localities of its colleges. To dissolve the Glasgow and Lanarkshire Regional Strategic Bodies would require an affirmative statutory instrument to modify Part 1 of Schedule 2A of the 2005 Act. In order to give effect to this change, Scottish Ministers must lay this in the Scottish Parliament and follow the appropriate processes for this to come into force.
4. The Scottish Government launched a consultation on the proposals, which ran for 12 weeks from 17 June until 20 September 2024. The consultation sought views on the proposals to inform decision-making and to establish whether these proposals were seen as the right changes to take forward through an affirmative statutory instrument.
5. All responses to the consultation were analysed and themes identified, and are presented in the analysis section of this report.

Overview of respondents

A total of 24 written responses were received and of these 7 were from individuals; and 17 were from organisations.

18 of the responses were submitted to the consultation on Citizen Space, which is the Scottish Government's consultation website. 6 of the responses were received by email and were sent directly to the lead policy official. No responses were received by post.

Of the 24 responses received, 19 have been published on the Scottish Government website. Most respondents were happy to have their views published, however 5 responses from individuals have been published anonymously as requested. All responses have been included in this analysis. The published responses can be accessed here:

[Review of the Regional Strategic Bodies within the Glasgow and Lanarkshire college regions - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#)

A list of the organisations who consented to their responses being published can be found at Annex A.

Analysis

There were 16 questions in the consultation document which related to the proposals to reform the Glasgow and Lanarkshire Regional Strategic Bodies. 6 questions were closed (questions 1, 3, 6, 8, 11, 14) and also included an open response where respondents were asked to give a reason for their answer.

All questions were answered by some respondents. No questions were answered by all respondents to the consultation.

The analysis below follows the layout of the consultation document.

Question 1

Should the Lanarkshire RSB be dissolved and both Lanarkshire colleges become regional colleges?

From the 24 responses received to the consultation, 14 responded to this question (58% of respondents).

The majority of responses were in favour of the proposal to dissolve the Lanarkshire RSB, with 12 of the 14 respondents answering yes to this question. When removing the “not answered” responses from consideration, 12 respondents agreed with this proposal, whilst 2 of respondents answered “no”.

The following themes emerged from those who were supportive of the proposed changes:

- Opportunity to improve accountability and assurance processes
- Further opportunities for colleges to collaborate with wider partners for better regional planning
- Opportunity for student views to be at the heart of regional planning
- Opportunity to improve the funding process and allocate funding directly from the SFC to the colleges in the region.

The following themes emerged from those who were against the proposed changes¹:

- Students may be impacted in rural areas
- Students may have to travel further for education

¹ The nature of this answer suggests that there may have been some misunderstanding of the consultation questions as it relates to a movement of provision as a result of dissolution of the boards which is not expected to occur as an impact of changes.

Question 2

Please explain your views.

18 respondents (75%) provided a response to this question.

As this was a follow-up for question 1, the majority of responses were in favour of the proposal to dissolve the Lanarkshire RSB.

The following themes emerged from those who were supportive of the proposed changes:

- Opportunity to improve accountability and assurance processes
- Further opportunities for colleges to collaborate with wider partners for better regional planning
- Opportunity for student views to be at the heart of regional planning
- Opportunity to improve the funding process and allocate funding directly from the SFC

The following themes emerged from those who were against the proposed changes:

- Students may be impacted in rural areas
- Students may have to travel further for education

A summary of the responses to each theme is presented below.

Accountability and Assurance Processes:

- Important that a consistent approach is taken to ensure colleges are held to account

Collaborative arrangements for regional planning:

- Improved opportunities to engage with a wider range of partners to benefit regional planning
- Opportunities for colleges to collaborate on a deeper level to create a stronger college sector, improve job opportunities, deliver coherent provision, meet local communities needs and improve evaluation
- Risk that changes could have negative impact by creating a less accessible learner offer if there was an impact on campuses and course offering which could result in learners having to travel further to access provision

Funding allocation

- Opportunity for a clearer approach to the allocation of funding

Question 3

Should South Lanarkshire College and New College Lanarkshire enter into formal collaborative arrangements?

There were 12 responses to this question – 50% of respondents to the consultation answered this question.

Most responses were in favour of collaborative arrangements in the Lanarkshire college region but not necessarily with just each other, with 7 out of the 12 question respondents in favour of this approach. When removing the “not answered” responses from consideration, 7 respondents think both Lanarkshire colleges should enter into collaborative arrangement, but not necessarily with each other. While 1 respondent thinks both Lanarkshire colleges should enter into collaborative arrangements together. Lastly, 4 respondents were not in favour of the Lanarkshire colleges entering into collaborative arrangements.

The following themes emerged from those who were supportive of the proposed collaborative arrangements:

- Opportunity for improved regional planning and better outcomes
- Opportunity to collaborate with wider partners
- Opportunity for improved accountability process with the SFC as a defined agreement would serve as a reference point for evaluation

The following themes emerged from those who were not supportive of the proposed collaborative arrangements:

- Risk that learning offer is less accessible for students in Lanarkshire and Glasgow
- Important that regional planning remains college specific to ensure it remains responsive to the needs of their immediate local area including the local jobs market

Question 4

If yes, please describe how you would see collaborative arrangements working for each of the Lanarkshire colleges and who should be involved.

13 respondents (54% of respondents) provided a response to Question 4.

A summary of the responses to each theme is presented below.

Accountability and Assurance Processes:

- Opportunity for improved approach to allow colleges to work in a more collaborative manner
- Opportunity to find an improved approach to enable ways to better evaluate performance

Collaborative arrangements for regional planning

- Improved opportunities to engage with a wider range of partners, including SDS, Scottish Enterprise, Prosper and Colleges Partnership West to benefit regional planning
- Opportunity for colleges to work in a more flexible manner and focus on developing regional needs
- Opportunity for improved outcomes for learners

Question 5

If no, please describe how you think the colleges could ensure that they fulfil their new duties (to plan and provide education and skills curriculum for the benefit of the learner, regional economy and community).

8 responses were received to this question (33% of the 24 respondents responding to the consultation).

A summary of the responses to each theme is presented below.

Accountability and Assurance Processes:

- Risk that by making these changes will impact accountability and reduce collaboration due to the dissolution of formal legal requirements as currently underpin the board
- There will be a need for robust monitoring of performance. Respondents suggested that this could take the form of a regional plan from regional colleges requiring annual updates or through continued collaboration on the Regional Outcome agreements

Collaborative arrangements for regional planning

- Changes could result in a less accessible learner offer due to increased travel distances if changes to offer at specific college campuses was to happen as a result of the dissolution of the board
- Risk that the changes will not lead to better outcomes

Question 6

Should the Glasgow RSB be dissolved and the three Glasgow colleges become regional colleges?

There were 17 responses to this question (71% of respondents to the consultation).

The majority of responses were in favour of the proposal to dissolve the Glasgow RSB, with 15 out of the 17 respondents answering yes to this question. When removing the “not answered” responses from consideration, 15 respondents agreed with this proposal and 2 respondents answered “no” to this question.

The following themes emerged from those who were supportive of the proposed changes:

- Opportunity for improved accountability and assurance processes
- Opportunity for colleges to improve collaborate working and regional planning
- Opportunity to improve process to allocate funding directly from the SFC
- Opportunity for colleges to be more flexible in their learner offer
- Dissolving the Glasgow RSB removes an unnecessary additional layer of governance and will reduce duplication of effort for the Glasgow colleges

The following themes emerged from those who were against the proposed changes:

- Risk that removing the Glasgow RSB with formal powers may result in less than optimal collaborative working arrangements
- Existing structures already provide colleges with opportunity to develop regional planning
- Risk that colleges are less accountable
- Removing the Glasgow RSB may result in greater inefficiencies and competition between Glasgow's colleges resulting in poorer outcomes for learners

Question 7

Please explain your views.

In follow-up to Question 6, the consultation asked respondents to provide further explanation of their views.

20 respondents provided a response to this question (83% of the total number of respondents to the consultation).

The majority of responses were in favour of the proposal to dissolve the Glasgow RSB.

The following themes emerged from those who were supportive of the proposed changes:

- Opportunity for improved accountability and assurance processes
- Opportunity for colleges to improve collaborate working and regional planning
- Opportunity to improve process to allocate funding directly from the SFC
- Dissolving the Glasgow RSB removes an unnecessary additional layer of governance and will reduce duplication of effort for the Glasgow colleges

The following themes emerged from those who were against the proposed changes:

- Risk that removing the Glasgow RSB with formal powers may result in less than optimal collaborative working arrangements
- Existing structures already provide colleges with opportunity to develop regional planning
- Risk that a future collaborative body would be less accountable without a formal accountability

- Removing the Glasgow RSB may result in greater inefficiencies and competition between Glasgow’s colleges resulting in poorer outcomes for learners.

A summary of the responses to each theme is presented below.

Accountability and Assurance Processes:

- Important that a consistent approach is taken to ensure colleges are held to account
- Suggestion that a new governing body be put in place comprised of elected members
- Importance of formal accountability of any new body

Collaborative arrangements for regional planning

- Improved opportunities to engage with a wider range of partners to benefit regional planning
- Opportunities for colleges to collaborate on a deeper level
- Opportunity for improved outcomes
- Risk that changes could have negative impact and be create a less accessible learner offer
- Risk if robust measures are not in place this will result in colleges not working in a collaborative manner to prioritise regional planning

Funding allocation

- Opportunity for a clearer approach to the allocation of funding

Question 8

Should City of Glasgow College, Glasgow Clyde College and Glasgow Kelvin College enter into formal collaborative arrangements?

There were 16 responses to this question (67% of respondents to the consultation answered this question).

Most responses were in favour of a collaborative arrangement in the Glasgow college region which includes a wider range of partners, with 12 out of the 16 respondents in favour of this approach. When removing the “not answered” responses from consideration, many respondents to this question (12) think the three Glasgow colleges should enter into collaborative arrangement which includes a wider range of partners. While 3 respondents think the three Glasgow colleges should enter into collaborative arrangements but just between the three Glasgow colleges. Lastly, 1 respondent was not in favour of the Glasgow colleges entering into collaborative arrangements.

The following themes emerged from those who were supportive of the proposed collaborative arrangements:

- Opportunities for improved regional planning and better outcomes

- Opportunity to collaborate with wider range of partners
- Opportunity for improved accountability process with the SFC

The following themes emerged from those who were not supportive of the proposed collaborative arrangements:

- Robust assurance and accountability processes required
- Risk that colleges will not work in a collaborative manner
- Risk to outcomes for students if financial savings are the driver for change and this subsequently leads to an impact on facilities

Question 9

If yes, please describe how you would see collaborative arrangements working in Glasgow and who should be involved.

18 respondents provided a response to Question 9 (75% of the total number of respondents to the consultation).

A summary of the responses to each theme is presented below.

Accountability and Assurance Processes:

- Important that a consistent approach is taken to ensure colleges are held to account

Collaborative arrangements for regional planning

- Improved opportunities to engage with a wider range of partners to benefit regional planning
- Opportunities for colleges to collaborate on a deeper level
- Opportunity for improved outcomes

Funding allocation

- Opportunity for a clearer approach to the allocation of funding

Question 10

If no, please describe how you think the colleges could ensure that they fulfil their duties (to plan and provide education and skills curriculum for the benefit of the learner, regional economy and community).

5 respondents provided a response to this question (21% of the total number of respondents to the consultation).

A summary of the responses to each theme is presented below.

Accountability and Assurance Processes:

- Risk that by making these changes it will make colleges less accountable

- There will be a need for robust monitoring of performance

Collaborative arrangements for regional planning

- Changes could result in a less accessible learner offer
- Risk that the changes will not lead to better outcomes

Question 11

Do you think the implementation of the proposal delivers benefits in the Lanarkshire college region?

50% of respondents to the consultation gave a response to this question (12 responses).

The majority of the responses were of the view that the implementation of the proposal delivers benefits in the Lanarkshire college region, with 9 out of the 12 respondents in favour of this approach. When removing the “not answered” responses from consideration:

- 9 respondents were in agreement that this will benefit both the learner and regional economy
- 1 respondent did not think this would deliver benefits in the Lanarkshire college region
- 2 respondents answered “don’t know” to this question

The following themes emerged from those who agreed this would deliver benefits in the Lanarkshire college region:

- Improved opportunities to support learners
- Improved opportunities for colleges to collaborate and regional planning
- Opportunity for improved accountability and assurance processes
- Opportunity for improved funding arrangements to allocate funding directly from the SFC

The following themes emerged from those who were against the proposed changes:

- Risk to workforce and benefit to learner offer
- Risk that students find learning offer less accessible
- Risk that there is less support to students

Question 12

Please explain your answer.

50% of respondents to the consultation gave a response to this question (12 responses).

A summary of the responses to each theme is presented below.

Accountability and Assurance Processes:

- Important that a consistent approach is taken to ensure colleges are held to account

Collaborative arrangements for regional planning

- Improved opportunities to engage with a wider range of partners to benefit regional planning
- Opportunities for colleges to collaborate on a deeper level.
- Opportunity for improved outcomes

Funding allocation

- Opportunity for a clearer approach to the allocation of funding

Workforce & Learning Offer

- Risk that changes could result in workforce cuts
- Risk that changes could have a negative impact on the learner offer and support to students

Question 13

What impact, if any, will the proposals have on your own organisation, and your service users, staff and potential employees? Please particularly consider any implications for people who are socio-economically disadvantaged or from the protected equality groups.

13 responses were received to this question (54% of the 24 responses received to the consultation)

A summary of the responses to each theme is presented below.

Accountability and Assurance Processes:

- Important that a consistent approach is taken to ensure colleges are held to account

Collaborative arrangements for regional planning

- Improved opportunities to engage with a wider range of partners to benefit regional planning
- Opportunities for colleges to collaborate on a deeper level
- Opportunity for improved outcomes

Funding allocation

- Opportunity for a clearer approach to the allocation of funding

Workforce & Learning Offer

- Risk that changes could result in workforce cuts
- Risk that changes could have a negative impact on the learner offer and support to students

Question 14

Do you think the implementation of the proposal delivers benefits in the Glasgow college region?

There were 17 responses to this question (71% of the total respondents).

The majority of the responses are of the view that the implementation of the proposal delivers benefits in the Glasgow college region, with 12 out of the 17 respondents in favour of this approach. When removing the “not answered” responses from consideration, 12 respondents were in agreement that this will benefit both the learner and regional economy. 3 respondents did not think this would deliver benefits in the Glasgow college region. Lastly, 2 respondents answered “don’t know” to this question.

The following themes emerged from those who agreed this would deliver benefits in the Glasgow college region:

- Improved opportunities to provide better learners pathways
- Improved opportunities for colleges to work collaboratively with a wider range of partners for regional planning
- Opportunity for improved accountability and assurance processes

The following themes emerged from those who were against the proposed changes:

- Risk to workforce and benefit to learner offer
- Risk that students find learning offer less accessible
- May negatively impact regional planning if colleges do not work in a collaborative manner
- Risk that accountability and assurances process are not robust enough

Question 15

Please explain your answer.

71% of respondents to the consultation gave a response to this question (17 responses).

A summary of the responses to each theme is presented below.

Accountability and Assurance Processes:

- Important that a consistent approach is taken to ensure colleges are held to account

Collaborative arrangements for regional planning

- Improved opportunities to engage with a wider range of partners to benefit regional planning
- Opportunities for colleges to collaborate on a deeper level.
- Opportunity for improved outcomes

Funding allocation

- Opportunity for a clearer approach to the allocation of funding

Workforce & Learning Offer

- Risk that changes could have a negative impact on the learner offer and support to students

Question 16

What impact, if any, will the proposals have on your own organisation, and your service users, staff and potential employees? Please particularly consider any implications for people who are socio-economically disadvantaged or from the protected equality groups.

16 respondents gave a response to this question (67% of the 24 respondents responding to the consultation.)

A summary of the responses to each theme is presented below.

Collaborative arrangements for regional planning

- Improved opportunities to engage with a wider range of partners to benefit regional planning
- Opportunities for colleges to collaborate on a deeper level.
- Opportunity for improved outcomes

Funding allocation

- Opportunity for a clearer approach to the allocation of funding

Workforce & Learning Offer

- Risk that changes could result in workforce cuts
- Risk that changes could have a negative impact on the learner offer and support to students

Next steps

This analysis has been presented to the Minister for Higher Education & Further Education; and Minister for Veterans, along with the Ministerial Submission.

Following that advice, the Minister has made the decision to:

- Dissolve the Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board (GCRB), the Regional Strategic Body (RSB) for the Glasgow college region;
- No longer have New College Lanarkshire (NCL) designated as the RSB for the Lanarkshire college region; and
- Designate each of the Glasgow and Lanarkshire colleges as "regional colleges"

These actions will be taken to allow, subject to Parliamentary agreement, the changes to come into effect from Academic Year 2025/26.

The Scottish Government will continue to engage with the SFC, assigned colleges, RSB's and other stakeholders will work together to explore best options for future collaborative arrangements in the regions.

This decision will also require a process to recruit and appoint a new Ministerially appointed Chair at each of the 5 colleges. The Scottish Government will seek to complete this recruitment within the timeframes required.

Annex A – List of organisations that responded to the consultation

- Glasgow Clyde College
- Glasgow Kelvin College
- City of Glasgow College
- South Lanarkshire College
- New College Lanarkshire
- Chairs of City of Glasgow College, Glasgow Clyde College, Glasgow Kelvin College
- Glasgow Colleges Regional Board
- Glasgow City Region – Regional Skills Devolution Group
- National Union of Students – Scotland
- Skills Development Scotland
- Audit Scotland
- EIS/FELA representatives of the three Glasgow Colleges



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