Item 16
For Discussion and Noting

Glasgow Kelvin College

Finance & Resources Committee Meeting of 29 September 2026

Best Value Report

Report by Vice Principal Resources and Corporate Development

1. Introduction

Accountable Officers appointed by the Principal Accountable Officer (PAO) for the Scottish Administration have a specific responsibility to ensure that arrangements have been made to secure Best Value.

The Scottish Ministers expect all Accountable Officers to comply with the duty of Best Value placed upon them.

The Boards (or equivalents) of relevant public service organisations have corporate responsibility for promoting the efficient and effective use of staff and other resources by the organisations in accordance with the principles of Best Value.

This report has been prepared to highlight the arrangements in place in the College to secure Best Value.

2. Background

Best Value provides a common framework for continuous improvement in public services in Scotland and is a key foundation of the Scottish Government's Public Service Reform agenda.

The Scottish Ministers expect all PAOs to comply with the duty of Best Value placed upon them. In addition, the Boards (or equivalents) of relevant public service organisations have corporate responsibility for promoting the efficient and effective use of staff and other resources by the organisations in accordance with the principles of Best Value.

Under the terms of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000, the implementation of the duty of Best Value by relevant public service organisations is subject to scrutiny by the Auditor General for Scotland. Guidance on the implementation of Best Value (see paragraph 8 below) has been produced following extensive consultation with Scotland's public service organisations.

2.1 The Duty of Best Value

The duty of Best Value in Public Services is as follows:

- To make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost; and in making those arrangements and securing that balance.

- To have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirements, and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

The Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM) sets out nine characteristics of Best Value which Public Bodies are expected to demonstrate. Each of the original 9 Best Value characteristics in the SPFM remain equally relevant now. However, the nature of these characteristics has evolved in light of the changing context within which Public Bodies have operated since 2007.

In moving forward and refreshing this guidance, the Scottish Government has deemed it appropriate to focus on 5 generic and 2 cross-cutting themes which now define the expectations placed on Accountable Officers by the duty of Best Value.

This refreshed guidance, therefore, regroups the Best Value characteristics in a way which both emphasises the connections between the characteristics and assists partnership working between Public Bodies and their partners (including where appropriate Community Planning Partners) as they deliver their outcomes. The five themes are:

- Vision and Leadership;
- Effective Partnerships;
- Governance and Accountability;
- Use of Resources; and
- Performance Management.

The guidance also identifies the two cross-cutting themes which a Best Value organisation should fully embrace across all the activities by which they deliver their outcomes. These cross-cutting themes are:

- Equality; and
- Sustainability

Best Value ultimately is about creating an effective organisational context from which Public Bodies can deliver their key outcomes. It provides the building blocks on which to deliver good outcomes by ensuring that they are delivered in a manner which is economic, efficient, sustainable and supportive of continuous improvement. It also provides a common framework for continuous improvement across public services in Scotland.

2.2 Implementing the Duty of Best Value

Guidance for Accountable Officers on the Duty of Best Value is available on the Scottish Government website. The guidance identifies the themes which an organisation needs to focus on in order to deliver the duty of Best Value. The guidance is not prescriptive of the approach which should be taken, nor does it specify process. It does not seek to create a "one-size fits all" approach but rather it provides detail on what organisations should be aiming for and also points to related support and guidance material.

Best Value should be appropriate to, and proportionate to, an organisation's priorities, operating environments and scale/nature of business and should be implemented accordingly. Any enquiries on the content and application of the guidance should be addressed to the Scottish Government's Public Bodies Unit.

3. Best Value Arrangements – by Theme

The Best Value themes are listed below, with the relationship to the SPFM Best Value characteristics noted in *blue*. Below each, there is a list of the College arrangements in place to support Best Value.

Any organisation with a duty of Best Value must be able to demonstrate a focus on continuous improvement in performance around each of these themes and the delivery of outcomes.

A Continuous Improvement Team, led by the Vice Principal Resources and Corporate Development, was set up in the Spring of 2021. This group included staff at all levels across the College from all support areas and teaching faculties. Most of the staff involved received lean training from the Continuous Improvement Team at Strathclyde University. Working together the Team has developed a significant number of improvements to services and processes across the College and the ethos of continuous improvement is now embedded.

Continuous Improvement has been led by the Director of Digital and Information Services since August 2023. **Annex 1** provides some detail on the key continuous improvement achievements this year.

The College also has an Assurance Framework, with a supporting Map, which covers key areas for the College:

1. Business Planning
2. Financial Management
3. Quality Learning & Teaching and Student Outcomes
4. Risk Management and Business Continuity
5. Estates & Project Works
6. Human Resources
7. Governance & Legislative Compliance
8. Digital Services and Cyber Security
9. Fraud
10. Sustainability & Net Zero

There is significant overlap between the Assurance Framework and the Best Value themes below. The careful implementation and ongoing review of this Framework and the three lines of assurance support the achievement of Best Value in the College.

Best value in public services: guidance for accountable officers - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

3.1 Vision and Leadership

SPFM - "commitment and leadership", "responsiveness and consultation" and "sound governance at a strategic and operational level"

- The College developed Strategy 2030 during 2025-26 in consultation with staff, students and key stakeholders;
- A full revision of the College values was undertaken during 2025-26, supported by an external facilitator, bur developed and created by College staff – not leadership. These new TIME values were embedded into Strategy 2030 prior to final sign off by the Board in December 2026.

- Six new supporting strategies which underpin the new Strategy were also created during the year, with two key strategic enablers (Digital and Sustainability) identified;
- Alongside the Strategy 2030, the Workforce 2030 programme was undertaken to ensure the College had the correct structures and resources to deliver the ambitions of the new Strategy. Phase 1 related to College Leadership; Phase 2 involved Management and supporting Team structures; and Phase 3 will focus on processes and digital transformation and will take place in 2026/27.
- Annual Operating Plans are created to support delivery of the College Strategy and supporting strategies and Frameworks and significant work has been done to improve this process.
- The Corporate Planning Internal Audit in 2023/24 was rated good, with only one minor recommendation.
- The Board of Management, Board Committees, stakeholders, partners, College Management, specific internal groups and wider staff are consulted with, engaged and informed on an ongoing basis.
- The College Principal has briefing sessions with staff every six weeks, updating them on key current and future matters. This session is face to face and online and staff can ask whatever they wish, either directly related to the briefing or any other matters of concern. This continued face-to-face contact and the openness of the new Principal is greatly appreciated by staff.
- To gather feedback and input in a smaller group, the Principal has also undertaken a series of Listening Lunch sessions twice since joining in April 2025. These involve a variety of staff from across the College and take place on each campus. There is also a separate Listening Lunch for students.

3.2 Effective Partnerships

SPFM - "joint working" and "responsiveness and consultation"

The College works collaboratively and jointly with multiple organisations and partners, key partnerships are provided below, but this list is not exhaustive.

Education & Skills Partnerships

- Collaboration across education providers:
  - Glasgow Colleges Group and sub-groups: Sustainability, Learning & Teaching and Student Funding
  - Colleges Partnership West, working together to achieve £1.2m UKRI funding (via Innovate UK) six College partnership College Local Innovation Centre (CLIC) project.
  - Colleges Scotland, College Employers Scotland, Principal's Group
  - Joint provision with universities (GCU, UWS, Strathclyde, UoG)
  - SWAP West
- Regional Innovation Strategy Group – to implement the City Region Innovation Strategy.
- Employers – to provide student placement and student development opportunities.
- Training Bodies – to deliver high quality training to apprentices, eg CITB, SNIPEF.
- New MOU and Partnership with the Wise Group.
- North East and East Dunbartonshire Schools Partnerships – to ensure a strategic and focussed approach to meeting the needs of these key schools.

Operating & Governance Partnerships & Stakeholders

- Scottish Funding Council
- Glasgow City Council (GCC)
  - Local Employability Partnership

  - Community Planning Partnership
  - Glasgow Economic Leadership Group
  - Communities Funding for College activities
- Clyde Gateway, with Kelvin and South Lanarkshire College
- Young Enterprise Scotland
- Skills Development Scotland
- DWP
- JISC
- Chamber of Commerce, Ceed, Prosper and CBI Scotland

Other Partnerships & Stakeholders

- Elected Members – MPs, MSPs, GCC Councillors
- Student Association
- Media
- Springburn Residents Association
- STV Children's Appeal

3.3 Governance & Accountability

SPFM - "responsiveness and consultation", "commitment and leadership" and "accountability"

- The College regularly reports to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC):
  - College Self Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP)
  - Quarterly SFC Outcome Framework and Assurance (OF&AM) Meetings.
  - Annual Accounts
  - FFR/MYR
  - Annual Cash Flow, monthly cash drawdown
  - Specific Fund Reporting
- The College Reports to its Board of Management four to five times per year and to each of its three main Board Committees four times per year, with additional special Board or Committee meetings are arranged as required by the governance.
- The College Board has again been strengthened this year with the recruitment of five new strong external members.
- The quality of the Internal Audit and External Audit reports supports the position that good governance arrangements are in place in the College.
- The outcomes of the Externally Facilitated Efficiency Review (EFER) in 2024/25 supports good governance and accountability.
- Education Scotland reports highlighted what the College does well and that it responds well to improvement recommendations. These have been replaced by QAA visits under the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) system and the College will receive its external TQER inspection during 2026/27.
- Other mechanisms: Annual review of SPFM compliance, Assurance Framework, Risk Management Framework, Health & Safety Committee, Estates Working Group, Business Continuity Group and testing.

3.4 Use of Resources

SPFM - "sound management of resources" and "use of review and options appraisal"

- Five Year College Operation Plan and Five-Year Budgets
- 10 Year and Annual Capital Plans
- Annual Departmental Operating Plans

- Formal SLT Meetings every two weeks, informal SLT Meetings every two weeks, Monthly Finance and Resources SLT Meetings.
- Manager Forums every six weeks, with presentation of department Operational Plans and progress presented on a rolling basis throughout the year.
- Monthly Meetings with Budget holders
- The College engages the services of APUC who provide a full time Procurement Manager and additional exert resources as required. The College has a detailed Procurement Strategy, approved by Management and the College Board every two years. There is an Annual Procurement Report to the Finance and Resources Committee (F&R) and a Procurement update is provided to every meeting of the F&R. Savings and Community Benefits from Procurement are tracked and reported.
- Quarterly Financial Forecasts
- CECAT Resource Management software
- Power BI management reporting on staff and non-staff resource utilisation
- Curriculum planning and Credit per FTE monitoring
- Reporting of financial and operational resources to Board and Committees.
- Appropriate Project Management arrangements are put in place depending on the scale of the project.

3.5 Performance Management

SPFM - "Sound governance at a strategic and operational level" and "responsiveness and consultation

- This is carefully monitored via internal and external monitoring, reporting and auditing.
- External review: Education Scotland/QAA, SQA, SDS, City and Guilds, SCQF
- Internal Audit
- SFC – FFR, ROA Evaluation, special funds
- Statutory reporting, including key metrics on HR, equalities and sustainability.
- Grant funding reports (e.g. LAs)
- Power BI management reporting
- Annual Budgeting, Quarterly Forecasting, ongoing monitoring and regular reporting.
- Annual Report and Financial Statements – external audit covering much more than finance. There are tight timescales for reporting to SFC and then lodging before Parliament.
- PDRs for senior staff also support high performance, with a different type of PDR for other staff which supports individual development aligned with job and College requirements.

3.6 Equality

SPFM - "Equal Opportunities arrangements"

The College has an Equality and Inclusion Lead and the key responsibilities of this role include:

- Engage with staff, management, students and stakeholders to review, identify and deliver priorities to embed equality and inclusion within the College.
- Ensure that equality and inclusion is aligned with the College ethos and values and is embedded within all areas.

- Lead and drive imaginative initiatives and projects based on a sound understanding of the complexity of the issues surrounding equality and inclusions and social deprivation within the context of the working and learning environment.

Alongside this there is detailed list of duties and responsibilities, and the post holder is conscientiously working to deliver these.

As part of the reporting process the People and Culture update to the Finance and Resources Committee includes an Equality and Incluson section, which details recent/ current and planned initiatives.

The College has an Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Committee, led by the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality and members include the Equality and Inclusion Lead, senior People and Culture staff, recognised Trade Unions representatives, and staff at different grades from Teaching and Support areas across the College.

During 2024/25 the College worked extensively with Radiant & Brighter, a registered Community Interest Company that aims to promote diversity through education, inspiration and changing perceptions, applying the insights gained its founders on their own journey to deliver greater societal integration and economic participation. The next stage of this work continued with staff and student workshops in 2025/26 and follow this an Action Plan has been created and implementation is underway.

Every formal College Meeting has Equality as an Agenda item and every formal paper has an Equality section, so this remains a focus in all that we do.

3.7 Sustainability

SPFM - "A Contribution to Sustainable Development"

The College has an Environmental Sustainability Manager. This post is required to deliver a number of tasks and responsibilities across Glasgow Kelvin College in relation to Green Kelvin including:

- Managing various projects in the environmental/sustainability arena across the College;
- Working closely with the Estates Senior Staff, Lecturing Staff, Procurement and the Student Association;
- Assisting with the development of material for use within each course, where applicable, on environmental matters/sustainable development for the student population;
- Working with other colleges on shared/collaborative projects including working with a variety of staff across the sector, finding out about sources of funding streams available and endeavouring to secure these;
- Attending meetings/conferences and events; and
- Assisting with the work required to complete the mandatory annual Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report.

Again, alongside this there is detailed list of duties and responsibilities, and this post holder is enthusiastically working to deliver these, with a significant amount of activity in this area. A separate Environmental and Sustainability report is presented to each Finance and Resources Committee detailing a significant list of activities, achievements and information in this key area.

Glasgow Kelvin College has been shortlisted for three awards in 2026, which recognise its leadership in sustainability. The Students for Sustainable Futures programme is a finalist in both the Herald Inspiring City Awards and UK & Ireland Green Gown Awards for empowering students to lead sustainability initiatives and influence decision-making. The College is also a finalist in the CDN Awards for embedding Learning for Sustainability across its curriculum and operations. Additionally, its Cycling for All initiative received Highly Commended recognition at the International Green Gown Awards.

Over the last year, the College has secured external funding to advance sustainability initiatives across its campuses. Funding has supported water efficiency improvements, enhanced cycling infrastructure and a new Campus Cycling Officer, expanded green spaces through tree planting, and biodiversity projects at the East End Campus. In addition, the College has been selected for Butterfly Conservation's Wild Spaces Glasgow programme, supporting pollinator-friendly planting and community garden development in partnership with Support for Learning students.

Every formal College Meeting has Environmental and Sustainability as an Agenda item and every formal paper has an Environmental and Sustainability (see section 9 below) section, so this remains a focus in all that we do.

4. Resource Implications

There is no additional resource implications associated with the revised this report.

5. Impact on Students

There are no negative impacts on students identified as a consequence of anything within this report.

6. Risk and Assurance

There are no new risks arising from the content of this report, the achievement of Best Value is embedded in everything the College does.

7. Equality Impact

No negative impacts on people with protected characteristics have been identified as a consequence of this report.

8. Data Protection

There are no new data protection matters arising from the contents of this report.

9. Environmental and Sustainability

There are no new environmental and sustainability matters arising from the contents of this report.

10. Recommendations

Members of the Finance & Resources Committee are recommended to note the contents of this report

11. Further Information

Members may obtain further information relating to the contents of this report from Jeanette Evans, Vice Principal Resources and Corporate Development jevans@glasgowkelvin.ac.uk.

JE
Glasgow Kelvin College
September 2026

Annex 1

Continuous Improvement Examples 2025/26

Alternative Assessment Arrangements

A new digital process has been developed to manage Alternative Assessment Arrangements. Information is submitted through a central online form and automatically shared with the relevant support services, ensuring a consistent approach, reducing administration and improving communication between departments.

Online Booking System for Hair and Beauty

Online appointment booking was introduced within Beauty during 2024/25 and has subsequently been extended to Hairdressing for 2025/26. The solution provides a paperless booking process for both staff and external clients, improves accessibility and reduces administrative effort. Online booking links will be integrated into the College website.

Online Booking System for Music Facilities

A digital booking platform has been implemented for music rehearsal rooms, recording studios and event spaces. Students can independently reserve facilities, improving access to specialist resources while reducing the administration associated with manual booking processes.

Student Progress Tracker for Sport

A new student progress tracking system has been developed for Sport programmes. The system provides lecturers with a consolidated view of learner progress and enables students to monitor their own performance, supporting early intervention and improved learner engagement.

Student PVG Application Process

The PVG application process has been redesigned through workflow automation. The new process reduces manual administration, improves data accuracy, automates approval activities and provides additional support pathways for students experiencing difficulties during the application process.

Employer Verification for Work Experience

A digital employer verification process has been introduced within Plumbing programmes to support the validation of work experience activity. Automated checks improve assurance, strengthen data quality and reduce the risk of inaccurate or fraudulent submissions.

Enhancements to Student Support Services Systems

Further improvements have been made to Student Support Services tracking and referral systems. Enhancements include improved data management, GDPR compliance measures, automated communications and additional validation checks to ensure learners receive appropriate support in a timely manner.

Student Class Representative Training

An interactive digital training programme, using Kahoot!, has been developed for Student Class Representatives to improve awareness, participation and engagement. The resource helps students understand their representative role, encourages involvement in College

decision-making and strengthens the student voice in supporting continuous improvement across the College.