Conveners' Committee

Date of Meeting	**31 August 2026**
Paper No.	**CC1-K**
Agenda Item	**3.2.3**
Subject of Paper	**Board Development Plan 2026-27**
FOISA Status	**Disclosable**
Primary Contact	**Marcus Walker** **Associate Director of Governance & Risk**
Date of production	**18 July 2026**
Action	**For Discussion**

1. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to:

i. Review the proposed Board Development Plan 2026-27 attached at Appendix 1.
ii. Consider whether the proposed priorities and actions appropriately reflect the Board's development needs for 2026-27.
iii. Consider whether any amendments should be made before the Plan is presented to the Board of Management.
iv. Recommend the Board Development Plan 2026-27 to the Board of Management for approval, subject to any agreed amendments.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the proposed Board Development Plan 2026-27 for review by the Conveners' Committee prior to its submission to the Board of Management. The paper seeks the Committee's views on whether the Plan provides an appropriate and proportionate response to the Board's identified development priorities, supports continuous improvement in Board effectiveness, and establishes a clear framework for strengthening strategic leadership, assurance, accountability, capability and Board culture during 2026-27.

2.2. Delivery of this Plan is a collective responsibility of the Board of Management. While individual actions are led by the Chair, Committee Conveners, and the Executive Leadership Team, responsibility for achieving the intended outcomes rests with the Board as a whole. The Plan is intended to support the Board's continuous development and effectiveness rather than represent a governance programme delivered to the Board.

3. Consultation

3.1. The proposed Plan has been developed by the Chair of the Board and the Associate Director of Governance & Risk following an annual review of Board effectiveness. The Plan has also been informed by feedback received from Board members through the Board's annual self-evaluation process and consideration of governance good practice.

3.2. The Convenors' Committee will play a key role in the delivery of several of the proposed actions and will therefore have an important contribution to future monitoring and reporting arrangements.

4. Key Insights

4.1. The Board Development Plan 2026-27 has been designed to strengthen the effectiveness of the Board as a strategic governing body and to support continuous improvement in governance arrangements. Rather than establishing a broad programme of governance activity, the Plan focuses on a limited number of development priorities intended to have the greatest impact on Board effectiveness.

4.2. The proposed Plan is structured around three strategic priorities:

- Becoming a more strategic Board.
- Strengthening assurance and accountability.
- Developing Board capability and culture.

4.3. These priorities seek to strengthen strategic discussion, challenge, assurance, committee effectiveness, collective responsibility, trustee awareness and member development. The Plan also places greater emphasis on strategic risk, horizon scanning, workforce assurance, stakeholder insight and consideration of student impact in Board decision-making.

4.4. A key objective has been to distinguish between Board development activity and routine governance business. Whilst governance compliance, reporting requirements, policy review and annual committee evaluations will continue, these activities are treated as enabling actions rather than strategic priorities. This is intended to ensure that the Board maintains focus on a small number of meaningful improvements capable of strengthening its effectiveness and impact.

4.5. The proposed Plan has been presented in a format that allows progress to be monitored throughout the year through regular reporting to Conveners' Committee and the Board of Management. Individual actions have been allocated to responsible parties, supported by target dates and measurable success criteria. This will enable progress to be tracked through RAG reporting and periodic effectiveness reviews.

5. Impact and Implications

5.1. The proposed Plan is expected to strengthen the Board's effectiveness by improving strategic decision-making, assurance and oversight arrangements. Enhanced focus on strategic risk, student impact, workforce assurance, stakeholder insight, collective responsibility and member development should support the Board in fulfilling its governance responsibilities and contributing effectively to the College's long-term strategic direction.

5.2 There are no significant financial or operational implications arising directly from the Plan, which will be delivered through existing governance arrangements and development

activity. The Plan supports compliance with the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges and provides a structured approach to continuous improvement in Board effectiveness.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Board Development Plan 2026-27

APPENDIX 1: BOARD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2026-27

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of Board development is to strengthen how the Board thinks, challenges, assures and decides. The Plan focuses on a small number of strategic improvements designed to enhance Board effectiveness, support delivery of future strategic ambitions and improve governance performance.

The Plan is intended to remain deliberately focused. Routine governance activity and compliance obligations will continue throughout the year but are not treated as strategic development priorities.

2. DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Become a More Strategic Board

Outcome Sought
The Board actively shapes the long-term direction of the College through informed strategic discussion, constructive challenge and evidence-based decision-making.

Ref	Key Action	Lead	Target Date	Success Measure	RAG	Progress Update
1.1	Deliver the Strategy 2040 governance process.	Chair / Board / ELT	Jul 2027	Board decisions demonstrably influence development of Strategy 2040.		
1.2	Introduce Strategic Choice Papers for major strategic decisions.	Governance & Risk / ELT	Dec 2026	Strategic papers focus on choices, risks and trade-offs.		
1.3	Strengthen horizon scanning and external insight.	Board / ELT	Ongoing	Strategic discussions informed by external evidence and sector intelligence.		
1.4	Deliver annual strategic risk and scenario planning session.	Board/ Audit & Assurance Committee / ELT	Apr 2027	Strategic risk and future scenarios considered by Board.		
1.5	Increase focus on student outcomes and impact within strategic discussions.	LTSE Committee / Board	Ongoing	Student impact evidenced in major strategic decisions.		
1.6	Rebalance Board agendas to increase strategic discussion time.	Chair / Governance & Risk	Jul 2027	At least 50% of substantive Board discussion focused on strategy, future direction, risk or organisational impact.		

Success Indicators
- Increased Board focus on future direction and strategic priorities.
- Improved quality of strategic discussion and challenge.

- Greater consideration of future risks and opportunities.
- Clear evidence that external insight and student impact inform decision-making.

Priority 2: Strengthen Assurance and Accountability

Outcome Sought
Committees provide effective scrutiny, clear assurance and timely escalation, enabling the Board to discharge its responsibilities with confidence.

Ref	Key Action	Lead	Target Date	Success Measure	RAG	Progress Update
2.1	Complete Committee Effectiveness Review.	Conveners' Committee	July 2027	Review completed and agreed improvements implemented.		
2.2	Clarify committee assurance, escalation and reporting arrangements.	Conveners' Committee	March 2027	Committees provide clear assurance to the Board, with material issues and assurance gaps escalated consistently.		
2.3	Strengthen Convener leadership and coordination.	Conveners' Committee	Ongoing	Clearer alignment of Committee workplans to strategic priorities, with reduced duplication and effective escalation of cross-Committee issues.		
2.4	Align strategic KPIs, risk and assurance reporting.	Board / ELT	July 2027	Integrated assurance and performance framework implemented.		
2.5	Strengthen workforce and people assurance arrangements.	People & Culture Committee	July 2027	Enhanced Board assurance regarding workforce, culture and organisational capability.		
2.6	Maintain Board focus on financial sustainability and resilience.	Finance Committee	Ongoing	Strategic financial assumptions and resilience reviewed regularly.		
2.7	Introduce reporting by exception where appropriate.	Governance & Risk / ELT	Dec. 2026	Reports become shorter, clearer and decision-focused.		

Success Indicators

- Improved quality of Board assurance.
- Reduced duplication between committees and Board.
- Stronger oversight of workforce, financial sustainability and strategic performance.
- More focused reporting and decision-making.

Priority 3: Develop Board Capability and Culture

Outcome Sought

Board members demonstrate strong collective responsibility, confidence in fulfilling their governance responsibilities and a culture of constructive challenge, mutual respect and continuous improvement.

Ref	Key Action	Lead	Target Date	Success Measure	RAG	Progress Update
3.1	Develop and adopt a Board Principles Statement.	Chair / Governance & Risk	July 2027	Increased evidence of collective responsibility, constructive challenge and agreed Board behaviours reflected through Board evaluation feedback.		
3.2	Refresh understanding of trustee duties and governance responsibilities.	Governance & Risk	March 2027	Increased member understanding and confidence in trustee duties, collective responsibility and governance responsibilities demonstrated through evaluation feedback and Board discussions.		
3.3	Deliver targeted Board development aligned to identified needs.	Governance & Risk	Ongoing	Identified development needs show measurable improvement through Board evaluation results and member self-assessment.		
3.4	Refresh Board and Committee induction arrangements.	Governance & Risk	July 2027	New members report greater confidence in contributing effectively to Board and Committee business within their first year of appointment.		
3.5	Strengthen member understanding of finance, risk and assurance.	Committee Conveners / ELT	Ongoing	Members demonstrate greater confidence in scrutinising financial, risk and assurance matters, reflected through evaluation feedback and Board effectiveness review findings.		
3.6	Increase opportunities for organisational, stakeholder and	Board / ELT	Ongoing	Board discussion and decision-making demonstrate increased consideration of		

	employer engagement.			stakeholder, employer, staff and student perspectives.		
3.7	Review succession planning and leadership development arrangements.	Chair / Conveners' Committee	July 2027	Increased Board confidence in succession and leadership continuity arrangements, with identified development pathways for future Board and Committee leadership roles.		
3.8	Use mid-year and annual evaluation activity to drive improvement.	Board / Conveners' Committee	July 2027	Board evaluation demonstrates improvement against priority development areas identified through previous reviews.		

Success Indicators

- Stronger collective responsibility and Board culture.
- Increased member confidence and participation.
- Improved trustee awareness and governance capability.
- Enhanced insight into students, staff, employers and stakeholders.

3. ENABLING IMPROVEMENTS

The following activities support the delivery of the Plan but are not treated as strategic priorities:

- Enhanced Board paper template and reporting standards.
- Quarterly Strategic Performance and Assurance Reporting.
- Annual Board and Committee effectiveness reviews.
- Governance communications and stakeholder updates.
- Ongoing governance compliance and policy review activity.
- Continuous review of governance effectiveness and good practice.

4. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

Review Point	Reporting Body	Purpose
September 2026	Board of Management	Approval of Development Plan
October 2026	Conveners' Committee	Progress review and RAG assessment
January 2027	Conveners' Committee	Progress review and RAG assessment
March / April 2027	Conveners' Committee / Board of Management	Mid-year effectiveness review
August / September 2027	Conveners' Committee / Board of Management	Annual review, evaluation of outcomes and priorities for 2027-28

5. RAG DEFINITIONS

- **Green:** On track to deliver outcome within agreed timescale.
- **Amber:** Progress made but corrective action required.
- **Red:** Significant delay or risk to delivery.
- **Complete:** Action delivered and outcome achieved.