Item 4

19th November 2026

Glasgow City Council

Education, Skills and Early Years Committee

Report by Executive Director of Education

Contact: Brian McDermott Ext: 74214

School Leaver Destinations

Purpose of Report:

To report to the committee on Glasgow's school leaver follow-up destinations and our activities to support this key area.

Recommendations:

Committee is invited to consider the report and note the continued emphasis and commitment to ensuring our young people will have access to positive, sustained destinations as they leave school.

Ward No(s):	Citywide: ✓
Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐	consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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1. Background

1.1. The School Leavers Follow Up (SLFU) destinations report is a statistical return undertaken by Skills Development Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. The return follows up on the young people whose destinations were collected in October 2025.

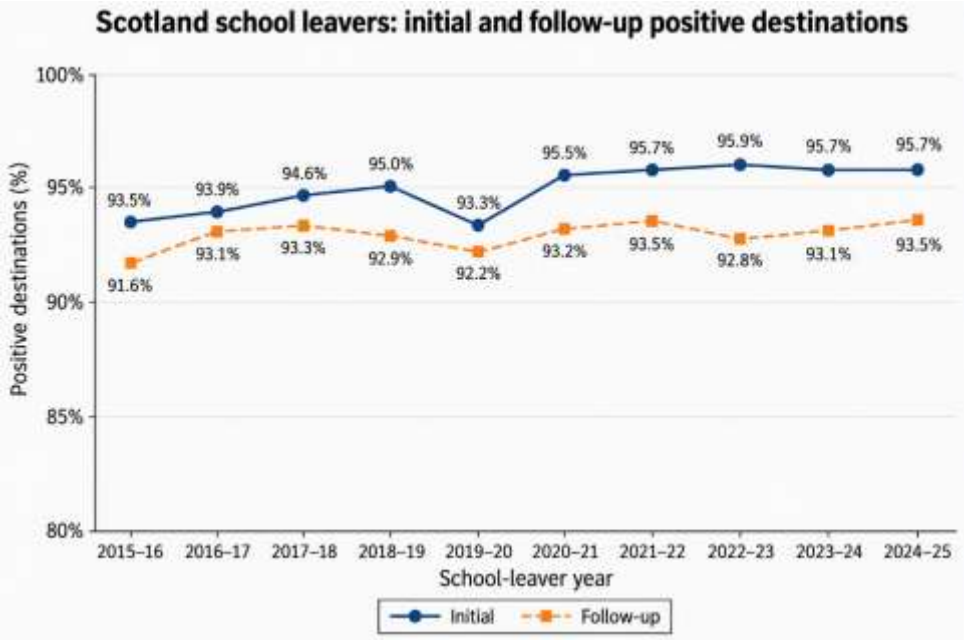
1.2. The follow up destinations for all young people who left school in 2025 were collected in April 2026 and published in June 2026. It provides a comparison between the initial destination for Glasgow's school leavers and their destination six months later. The statistics are for all destination categories in the School Leavers Follow Up.

2. Summary of findings

2.1. Overall, the number of young people who sustained their positive destination was 93.5% which was 1.4% lower than our initial destination figure of 94.9%. However, the final statistics captured in April 2026 are an improvement on the previous year, where it was 92.3%. Also, the difference of 1.4% is better than last year's drop off, which was 3.4%. It was also broadly in line with the national difference.

2.2. The final Glasgow figure of 93.5% is consistent with the national figure. The graph below shows the initial destination (blue) and follow-up destination figures (orange) across Scotland for the last ten years.

Figure 1: Initial versus follow-up destinations figures, National:



https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-for-follow-up-leaver-destinations-no-8-2026-edition/documents/

2.3. The next graph shows the equivalent difference between the initial destinations (blue) and then the follow up destination figures (orange) for Glasgow over the same period.

Figure 2: Initial versus follow-up destination figures, Glasgow:

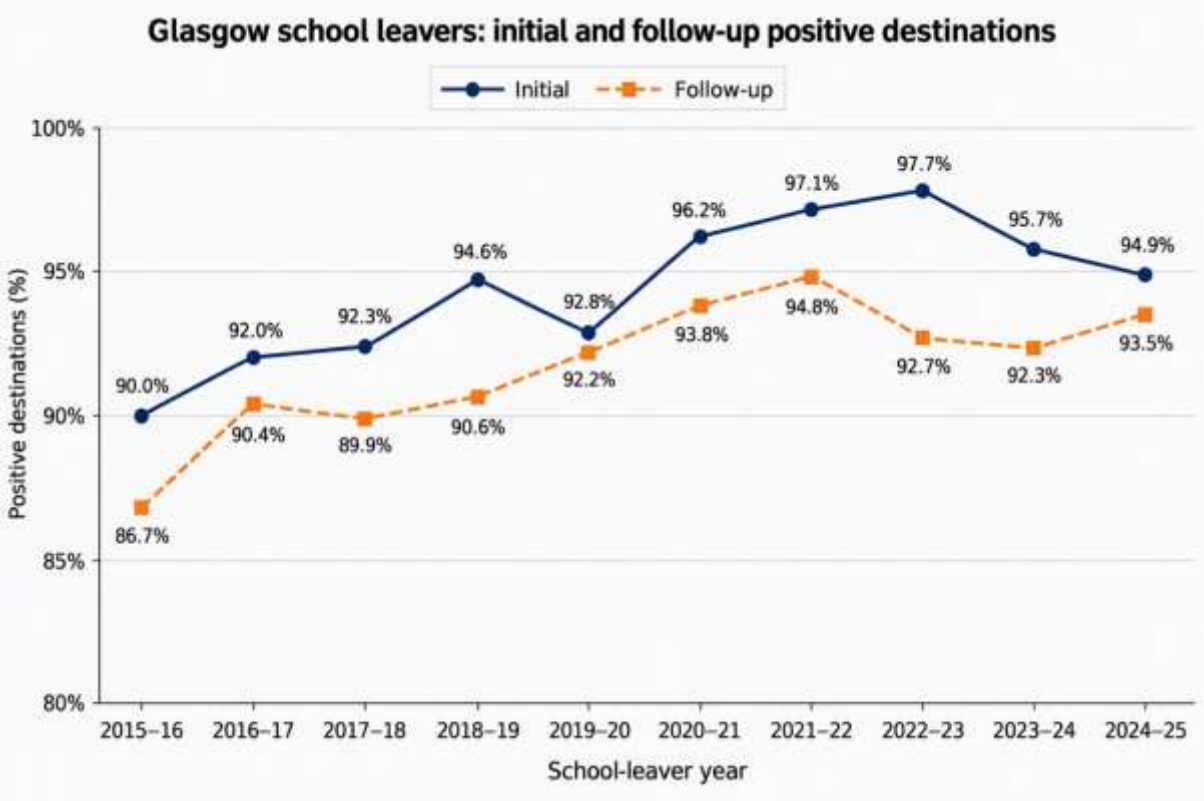
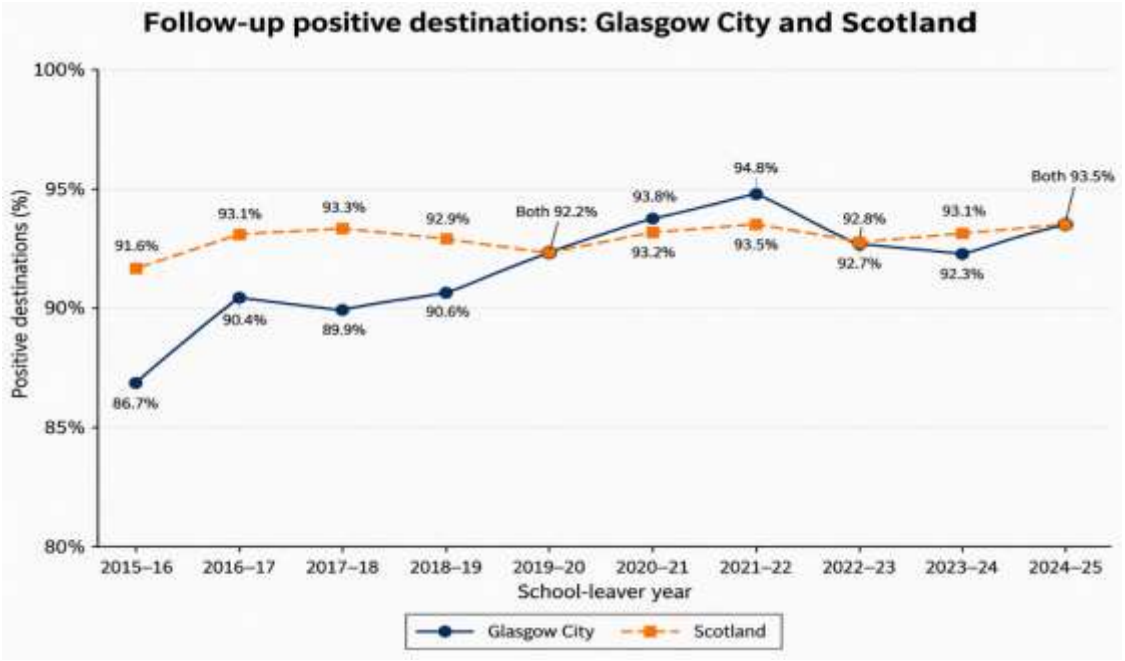


Figure 3: Follow-up Destinations, Glasgow v National:



2.4. The next table shows the actual destinations of our school leavers and how they have changed over the years.

Figure 4: Follow-up destination by category, Glasgow:

Year	LA Name	Number of leavers	Positive Destination	Higher Education	Further Education	Training	Employment	Voluntary Work	Activity Agreement	Personal Skills Development	Unemployed Seeking	Unemployed Not Seeking	Unknown
2024-25	Glasgow City	5,269	93.5	40.3	26.6	5.1	19.7	0.8	N/A	1.0	3.7	2.5	0.3
2023-24	Glasgow City	5,231	92.3	39.1	24.8	4.9	21.7	0.8	N/A	1.0	4.6	3.0	0.1
2022-23	Glasgow City	4,998	92.7	37.9	23.7	4.5	25.4	0.5	N/A	0.7	4.9	2.3	0.0
2021-22	Glasgow City	4,976	94.8	38.4	25.0	6.5	25.4	0.6	N/A	1.0	3.1	2.0	0.1
2020-21	Glasgow City	4,589	93.8	38.7	21.6	5.4	26.2	0.6	N/A	1.2	3.9	2.4	0.0
2019-20	Glasgow City	4,284	92.2	40.0	26.5	5.5	16.0	0.5	N/A	3.6	4.7	[c]	[c]
2018-19	Glasgow City	4,346	90.6	36.6	26.7	3.1	23.1	0.4	N/A	0.6	6.7	2.4	0.3
2017-18	Glasgow City	4,345	89.9	36.8	25.5	2.9	23.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	6.0	2.8	1.4
2016-17	Glasgow City	4,472	90.4	34.0	28.6	2.8	23.4	0.3	0.5	0.8	6.3	2.2	1.1
2015-16	Glasgow City	4,542	86.7	31.2	24.1	2.9	26.7	0.4	0.6	0.8	8.5	2.6	2.2

2.5. Last year we reported that the Glasgow statistic for Higher Education was 39.1% which was above the national figure of 38.1%. This year's figure is 40.3% which is our highest ever and we are consistent with the national average of 40.2%. Our schools have worked very hard to achieve this and they are supported by staff in the Toward's Better Future team who link with Higher Education providers to access a range of opportunities. Of course, it is also supported by our continued prioritisation of raising attainment and celebrating achievement across all our schools.

2.6. We still have an above national average amount of young people going into Further Education at 26.6% compared to 22.1% nationally. We continue to work in close partnership, particularly with our Glasgow colleges, to provide opportunities to link with the colleges including through our Senior phase college vocational programme.

2.7. With the latter two categories increasing, this has impacted the employment statistic which has decreased to 19.7% from 21.7% last year. The national level has also decreased from 28.8% to 26.5% Our figure for unemployed seeking has decreased from 4.6% to 3.7% and the national level remains 3.5%. We have made some headway in this area, but it remains a frustrating figure since it represents young people who are seeking to engage with either employment or continue their education. We continue, with our partners, to support these young people.

3. Destinations and Deprivation

3.1. This table below shows the difference in the statistics for young people living in Glasgow according to their SIMD deprivation criteria. The first column of numbers is those in a positive destination and the second is the total number of leavers. You will note that the highest deprivation category i.e. Quintile 1, 0-20% (most deprived), is over 57% of our total leavers, accounting for 3031 of our 5269 leavers. Note – the [c] is utilised by the Scottish Government where

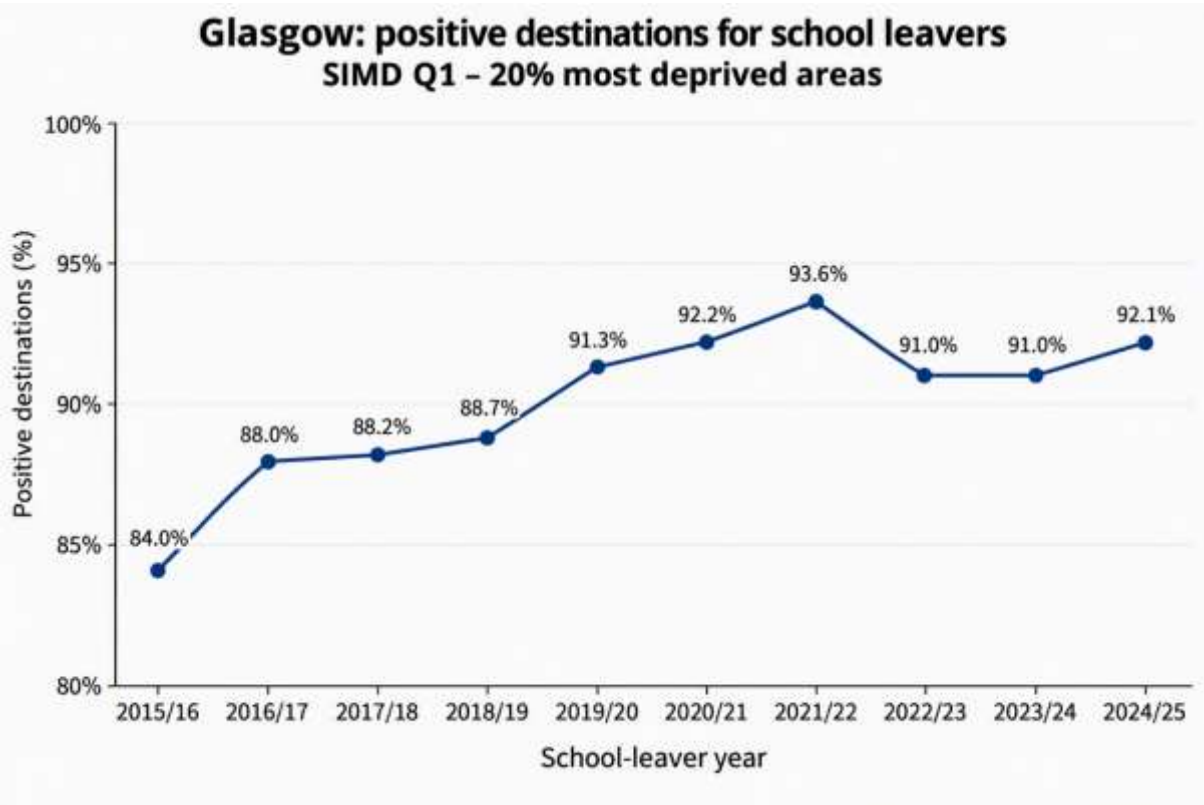
the value is suppressed to protect against the risk of disclosing personal information.

Figure 5: Follow-up destination figures by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD):

Year	Local Authority	SIMD Quintile [note 5]	Positive Destination (Number)	Number of leavers	Positive Destination (Percentage)
2024-25	Glasgow City	0-20% (Most Deprived)	2,792	3,031	92.1
2024-25	Glasgow City	20-40%	898	946	94.9
2024-25	Glasgow City	40-60%	468	506	92.5
2024-25	Glasgow City	60-80%	[c]	450	[c]
2024-25	Glasgow City	80-100% (Least Deprived)	[c]	336	[c]
2024-25	Glasgow City	Total	4,924	5,269	93.5

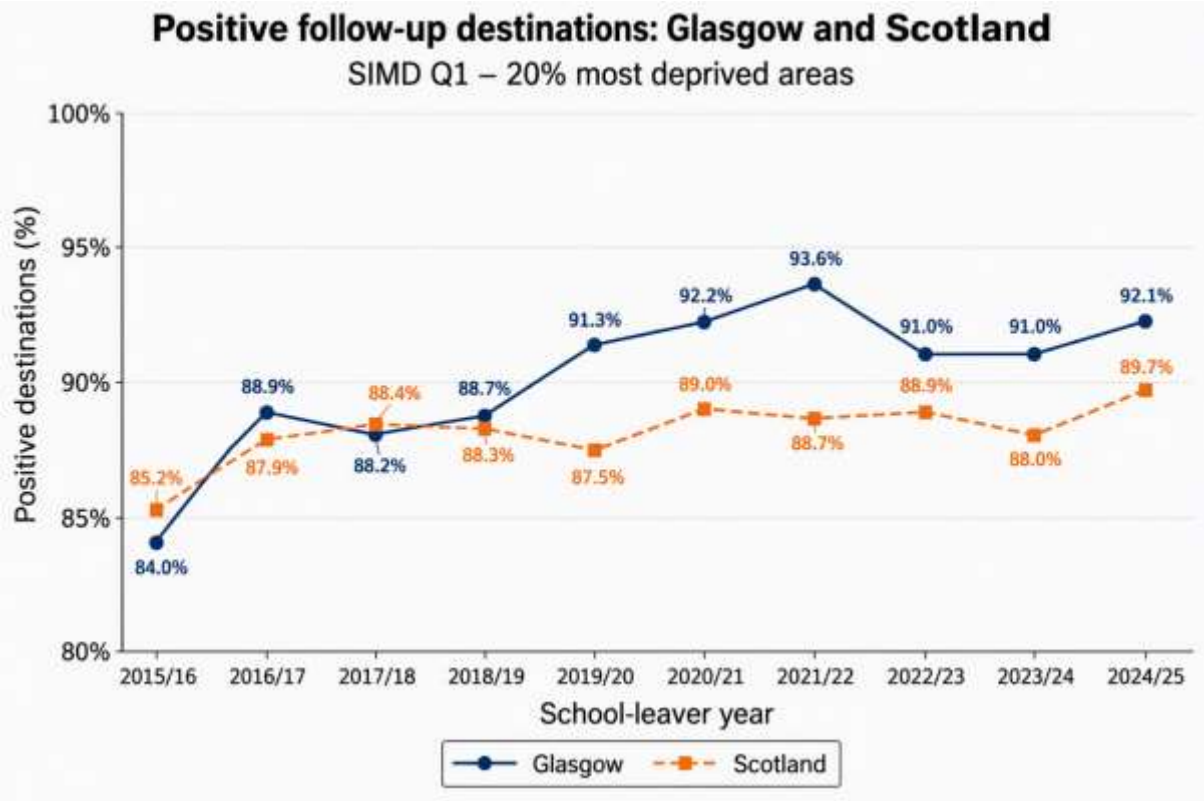
3.2. The next graph shows the percentage of young people from the most deprived postcodes in positive follow-up destinations over the past ten years. It is up on last year's figure last year and remains higher than the national figure for this demographic.

Figure 6: Follow-up destination figures for Q1 (20% most deprived), Glasgow:



3.3. The graph and below compares the Glasgow statistic (blue) for 0-20% most deprived with the national one (orange). For seven years now Glasgow has been above national levels, with the positive gap now 2.4%. Again, this demographic criterion is applicable to more than 57% of our young people.

Figure 7: Follow-up destination figures for Q1 (20% most deprived), Glasgow versus National:



3.4. Destination outcomes are influenced by a range of factors, and the available data does not identify a single group of young people as being consistently at greatest risk. Assumptions relating to qualification levels or levels of deprivation are not always borne out by the evidence. Positive destination rates remain strong across many school communities, including those serving areas of high deprivation. Accordingly, the focus remains on targeted support for individual young people, underpinned by Glasgow's ambition to secure positive and sustained destinations for every school leaver.

4. Clear Lines of Sight

4.1. Education Services' emerging employability strategy aims to set out a strategic approach to ensuring that every young person in Glasgow can see, understand and access the opportunities available across the Glasgow City Region economy. It seeks to create stronger connections between education, skills development, employer engagement and future employment, and via the leadership of a newly appointed Quality Improvement Officer (Employability) it will ensure that learning in schools is increasingly aligned with economic opportunity, labour market demand and the needs of a rapidly changing workforce.

4.2. The emerging strategy will be cognisant that employability is not solely about career education in the senior phase. Rather, it is a whole-system responsibility involving schools, employers, colleges, universities, Skills Development Scotland, Developing the Young Workforce, Glasgow Futures, Towards Better Futures and wider economic partners across Glasgow and the Glasgow City Region.

4.3. The Glasgow City Region economy supports over 850,000 jobs and is home to six universities and six colleges. However, despite significant strengths, the region continues to face challenges around economic inactivity, skills shortages, labour market alignment and poverty. The Glasgow City Region has identified Future Skills, Inclusive Growth and Skills Alignment as critical components of its Regional Economic Strategy.

4.4. This strategy supports wider city and regional ambitions to:

- Increase the number of skilled jobs.
- Improve alignment between education and labour market demand.
- Reduce worklessness and economic inactivity.
- Improve positive destinations and progression pathways.
- Reduce poverty through improved access to employment and skills.
- Support inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

4.5. The central premise of this strategy is that every young person should have a clear line of sight from their learning experiences in school to future opportunities in employment, apprenticeships, college and university and training.

4.6. This means that young people should:

- Understand the sectors driving Glasgow's economy.
- Encounter employers regularly throughout their school journey.
- Access meaningful workplace experiences.
- Develop skills valued by employers.
- Understand multiple progression routes, including apprenticeships, college and university.
- Leave school with a clear and realistic pathway plan.

4.7. Schools will be supported to use Glasgow City Region labour market intelligence to inform curriculum planning, learner pathways and subject choice processes.

4.8. Curriculum planning should increasingly reflect both growth sectors and foundational economy sectors, ensuring that young people understand how classroom learning relates to future employment and skills development.

4.9. Every young person should experience meaningful employer engagement throughout their educational journey. This includes:

- Employer assemblies and careers events and talks.
- Workplace visits.
- Industry challenges.
- Masterclasses.
- Skills workshops.
- Apprenticeship awareness activities.

4.10. The objective is to broaden horizons, raise aspirations and develop understanding of the opportunities available across Glasgow City Region.

4.11. Alongside universal provision, additional support should be provided for young people who face barriers to employment or are at greater risk of not achieving positive destinations. This includes:

- Mentoring.
- Work placements.
- Employability coaching.
- Supported transitions.
- Apprenticeship preparation.
- Glasgow Futures and Towards Better Futures interventions.

4.12. This aligns directly with the city's anti-poverty agenda and wider efforts to reduce economic inactivity and improve social mobility.

4.13. The strategy seeks to strengthen long-term partnerships between schools and employers across key sectors. Priority sectors include:

- Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering.
- Digital, Data & Artificial Intelligence.
- Financial & Professional Services.
- Health & Social Care.
- Housing, Construction & Net Zero.
- Public Services & Communities.

4.14. Employers in these areas can support young people through workplace visits, mentoring, industry projects, apprenticeships, internships and careers insight activities.

4.15. The strategy proposes a progressive model of employer engagement:

See It
- Assemblies.
- Employer talks.
- Careers events.

Explore It
- Masterclasses.
- Workplace visits.
- Industry challenges.

Experience It
- Mentoring.
- Work placements.
- Internships.

Achieve It
- Foundation Apprenticeships.
- Modern Apprenticeships.
- College pathways.
- University pathways.

Become It
- Employment.
- Further learning.
- Career progression.

4.16. This provides a coherent pathway from early awareness through to sustained positive destinations.

4.17. The strategy proposes a city-wide ambition that every young person should:

- Meet employers throughout their school journey.
- Experience opportunities linked to Glasgow's economy.
- Understand apprenticeship, college and university pathways.
- Access workplace experiences before leaving school.
- Develop the skills valued by employers.
- Leave school with a clear progression plan.

4.18. As part of the implementation of this strategy, schools will be supported to:

- Use labour market intelligence to inform curriculum planning.
- Deliver employer engagement at every stage.
- Develop partnerships across priority sectors.
- Promote apprenticeships alongside academic pathways.
- Continue to support young people at risk of poor destinations, working with colleagues in the Toward Better Futures Team.
- Monitor participation and destination outcomes.
- Celebrate local role models, employers and success stories.

4.19. Success will be measured through a range of indicators including:

- Increased employer engagement activity.
- Improved curriculum alignment with labour market demand.

- Increased participation in work-based learning.
- Growth in apprenticeship participation.
- Improved positive destination rates.
- Reduced numbers of young people leaving school with no qualifications.
- Reduced youth economic inactivity.
- Improved progression into employment, further and higher education, and training.

4.20. Our emerging employability strategy will provide a framework for strengthening the connection between education, skills and economic opportunity. Through stronger collaboration between schools, employers, colleges, universities and employability partners, Glasgow can ensure that every young person develops the knowledge, skills, experiences and networks required to thrive in the future economy while contributing to the city's ambitions for inclusive growth, reduced poverty and sustainable economic success.

5. Towards Better Futures

5.1. Glasgow Education Services continues to prioritise support for young people as they progress from school into positive and sustained destinations. Through the Towards Better Futures (TBF) service, targeted support is provided to young people requiring additional assistance to progress into employment, education, training or wider opportunities that meet their individual needs.

5.2. The service works collaboratively with secondary schools and a wide range of partners, including Skills Development Scotland, Developing the Young Workforce Glasgow, Glasgow Colleges and Universities, Glasgow's Local Employability Partnership, third sector organisations and employers across the city. Through these partnerships, young people are supported to develop skills, increase confidence and access opportunities aligned to Glasgow's labour market and growth sectors.

5.3. The service has continued to develop opportunities for young people with additional support needs, including tailored employability programmes, employer engagement activities, work-based learning opportunities and supported transitions. Additional work has also been undertaken to increase accessibility of services for young people facing barriers to participation, ensuring support is responsive to individual circumstances and aspirations.

5.4. The service has also continued to expand opportunities for young people with additional support needs through tailored employability programmes, employer engagement activities, work-based learning experiences and supported transitions. A key area of development during 2025-26 has been the co-production and delivery of a bespoke employability programme for neurodiverse young people. Developed by the On Route Team in partnership with young people, the programme was designed in direct response to identified

needs and aspirations, ensuring participants received meaningful, accessible and person-centred support to develop employability skills, confidence and progression pathways.

5.5. In addition, enhanced provision has been developed for young people who are new to Glasgow and for whom English is an additional language. This targeted support has focused on increasing confidence, improving understanding of post-school pathways and supporting progression into further learning opportunities. The programme has achieved positive outcomes, with a significant number of participating young people progressing successfully into Further Education.

5.6. Further information on the Towards Better Futures strategy and current activities can be accessed via the Towards Better Futures website: Towards Better Futures

11. **Policy and Resource Implications**

Resource Implications:

Financial:	Within existing resources, effective deployment and management of grant funding.
Legal:	N/A
Personnel:	Staff team related to Towards Better Futures Strategy
Procurement:	N/A except in relation to elements of grant funding

Council Strategic Plan:

Grand Challenge 1-Reduce poverty and Inequality in our city

Mission 3 - Raise attainment amongst Glasgow's children and young people

Grand Challenge 2 - Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens

Mission 1 - Support Glasgow residents into sustainable and fair work

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2025-29? Please specify.	Outcome 10: Glasgow City Council (Education Services) has improved the engagement, participation and inclusion of all children and young people in order to support the attainment, achievement and wellbeing of all, including those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, English Additional Language learners, those who identify as black and minority ethnic, LGBT and ASN
What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?	There is a positive impact since the activities in this area help young people leaving school to embark on a positive, sustained destination.
Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-	The work in schools, supported by the Towards Better Futures team, is making a significant

economic disadvantage.	difference to improving outcomes and opportunities for our young people.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	N/A Although raising awareness in net zero and related employment may support Glasgow's young people to contribute.
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	N/A
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	N/A

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report Y/N	N
If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out	

12. Recommendations

12.1. Committee is invited to consider the report and note the continued emphasis and commitment to ensuring our young people will have access to positive, sustained destinations as they leave school.