

Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
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By Email.

11 January 2019

Dear Enterprise and Skills Agency Chairs,

ADDITIONAL JOINT STRATEGIC GUIDANCE TO ENTERPRISE AND SKILLS AGENCIES

Introduction

1. Further to our letters to the agencies of Spring 2018, which provided guidance on priorities for 2018-2019 (from hereon in referred to as the Spring guidance), we are now writing to provide additional guidance in order to underline our commitment to delivering on the priorities set out in the Government's Programme for Government (published on 4th September 2018) and Economic Action Plan (EAP) (24th October), as well as the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board's Strategic Plan (17th October).
2. These three key documents can be found at:
<https://www.gov.scot/programme-for-government/>
<https://economicactionplan.mygov.scot/>
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/working-collaboratively-better-scotland/>
3. This additional, joint guidance builds upon, rather than supersedes, our earlier advice, and the priorities we set out then remain in place for 2018-2019 and should continue to be followed.
4. Scotland has huge economic potential, and we must look to be a leader in the technological and social innovations of the future, harnessing our strengths in innovation and research and making the most of our highly skilled workforce. Your organisations have a key role to play in driving inclusive and sustainable economic growth, helping to improve lives for the better. We therefore look to you now to deliver on the purposeful actions to support these goals.

Programme for Government

5. The Programme for Government sets out the Scottish Government plans for the next year, including the Bills that will be introduced to the Scottish Parliament.

Economic Action Plan

6. The EAP sets out our plans to drive inclusive economic growth that combines increased prosperity with greater equality, creates opportunities for all and distributes the benefits of increased prosperity fairly. It therefore provides important strategic context which should be clearly reflected in your business planning processes going forward. We therefore look to each of you to now align behind the aims of the EAP and appropriately support all the actions it sets out wherever your agency has a role to play or can add value.

7. Collaboration is essential if we are to stimulate economic growth and improve public services and, in line with the partnership approach set out in the EAP, we would look to you to develop your business plans collaboratively: with the Scottish Government; across the agencies and the South of Scotland Economic Partnership (SOSEP); and with an approach that is mindful of the role of other relevant bodies and organisations who have a contribution to make to this agenda, including in rural areas.

Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board Strategic Plan

8. As you know, the Scottish Government supports the aims of the Strategic Board. In our spring guidance letters, we looked to you to undertake your operational and strategic planning in line with the Strategic Board's Strategic Plan once it was developed. Now that the Strategic Plan has been published, we look to your organisations for continued commitment in implementing it and pursuing its aims, so would ask that you now collectively pursue its actions with the oversight of the Strategic Board.

9. The Plan's commitments to collaboration, better use of data and clarity around the national, regional and local conditions, including rural aspects, should be embedded in your business plans. In addition, we strongly support the Strategic Plan's overarching focus on improving customers' experience of the system, and look to you to put businesses and learners at the heart of everything you do.

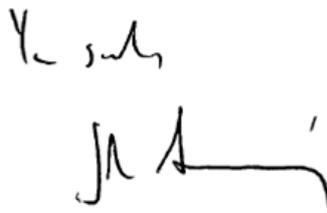
Conclusion

10. Now that further clarity and strategic direction exists through these documents, you should look to support this now insofar as possible and prioritise resources when budget allocations are confirmed for 2019/20, managing existing commitments against these additional ones. We would also expect you to make the changes required to your organisation and to the way it works in order to deliver against these.

11. We would ask you to ensure you continue to engage with us, including as early as possible with our sponsor teams, as you undertake the development of your new business plans. We also ask that you actively collaborate during this process with a view to meaningfully aligning business plans across the agencies behind the priorities defined.

12. We very much value the crucial impact of your work and that of your organisations in helping to deliver this Government's Purpose. We look forward to working with you as we

deliver the priorities set out in this letter, and to your continued commitment as we drive towards meeting our goal to create a prosperous nation with better jobs, fair work and a dynamic, sustainable and inclusive economy.



Derek Mackay, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work
John Swinney, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
Richard Lochhead, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science