

Access and Inclusion Committee meeting minutes

Purpose

- 1 This paper provides Council with the minutes of the Access and Inclusion Committee from its 21 November 2017 meeting.

Summary

- 2 At the 21 November 2017 meeting the Committee considered:
 - An update on progress with the Youth Employment Strategy.
 - SFC progress with the implementation of the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA) final report '*A Blueprint for Fairness*' recommendations.
 - Progress on the access and inclusion outcomes overseen by the Committee.
 - Development of the School Engagement Framework (SEF).
 - The key points of SFC's Gender Action Plan Annual Progress Report.
 - The Review of Student Support.
 - An update on the Access Engagement Strategy.

Recommendation

- 3 The Council is invited to note the Access and Inclusion Committee minutes.

Access and Inclusion Committee meeting minutes

The thirty-sixth meeting of the Access and Inclusion Committee was held at 9.30am on Tuesday 21 November 2017 at 99 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh.

Present: Professor Maggie Kinloch(Chair)
Lorna Caldwell
Angela Cox
Vincent Docherty
Heather Dunk
Lynn Graham
Hugh Hall
Professor Charlie Jeffery
Iain MacRitchie
Vonnie Sandlan (items 17/32 to 17/42)
Dr Edward Sosu
Jodie Waite (items 17/27 to 17/39)
Professor Valerie Webster

Officers: Rachel Adamson (items 17/35 to 17/38)
Fiona Burns (Secretary)
Sarah Kirkpatrick
Carina Macritchie
Linda McLeod
Sheila Meehan (Clerk)
Cathy Mitchell
Seamus Spencer (items 17/27 to 17/34)
Nick Stansfeld
Anna Thomson

Apologies: Dr Veena O'Halloran
Audrey Cumberford
James Dunphy
Alan Sherry
Leni Oglesby

17/27 Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed members, Council executive and observers to the meeting.

The Chair also welcomed Angela Cox, Hugh Hall, Professor Valerie Webster, Professor Charlie Jeffery and Jodie Waite new Committee members, to their first meeting.

The Chair also welcomed back Vonnie Sandlan and Heather Dunk, who had both stepped down at the May meeting, for agreeing to attend to input to the Committee's strategic discussions.

17/28 Declarations of Interests

The Chair reminded the members of their responsibility to indicate if they had or may be perceived to have a conflict of interest under any item.

The Chair invited members to indicate if they wished to discuss any of the starred items on the agenda. No paper was unstarred but it was noted that the future Committee meeting dates needed to be amended and that the Clerk would email attendees to update them.

17/29 Chair's business and Council executive update (AIC/17/16)

The Committee received and noted the Chair's business and Council executive update.

17/30 Minutes of 16 May 2017 meeting (AIC/17/Min2)

The minute of the meeting of 16 May 2017 was confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

17/31 Matters arising (AIC/17/17)

The Committee noted the matters arising from the last meeting of the Committee.

17/32 Long-term agenda (AIC/17/18)

The Committee received a paper informing members of substantive agenda items proposed for the next meeting.

The Committee **agreed** that:

- An item on the alignment of the learner journey review process with Access and Inclusion Committee work be added to the February 2018 agenda.
- A member of one of the new Regional Improvement Collaboratives' be invited to talk to the Committee at its May 2018 meeting.

Update on Council business (Oral)

The Chair gave an oral update to the Committee on the recent Scottish Funding Council Board business meetings.

The Committee noted that, at its recent meetings, amongst other things the Council had considered:

- The remit for the 2018-19 outcome agreements was considered and agreed.
- SFC's research strategy was considered and adopted.
- SFC's participation in the REF was discussed and the way forward agreed.
- The Innovation Centre programme and progress with the implementation of the recommendations from its independent review were discussed.
- College innovation was considered and the way forward for the colleges including transition to sectoral ownership of the college innovation agenda.
- University quality arrangements were considered in respect of the review of the Quality Enhancement Framework.
- National bargaining, latest developments were considered and financial implications and next steps.
- Assurance framework for the university sector. The Council considered the Council executive's developing proactive, risk-based assurance framework to inform the assessment of the required level of engagement with higher education institutions.
- Key policy developments in other parts of the UK and their implications for Scotland was considered.
- Consultation on rurality funding. The Board agreed to undertake this consultation.
- Evaluation of Research Pooling initiative. The Board agreed to endorse the plan to undertake a high level and forward looking review of this major investment for SFC.
- Gender Action Plan annual progress report. The Board considered the progress report summary.
- Estates condition survey was discussed.
- Council received a paper providing an update on the HE Funding Model Review.
- The creation of a Learning and Quality Enhancement Committee.

The Committee **agreed** that an update would be provided to the next meeting on consideration of the Quality Enhancement Framework in relation to the UK governance quality codes.

17/34 Youth Employment Strategy Update Report (SFC/17/19)

The Committee received a paper providing an update on progress with the Youth Employment Strategy.

In discussion the Committee noted that:

- Outcome Agreements for AY 2018-19 will be expected to outline how regional partnerships will increase the expansion of senior phase vocational pathways and their plans to improve success rates
- Key objectives of the DYW Plan include: STEM prioritisation, evidence of enhanced employer engagement and, continuing improvement of student outcomes.
- The intensification of outcome agreements will require evidence of greater external engagement in their development. Three regional DYW events are planned, with the aim of pulling together regional partnerships: colleges; schools; employers and local authorities (as well as SDS and Education Scotland) to review the current scale of vocational provision in the senior phase, the pace of change and future ambition.
- To date Colleges and partners have responded dynamically and flexibly, with 120% increase in pupils undertaking workbased learning, but further improvement was still needed.
- Workbased learning placement provision varies significantly dependent on subject area and course type.
- Students from the most deprived deciles undertook the highest number of placements.
- An Employer Engagement Framework was being developed for colleges.
- College regions are to build on their existing STEM Strategies and develop action plans in response to the National STEM Strategy.
- There were areas of best practice in DYW noted in some regions, with sharing of staff and good mapping of pathways.
- Foundation Apprenticeships are a key plank of the expansion of the vocational offer in the senior phase. To achieve a step change in uptake of vocational opportunities there needs to be a significant increase in parental awareness at a national level.

The Committee advised that:

- It would be beneficial to the college sector if the STEM Action Plan could be incorporated into the outcome agreement, rather than dealt with separately.
- The experience of young people with disabilities and those with additional support needs who are undertaking, or attempting to undertake, placements should be considered.
- The potential for undertaking national events, to disseminate a best practice guide, should be investigated.
- There was a confused landscape for parents and children to navigate around potential careers, further education and potential learner pathways etc. Careers guidance in schools and colleges should be upgraded and simplified where possible.
- Joint curriculum planning was necessary to best meet the needs of all pupils. As different local authorities used different models it would be useful to insert influence through Regional Improvement Collaboratives if possible.

The Committee **agreed** that the top three priorities for each topic be included in Committee papers going forward.

17/35

Commission on Widening Access ‘Blueprint for Fairness’ Update Report (AIC/17/20)

The Committee received a paper providing a summary update on SFC progress with the implementation of the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA) final report ‘*A Blueprint for Fairness*’ recommendations.

In discussion the Committee noted that:

- The CoWA target had been included in the university outcome agreement guidance.
- The aim was to pull the CoWA work into the learner journey work so that they were integrated and working together.
- The focus and purpose of the National Delivery Group was in monitoring progress, but it was hoped that this would evolve into a strategic forum going forward.
- The next meeting of the National Delivery Group was to take place in Spring 2018 and would coincide with the publication of the CoWA report.

- It was intended that an event would be held for Regional Improvement Collaboratives to explain CoWA's aims and to raise its profile with these groups.

The Committee advised that:

- It was important to consider a basket of measures, not SIMD alone, to ensure robust data. Many areas don't fall into low SIMD deciles but experience similar issues and need equivalent recognition and support.
- A whole system approach was vital to ensure a coherent approach.
- There was a limited pool of students and those undertaking vocational pathways would impact on the number of students available to meet college student number targets.
- There was a lack of data on the cultural barriers that students faced, with students having different experiences whether they articulated into 2nd or 3rd year of university. It was important to investigate the qualitative experience of students.

17/36

Progress on our Access ambitions and outcomes (AIC/17/21)

The Committee received a paper summarising progress on the access and inclusion outcomes overseen by the Committee.

The Committee noted that:

- It was expected that the access and inclusion outcomes for 2017-18 would be achieved.
- Further work, to identify gaps in analysis, was planned for:
 - Outcomes by disability type
 - Destinations by racial group
 - College withdrawal rates by protected group
 - University applications and acceptances by protected group.
- Drop out rates were available and could be provided on request.

The Committee advised that it was helpful, and good practice, for the Committee to review updated Equality Impact Assessments.

Developing the School Engagement Framework (AIC/17/22)

The Committee received a paper providing the most recent workings related to the development of the School Engagement Framework (SEF).

The Committee noted that:

- The Council executive had engaged with various stakeholders, including schools, local authorities, SCQF and sparqs during development of the School Engagement Framework.
- The focus was on the CoWA recommendations, particularly regional partnership working.
- The aim of positive destinations was prime.

The Committee advised that:

- It was important to work with current regional structures rather than creating new ones which would increase confusion and clutter.
- For best results, inclusion from S1 to S6 was desired, using a regional approach and high-level collaboration.
- Engagement with universities Widening Participation heads in universities and with primary schools should be undertaken.
- Universities global perspective impacted on their catchment areas and should be taken into account when considering the regional perspective.
- Alternative routes to university should be investigated fully and communicated widely to pupils.
- The potential for using the schools' individual tracker system to increase data and knowledge should be investigated.
- There were issues around duplication of initiatives and the potential for streamlining going forward, with one initiative in regions being the preferred option.

The Committee **agreed** that:

- The Council executive should investigate the scope for reducing initiatives in the regions.
- The Council executive moved forward with the next phase of the development as noted in the paper.
- The Committee be provided with an update on progress at the February 2018 Committee meeting.

17/38

Gender Action Plan – Annual Progress Report (AIC/17/23)

The Committee received a paper inviting the consideration of the key points of SFC's Gender Action Plan Annual Progress Report.

The Committee noted that:

- Significant activity was underway in institutions to progress gender access ambitions which, in turn, played a role in supporting institutions in meeting their statutory duties.
- The Council executive would continue to support institutions in developing action plans.

The Committee advised that:

- Embedding of gender action plans within their outcome agreements would be easiest for institutions.
- Role models could be useful vehicles in helping with the messaging around gender equality.

The Committee **agreed** that the Gender Action Plan Annual Progress Report be published on 4 December 2017, subject to final quality assurance processes.

17/39

Review of Student Support (Oral)

The Committee received an update on the Review of Student Support.

In discussion the Committee noted that:

- The report from the Student Support Review Group, *A New Social Contract for Students, Fairness, Parity and Clarity*, had been published on 20 November and the recommendations included:
 - Increased funding for students.
 - A common funding system for further and higher education.
 - Funding to follow the student, not the place of learning.
 - A single, centralised online portal to provide information to all students.
- The details of the tie in with the benefits system and the balance between loans and bursaries were still to be determined.
- Attendance requirements should be streamlined in further education to be made consistent with those in higher education.

- Reduced bureaucracy was expected to result from a single system, single funding body approach.
- Scottish Government was expected to respond in early 2018.

The Committee advised that:

- Students would welcome fairer attendance guidelines.
- The simplified, streamlined approach was to be welcomed.
- The detail on the balance of loans to bursary and the loan terms for FE students would be particularly important from an access perspective.

17/40 Engagement Strategy (AIC/17/24)

The Committee received a paper updating on the Access Engagement Strategy.

The Committee noted the feedback on the regional events and advised that school and university participation should be encouraged. The Committee felt that the AIC executive should seek to continue to promote its activities and engagement and that the regional events helped to achieve that. The paper had suggested no regional events in 2018 to enable the SFC executive to respond to the findings of the 2017 events. The Committee requested the SFC executive to re-consider this. It was suggested that rather than re-do the regional events, the SFC executive enhance their engagement in other stakeholder events as a means to promote our policy work. The AIC asked for this to come back to a future AIC meeting.

The Committee **agreed** that the:

- Council executive should look to develop an online survey.
- SFC executive further develop proposals for their intended engagement in 2018

17/41 Future Access and Inclusion Committee meeting dates (AIC/17/23)

The Committee received a paper providing the schedule of Access and Inclusion meeting dates for 2018/19.

17/42 Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Committee would take place at 9.30am on Wednesday 28 February 2018.