



The 102nd meeting of the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council was held on Thursday 9 November 2017 at 1.30pm, at The Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, High School Yards, Edinburgh.

**Present:** Mike Cantlay (Chair)  
John Kemp (Interim Chief Executive)  
David Alexander  
Mhairi Harrington  
Professor Maggie Kinloch  
Paul Little  
Douglas Mundie  
Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli  
Dr Keith Nicholson  
Dr Veena O'Halloran  
Caroline Stuart  
Marlene Wood  
Professor Lesley Yellowlees

**Officers:** Michael Cross  
Martin Fairbairn (Secretary)  
Dr Stuart Fancey  
Martin Kirkwood  
Lorna MacDonald  
Sheila Meehan (Clerk)

**Scottish Government:** Laura-Anne Brown

**Observers:** David Sweeney (HEFCE)  
David Blaney (HEFCW)  
Luke Humberstone (NUS (Scotland))  
Jenni Fairbairn

**17/117 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed David Sweeney of HEFCE, David Blaney of HEFCW, Luke Humberstone of NUS (Scotland), Laura-Anne Brown of the Scottish Government and Jenni Fairbairn to the meeting.

**17/118 Chair's business: papers for discussion and declarations of interest**

The Chair invited members to indicate if they wished to discuss any of the starred items on the agenda. No papers were unstarred for discussion.

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

The following members noted potential conflicts of interest:

- Paul Little, in relation to City of Glasgow College.
- Caroline Stewart, as a governor at Glasgow Caledonian University.
- Anton Muscatelli, in relation to University of Glasgow.
- David Alexander, in relation to West College Scotland.
- Mhairi Harrington, in relation to West Lothian College.
- Veena O'Halloran, in relation to University of Strathclyde.
- John Kemp, Fife College (indirect).

**17/119 Chair's report (SFC/17/82)**

The Council received and noted a paper providing a report from the Chair on his recent external engagements.

The Chair advised that he had, with the Interim Chief Executive, on 8 November met with the principals of Scotland's colleges and universities along with the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science. The Chair also confirmed that he would be meeting with institutions individually during 2018.

The Council **agreed** to the following Committee Chair appointments:

- Marlene Wood as Chair of the Finance Committee, standing down as Chair of the Audit and Compliance Committee.
- David Alexander as Chair of the Audit and Compliance Committee.

- Lesley Yellowlees as Chair of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

**17/120 Minutes of the 22 September 2017 meeting (SFC/17/Min06)**

The minute of the 22 September 2017 meeting was confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

**17/121 Action tracker (SFC/17/83)**

The Council received an update on the actions from the last meeting of the Board and noted progress on those actions.

**17/122 Long-term agenda planning (SFC/17/84)**

The Council received a paper informing members of substantive agenda items proposed for future meetings.

**17/123 SFC's Strategic Plan Performance Report and Risk Register update (SFC/17/85)**

The Council received an update on SFC's Strategic Plan Performance Report.

The Interim Chief Executive updated the Council on:

- Recent and imminent Parliamentary Committee attendance.
- Recent meetings attended by the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science and college and university principals, where she had confirmed her aims for the outcome agreement intensification agenda.
- SFC's refurbished office accommodation, commending the staff involved in the process.

The following two paragraphs are withheld from publication on the Council website under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30: Prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs

[ ] x 2 paragraphs

The Council **agreed** with the Interim Chief Executive's assessment that progress was on track.

**17/124 Chief Executive's report (SFC/17/86)**

The Council received and noted a paper providing a report from the Interim Chief Executive on matters of current interest.

The Council **agreed** to homologate the urgent action taken by the Chair to provide the Council's formal advice to Scottish Ministers on the proposed new build facility for Forth Valley College to replace its existing Falkirk campus.

**17/125 Gender Action Plan annual progress report (SFC/17/87)**

The Council received a paper providing the key points of the Gender Action Plan annual progress report.

In discussion the Council noted that:

- The full Gender Action Plan annual progress report would be reviewed at the November Access and Inclusion meeting in advance of publication.
- A whole system approach was necessary to progress the agenda and reduce any gender imbalances in courses.
- Working in partnership with Learned Societies, as is done in England, could be beneficial.

**17/126 College Estates Condition Survey (SFC/17/88)**

The Council received a paper presenting the high-level findings from the college sector estates condition survey.

The following two paragraphs are withheld from publication on the Council website under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 27: Information intended for future publication.

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**17/127 Update on HE Funding Model Review (SFC/17/89)**

The Council received a paper providing an update on the HE Funding Model Review.

The Council **agreed** that the Council executive should update the university sector and take forward the preferred option for AY 2018-19, as described in the paper.

**17/128 NHS Education for Scotland (NES)/SFC Joint Action Plan (SFC/17/90)**

The Council received a paper updating on the 2014-16 NES/SFC Joint Action Plan and highlighting the main areas to be addressed in the 2017-19 NES/SFC Joint Action Plan.

**17/129 Learning and Quality Enhancement Committee (SFC/17/91)**

The Council received a paper considering the case for establishing a 'Learning and Quality Enhancement Committee'.

In discussion the Council noted that:

- While the committee structure created a burden on Council members and Council executive, it was important that there was an appropriate committee to consider learning and quality issues and priorities.
- Dovetailing of the Strategic Board and SFC's committee structure would be beneficial to reduce duplication and could free up Council member time to support this Committee.

The Council **agreed** that plans to establish a 'Learning and Quality Enhancement Committee' should progress, subject to satisfactory resolution of the following matters: overall time commitment of Council board members; and the future role of the Joint Skills Committee after the establishment of the Strategic Board support structure. The Chair also invited members to give him their thoughts on the issue.

**17/130 Audit and Compliance Committee minutes (SFC/17/92)**

The Council received the unconfirmed minutes of the Audit and Compliance Committee meeting of 7 September 2017.

**17/131 Finance Committee minutes (SFC/17/93)**

The Council received the unconfirmed minutes and selected papers of the Finance Compliance Committee meeting of 10 October 2017.

**17/132 Remuneration Committee minutes (SFC/17/94)**

The Council received the unconfirmed minutes of the Remuneration Committee meeting of 22 September 2017.

**17/133 Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee minutes (SFC/17/95)**

The Council received the unconfirmed minutes of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee meeting of 14 September 2017.

**17/134 Skills Committee minutes (SFC/17/96)**

The Council received the unconfirmed minutes of the Skills Committee meeting of 23 August 2017.

**17/135 Update from observers (Oral)**

The Council received updates from the observers present, Jenni Fairbairn, David Sweeney, David Blaney and Luke Humberstone.

David Sweeney, Executive Chair Designate of Research England, confirmed that, as announced in the Prime Minister's Speech at the Conservative Party Conference, a review of fees and funding had been announced but the scope was not yet known.

David Blaney, Chief Executive of HEFCW, updated the Council on HEFCW's new Corporate Strategy and the use of measures to gauge HEFCW's performance.

The Council then received an update from Luke Humberstone, on recent work being undertaken by NUS (Scotland) on the Student Support Review, Brexit and students' mental health.

**17/136 Next meetings: 22 December 2017**