

Minutes of the 2 February 2017 Joint SFC and SDS Skills Committee (JSC) meeting

Key advice to SFC/SDS Boards

Advice to SFC and SDS Boards

SFC Board should:

On the **College Innovation** item: note the points raised by the Committee, in particular:

- Consideration should be given to how the innovation agenda can be developed **across** the system of colleges and universities; and
- The need for long term investment to meet the recommendations from the Reid report.

SDS Board should:

On the **Regional Skills Investment Plans** item: note the points raised by the Committee, in particular:

- That the Committee was supportive of the work on the development of Regional SIPs and they expressed the hope that Regional Skills Planning would be adopted across all of Scotland's regions in time.

Both SFC and SDS Boards should:

On the **College Innovation** item: note the points raised by the Committee, in particular:

- With the 'hollowing out' of the labour market there is an opportunity for colleges to support industry with re-training and upskilling the current workforce.

Skills Committee minutes

The thirtieth meeting of the Skills Committee of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) was held at 12.30pm on Thursday 2 February 2017 at SFC Offices, Apex 2, 97 Haymarket Terrace, EH12 5HD.

Present: Lorraine McMillan (Chair)
Allan Colquhoun
Doreen Davidson
Rob Henthorn
Paul Little
Craig Mahoney
Grahame Smith
Caroline Stuart
Dr Ken Thomson

Officers: Chris Brodie (SDS)
Michael Cross (SFC)
Sharon Drysdale (SFC)
Louise Lauchlan (SFC)
Maxine McClintock (SDS) (item 8 only)
Gordon McGuinness (SDS)
Andre Reibig (SFC)
Andrew Youngson (SFC) (items 1-5 only)

Observers

and guests: Carroll Buxton, Highland and Islands Enterprise
John McMorris, SQA
Linda Murray, Scottish Enterprise
Paul Smart, Scottish Government (item 7 only)

Apologies: Amanda Brown
Gordon Grant
Linda Hanna
Donald MacRae
Barry McCulloch
Professor Anton Muscatelli
Tricia Rainey
Graeme Waddell

17/01 Welcome by the Chair and apologies

The Chair **welcomed** members, guests and observers.

The Chair **informed** the Committee that Donald MacRae has been invited to remain on the Committee with Observer status in order to retain his expertise during the interim period whilst awaiting the outcome of the Phase Two of the Enterprise and Skills Review.

Apologies were noted as above.

The Chair **invited** the Committee to note the new version of the agenda and the change to the order of the agenda items.

17/02 Declarations of interest

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

Several Committee members highlighted a possible conflict of interest, however once discussed the Chair determined that this would not require any of the Committee members to be excluded from the relevant discussions.

17/03 Minute of 21 September 2016 (SC/16/Min 4)

The Committee received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the 21st September 2016, which had been to both Boards with the advice endorsed. The Committee **agreed** the minute as an accurate record of the meeting.

Further to a request from the Committee an update was provided by Michael Cross (SFC) on the current position regarding the establishment of a Strategic Labour Market Group. It was noted that:

- The Strategic Labour Market Group (SLMG) was established before the Enterprise and Skills Review
- The relationship between SLMG and the JSC has not been established
- Nominations for membership of the SLMG are being considered by Scottish Government.

17/04 Chair's business and matters arising (SC/17/01)

The Committee **noted** this paper updating members on matters arising and meetings undertaken by the Chair since the last meeting of the Committee, including the Chair's attendance at two meetings of the SFC/SDS Alignment Working Group.

SFC and SDS executives provided an update on Phase Two of the Enterprise and Skills outlining the 10 work streams that have been created. Comments from the Committee included: the hope that the tight timescales did not compromise the outcomes for the work streams; the recognition that there is a lot of interdependency between the work streams; and the acknowledgement of the substantial time and resources required, in particular from the SFC and SDS executive.

The Committee **reviewed** the advice tracker and updates were provided on current ongoing advice items.

17/05 College Innovation (SC/17/02)

The Chair **invited** Andrew Youngson (SFC) to present this item.

Andrew introduced the paper highlighting the work of the College Innovation Working Group (CIWG) and the recommendations from the Reid Report to develop opportunities for the college sector to maximise economic impact through working more closely with Innovation Centres and the university sector.

The Committee were **asked** to consider the draft action plan for the CIWG and were **invited** to identify opportunities to develop the skills element of the college innovation agenda.

Comments included:

- Recognition that colleges are already in the innovation space
- The importance of sharing best practice across the sectors
- Highlighting the good innovative practice that is already happening across the college sector
- There is a need for long term investment to meet the recommendations from the Reid report
- Recognition of the strength of college expertise in working with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), although not losing the reach they have within national and international companies

- With the ‘hollowing out’ of the labour market there is an opportunity for colleges to support industry with re-training and upskilling the current workforce
- How the innovation agenda can be developed **across** the system of colleges and universities
- Ensuring the focus is not only on the innovation but also the delivery of it, including training staff to be innovative
- Reviewing how colleges could access funding for innovation.

17/06 **Regional Skills Investment Plans (SC/17/03)**

The Chair **invited** Paul Zealey (SDS) to present this paper.

Paul highlighted:

- the increasing regional profile adopted since Regional Skills Investment Plan (SIP) for the Highlands and Islands in 2014 and how the introduction of city region and regional growth deals has accelerated this approach
- the development of the Glasgow City Region SIP
- the mission, strategic outcomes and actions for Regional SIPs, emphasising the first strategic outcome *“City Region working is the norm for skills investment, planning and provision”*
- the benefits of a regionally focused product.

The Committee were **invited** to consider the report and discuss the approach and to provide feedback to the executive on the content and focus of the approach.

Feedback from the Committee included:

- the Committee were supportive of the plan however they wanted to emphasise that no geographical area should be missed (i.e. Dumfries and Galloway)
- to consider how to make regional approaches more visible, possibly by looking at developing an ‘industrial powerhouse/city alliance’ type approach
- to ensure, where appropriate, that there is a particular focus on digital, at a Scotland-wide infrastructure level not just regional
- that the evidence and insight created through the RSAs and SIPs should be shared with school teachers. It was suggested that the Regional Developing Young Workforce groups could be used to support this.

17/07 **Learner Journey Review (Oral)**

The Chair **introduced** Paul Smart (Deputy Director, Scottish Government) and **invited** him to present the item.

Paul outlined the background and the aims of the Learner Journey review including: the review will take account of the Learner's perspective of school/college/university/training; the aim to improve the system and provide equal opportunities and informed choices; to avoid duplication of effort; and to improve the design and alignment of provision.

The Committee were **invited** to comment on the discussion and the draft project scoping document for the review. Comments included:

- an argument that the range for the review be extended from SCQF 9 to SCQF 11 as some employers require Masters/post graduate level qualifications
- to ensure that the college sector is not purely considered as FE providers and are included in consideration of HE provision
- to consider full range of apprenticeships – not only modern apprenticeships and make reference to the Apprenticeship Family within the document
- with an upper age limit of the review of 24 years old, to be aware of those people who come out of education early, for whatever reason, do not lose 'credit' for learning up to that date if they want to re-enter education at a later date
- the importance of the language used throughout the review so that it is accessible and understandable for all parties, i.e. not only in policy maker language
- it may be helpful to produce a visual map of the Learner Journey, setting out duration of learning, identifying bottlenecks in the system and duplication of learning
- What is the goal? What are the aspirations of young people – quality of employment or remuneration?

17/08 **Apprenticeship Levy Update (SC/17/04)**

The Chair **welcomed** Maxine McClintock (SDS) and Gordon McGuinness (SDS) and **invited** them to introduce the update paper.

Maxine outlined the creation of the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB) in 2016 and the announcement by Scottish Government (SG) of the planned Flexible Workforce Development Fund. She

explained that SG have outlined that employers, through SAAB, will input into the development of the Fund.

In order to discuss ways in which the fund could be used and to identify recommendations from employers a workshop for members of the SAAB Group Board and key industry representatives is to be held in February.

Comments from the Committee included:

- That SAAB involve as wide a range of employer voices as possible
- To prioritise and focus on areas of employer need, e.g. digital.

17/09 Draft Outcome Agreements: early outputs relating to skills and employability (SC/17/05*)

The Chair **asked** if any Committee members wished to discuss this paper for noting. A couple of comments were made regarding the growth of foundation and graduate level apprenticeships.

Sharon Drysdale (SFC) provided a brief summary of the paper, highlighting that there was limited information at this time as colleges and universities were still awaiting the indicative funding announcement.

17/10 Date of next meeting: Friday 21 April 2017, City of Glasgow College, Glasgow

The Chair thanked all members for their attendance and contributions to the discussions.