

The 116th meeting of the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council was held on Thursday 5 December 2019 at 12.30pm, at Forth Valley College, Stirling.

Present: Mike Cantlay (Chair)
Karen Watt (Chief Executive)
Douglas Mundie (Deputy Chair) (Items 19/106 to 19/114)
Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam
Professor Lesley Yellowlees
Andy Kerr
Mhairi Harrington
Dr Veena O'Halloran
Lorna Jack
David Alexander
Sheila Duncan
Professor Ewart Keep
Dr Paul Little

Officers: Martin Fairbairn (Secretary)
Dr Stuart Fancey
Maggie Wightman
Sinead Griffin
Lynne Raeside
Lorna MacDonald
Linda McLeod
Angela Seymour (Clerk)

Scottish Government: Dr Linda Pooley
Danielle Hennessey

Observers: Andrew Youngson (union-nominated observer)
David Sweeney (UKRI/Research England)

Apologies: Professor Peter Mathieson
Professor John Wallace
Caroline Stuart
David Blaney (HEFCW)
Liam McCabe (President of NUS Scotland)

19/106 Welcome

The Chair welcomed Dr Linda Pooley and Danielle Hennessey of the Scottish Government and David Sweeney of UKRI/Research England. Dr Ken Thomson and Ross Martin from Forth Valley College joined the meeting.

19/107 Presentation by Dr Ken Thomson on Forth Valley College

The Chair introduced Dr Ken Thomson and Ross Martin from Forth Valley College, who gave a presentation on Forth Valley College, 'A Vision for 2030'.

After discussion the Chair thanked them for their presentation and then they left the meeting.

19/108 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. The recommendations contained within papers SFC/19/92 and SFC/19/93 were **agreed** without discussion.

The Chair informed the Council that Danielle Hennessey was leaving after three years as Head of SFC's Sponsor Team, and thanked her for her help and support over this term.

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

The following members noted a potential conflict of interest:

- Andy Kerr in relation to South Lanarkshire College
- Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam in relation to Glasgow School of Art
- David Alexander in relation to West College Scotland
- Dr Paul Little in relation to City of Glasgow College
- Dr Veena O'Halloran in relation to University of Strathclyde

19/109 Minute of the 7 November 2019 meeting (SFC/19/Min05)

The minute of the 7 November 2019 meeting was **confirmed** as a true record of the meeting.

19/110 Action tracker (SFC/19/83)

The Council received an update on the actions from previous meetings of the Council and **noted** progress on those actions.

19/111 Chair's report (SFC/19/84)

The Chair's recent external engagements were **noted**.

19/112 Chief Executive's Report (SFC/19/85)

The Council received and **noted** a paper providing a report from the Chief Executive on matters of current interest and her recent external engagements, including a summary of the recently published 'Muscatelli Report'.

19/113 Innovation Centre Programme (SFC/19/86)

The Council was asked to approve SFC's contribution to the revised Oil and Gas Innovation Centre (OGIC) Transition Plan and delegate authority to the Chief Executive to agree, with the funding partners, the final contractual arrangements, subject to Ministerial **approval**.

In discussion, the Council welcomed the hard work that had gone into the revised plan and supported any further shortening of the transition, if at all possible.

The Council **approved** SFC's contribution of up to £2.6M to Transition Plan and delegated authority to the Chief Executive to sign off final details and KPIs alongside partners.

19/114 Corporate Governance (SFC/19/90)

The Council received a paper setting out proposals relating to its corporate governance.

The following members noted a potential conflict of interest:

- David Alexander in relation to West College Scotland.
- Andy Kerr in relation to South Lanarkshire College
- Dr Paul Little in relation to City of Glasgow College
- Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam in relation to Glasgow School of Art
- Dr Veena O'Halloran in relation to University of Strathclyde
- Lesley Yellowlees in relation to Edinburgh Napier University

In discussion the Council:

- Noted that there could be future succession planning issues arising from seven new board members starting at the same time.
- Noted that there would need to be careful planning of the policy areas the merged Access and Inclusion and the Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee would cover.
- Confirmed the value members gain from Strategic Dialogue Meetings and looked forward to considering how similar value can be achieved in future.

The Council **agreed**:

- the board development programme;
- merger of the Access and Inclusion Committee with the Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee;
- Douglas Mundie be appointed to the role of Chair of the Finance Committee;
- the proposals and timing of a new board effectiveness review; and
- that the Council executive would work with the Scottish Government to plan the future cycles of board appointments.

Douglas Mundie left the meeting.

19/115 Skills Alignment (SFC/19/87)

The Council received a paper updating on the progress of the Skills alignment programme.

The following members noted a potential conflict of interest:

- Lorna Jack in relation to the Law Society of Scotland

In discussion the Council:

- Welcomed the paper.
- Was reassured that the programme also focussed on the contribution of employers and their role in retraining the adult workforce.

The Council **noted** the report.

19/116 Use of delegated authority (SFC/19/88)

The Council **noted** the use of the Chief Executive's delegated authority from 13 August 2019 until 14 November 2019, under the Council's scheme of delegation.

19/117 SFC Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2019 (SFC/19/89)

The Council received a paper updating it on progress towards its published Equality Outcomes for the period 2017 - 2021

In discussion the Council welcomed the new report, citing the improved format and more informative narrative. The Council also noted the challenge of obtaining adequate gender pay gap information.

The Council **noted** the progress to date against the SFC's equality outcomes and the emerging strategic alliance with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.

19/118 SFC/NHS Education for Scotland Joint Action Plan (SFC/19/91)

The Council received a paper providing an update on the activities undertaken as part of the SFC/NES joint work in 2018-2019.

The Council **noted**:

- that the Chairs have agreed to continue the joint work and have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a further three years (2020 – 2023);
- the progress with the SFC/NES Joint Action Plan in 2018 – 2019; and
- the SFC/NES Joint Action Plan for 2020 - 2023

19/119 Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee minutes (SFC/19/92)

The Council **noted** the unconfirmed minutes of the Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee meeting of 19 September 2019.

19/120 Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee minutes (SFC/19/93)

The Council **noted** the unconfirmed minutes of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee meeting of 4 September 2019.

19/121 Long-term agenda (SFC/19/94)

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

The Council:

- **Noted** that indicative allocations for universities and colleges have been removed from the January board agenda due to the delay in the Scottish budget.

19/122 Next meeting: 30 January 2020