

## **The Cumberland-Little Report**

- This paper invites RKEC to note the publication of the *Cumberland-Little Report: One Tertiary System: Agile, Collaborative, Inclusive* and to comment on the report as appropriate.

## **Recommendations**

- Note the Cumberland-Little Report.
- Discuss the report and comment as appropriate.

## **Financial implications**

- Although there are no immediate financial implications arising from this paper, how SFC responds to the recommendations could require additional programme funds and running costs.

## The Cumberford - Little Report

### Purpose

1. This paper invites RKEC to note the publication of the *Cumberford-Little Report: One Tertiary System: Agile, Collaborative, Inclusive* and to comment on the report as appropriate.

### Background

2. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2019, the then Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work commissioned Audrey Cumberford (Principal and Chief Executive of Edinburgh College), and Dr Paul Little (Principal and Chief Executive Officer of City of Glasgow College) to undertake a review of the economic impact of Scotland's colleges<sup>1</sup>. The report was commissioned to complement that commissioned from Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli, focussing on the impact of the university sector.
3. The final published report was expected to:
  - Establish how colleges in Scotland currently impact on the economy through helping improve businesses' performance and productivity (for example, through upskilling and reskilling);
  - Consider their economic impact across a wider range of Scottish Government priorities;
  - Highlight examples of best practice in Scotland (and where possible, internationally); and
  - Make recommendations on how to realise untapped potential for creating sustained business growth, within college regions and beyond.

The report was also expected to reflect the likely operating environment of an increasingly diverse and inclusive workforce, and the need to improve both regional and metropolitan competitiveness.

4. The *Cumberford-Little Report: One Tertiary System: Agile, Collaborative, Inclusive*<sup>2</sup>, was launched in Glasgow on 13 February 2020. Scottish Government welcomed the report and committed to examining it closely

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk/news-events/news/city-glasgow-college-principal-review-impact-college-sector> and <http://www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk/newsandevents/college-principal-undertaking-review-into-impact-of-scotlands-colleges/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://view.pagetiger.com/inlhij/1>

before responding in due course.

5. SFC's Board will be invited to consider the Cumberford – Little Report at the meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

### **The Cumberford-Little Report and recommendations**

6. Principals Cumberford and Little made three key recommendations supported by extensive commentary and analysis. There are expectations and opportunities for the SFC to contribute to the three recommendations made.
7. The report is intended to reflect the views of its authors as experts in the College sector, and the views it contains are theirs and not those of their institutions or the wider sector.
8. The report's three recommendations are as follows:

#### ***Extract from The Cumberford-Little Report***

##### ***Recommendation 1***

***Ministers should endorse a compelling narrative setting out the purpose of a 21st college that we propose on page 22 [of the full report], and:***

- *noting our emphasis on lifetime learning and business engagement, promote it consistently across Government, irrespective of Portfolio, to develop a clear understanding across civic Scotland of what a college is for;*
- *use it to establish short, multi-year, Ministerial guidance, focused on core priorities in support of the purpose;*
- *develop a transparent and accessible performance regime directly related to the purpose. This should be done by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), working with the sector and other stakeholders. In the context of that work, we are clear the existing target for colleges, focusing on volume, should be replaced by a target that focuses clearly on the impact we want colleges to make;*
- *to allow colleges better to support business, particularly in pursuit of productivity gains, and inclusive growth, and given the priority of establishing a coherent, flexible, and efficient post school tertiary system, reconsider the current imbalance between the SFC's college and university strategic funds; and*
- *again given the ambition for a coherent tertiary system, reconsider the historical balance between the SFC's university and college 'core' funding streams to ensure the allocation of resource is appropriate for today's and tomorrow's economic*

landscape.

## **Recommendation 2**

*Consistent with the purpose we propose for a 21st century college, **Ministers** make supporting business growth a top priority for colleges. To this end, they should:*

- *ask SG, SFC, the enterprise agencies (inc SoSEP) to work with the college sector - on a 'Team Scotland' basis - to develop mechanisms that incentivise effective and purposeful college/employer engagement; this work should be business centred, and avoid complexity and bureaucracy; in addition, given the integral nature of colleges to business development, growth and productivity, and as we move closer to a knowledge-based economy where the importance of place is becoming more acute, Ministers should ask SFC to consider a strategic alignment between colleges and SDS, SE, HIE, and SoSEP so as to improve joint regional planning, and the development of joint teams to enable regional collaborations with colleges (and universities). This approach would be particularly helpful for PACE related activities, and in those areas where we know we have large scale and critical skills gaps;*
- *ask the enterprise agencies to work with colleges to explore how their relationship could be strengthened further, using a regional model of business-college/enterprise agency engagement, avoiding cluttering the landscape in which businesses have to navigate;*
- *ensure the college sector plays a full part in realising the national ambition of a single portal for businesses. This will help colleges properly understand - and contribute to - the content of the portal, while ensuring college support is clearly identified as a part of the resource available to employers;*
- *ask the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to work with SFC, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), and the sector to review its post-16 portfolio against the tests of the new college purpose. This should focus on the need to meet the tests of industry-related currency, credibility, and agility, and accommodating employers' wish for short, focused or bite-sized learning interventions. SQA should also consider, with colleges, and SCQF, how they might secure the freedom to design and develop their own qualifications. In addition, and again with colleges, and others where identified below, SQA should investigate:*
  - *how colleges might secure wider recognition for the value of accreditation provided by a range of other awarding bodies, and industry;*
  - *(with SFC) how to enhance the use of college certified qualifications, and more use of 'micro-credentials';*

- *how Ministers can better promote the value of Higher National Qualifications for direct entry into employment;*
  - *the development of a two-year college degree, based on the Higher National Diploma, with additional work placement content;*
- *ask Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council, as part of the work undertaken by the two bodies on skills alignment, to discuss with colleges the opportunities for greater college participation in each stage of the ‘Apprenticeship Family’*
  - *in line with Scottish Government international ambitions, and our status as “A Trading Nation”, and in the light of the experience and success some colleges have enjoyed in exporting, ask SDI to consider wider opportunities for Scottish colleges’ participation in international visits and trade missions, along with invitations to participate in inward trade missions;*
  - *ask SFC to work with the sector and business representatives to ensure its Outcome Agreements define effective and suitable impact measures for business engagement. SFC should also work with Education Scotland to ensure its quality assurance regime for colleges supports these measures;*
  - *expand the Flexible Workforce Development Fund, allowing colleges to engage and support SMEs and micro and family-businesses in enhancing productivity;*
  - *Our final recommendation for Scottish Ministers draws on the benefits that our other proposals may generate. Our theme is one of identifying opportunities to reduce unnecessary bureaucratic constraints and central controls that characterise the current system and which, in our judgement, hold colleges back from making the fullest possible contribution to inclusive growth. We invite Ministers to consider if the more coherent tertiary system we propose allows scope for asking the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to revisit its current classification of Scotland’s colleges. Ahead of that process, the Scottish Government should undertake a full analysis of the basis for the ONS decision (now several years old) and compare the position at that stage with the type of regime we propose.*

### **Recommendation 3**

**The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) should:**

- *work with the college sector, to reform its current funding model, so as directly to incentivise colleges’ agility and speed of response to employer demand. The new model should be transparent, and readily understood, and introduced as quickly as possible, no later than academic year 2021/22;*

- *working with colleges and universities, establish a means of learner-focused articulation from college to university. This should promote a more coherent tertiary system, incentivising collaboration, colocation, co-funding, and co-investment. This work should also address solutions to the difficulties in the south of Scotland arising from diseconomies of scale resulting from relatively small learner cohorts; the costs and challenges inherent in travel in rural communities; and the relatively low SIMD-defined areas of disadvantage;*
- *protect the essential diversity of the sector - which is a crucial strength – by considering how best to direct and maximise technological investment in which learner-focused provision and data innovation can be freely shared across and between regions. The SFC should consider the benefits and outcomes associated within a networked system of this kind: this should include consideration of the ‘hub models’ operating in the south of Scotland, UHI, and currently being explored in the Ayrshire region - which themselves help to address, but which do not yet fully resolve, the difficulties identified for the south of Scotland in the preceding bullet;*
- *explore how to promote collaborative solutions in considering future capital investment projects; and*
- *building on existing resources, explore the possibilities of a ‘staff college’ for the sector to develop the necessary cross-silo leadership we identify as necessary for the years ahead. Finally, we hope it is apparent from what we say in each of the recommendations above we consider it essential for **all actors** in Scotland’s tertiary sector to engage fully with the development of the solutions we propose.*

9. RKEC is invited to discuss the report’s recommendations and to comment as appropriate.

### **Contributing to a response**

10. The report makes recommendations in areas where the Scottish Government should lead a response, makes recommendations in areas where there is already work underway or in review, highlights areas of opportunity, challenges current SFC funding policy, and encourages SFC to take a leading role in areas where it would certainly need to work in partnership or may not be the right agency to lead. As Scottish Government considers its response, we will expect to work with it and partner agencies, guided by the SFC Board in April.
11. In SFC’s Strategic Framework we say we will :
- To invest in excellent research and innovation that adds to current knowledge, delivers economic and societal value, enhances Scotland’s international reputation and attractiveness, and makes the world around

us prosperous, healthier and more sustainable;

- ensure colleges, universities and specialist institutions form part of a successful, world-leading, coherent and sustainable system of education that responds effectively to the future needs of learners and the skills needs of the economy and society, enhances our rich cultural life, and strengthens Scotland's international connections; and
- be an excellent, outcome-focused public body that provides leadership, inspires confidence, models collaborative working, is committed to continuous improvement, and stewards public resources well.<sup>3</sup>

12. Our advice for Government will need to be framed in this context.

13. SFC's Board will consider the report at the Council meeting on 2 April. We invite RKEC to provide any appropriate advice as an input to the Board paper.

### **Risk assessment**

14. Since this paper is designed to provide the Committee with an open opportunity to consider the Cumberland-Little report, it does not contain recommendations for specific actions and therefore it is not appropriate at this stage to conduct a risk assessment.

### **Financial implications**

15. Although there are no immediate financial implications arising from this paper, how SFC responds to the recommendations could require significant additional programme funds and running costs.

### **Equality and diversity assessment**

16. Since this paper is designed to provide the Committee with an open opportunity to consider the Cumberland-Little report, it does not contain recommendations for specific actions and therefore it is not appropriate at this stage to conduct an equality and diversity assessment.

### **Recommendations**

17. RKEC is invited to:

- Note the Cumberland-Little Report.
- Discuss the report's recommendations and comment as appropriate.

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/StrategicFramework/Scottish\\_Funding\\_Council\\_Strategic\\_Framework\\_2019-2022.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/StrategicFramework/Scottish_Funding_Council_Strategic_Framework_2019-2022.pdf)

**Publication**

18. This paper will be published on SFC's website.

**Further information**

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