

## SFC review of coherent provision and FE/HE sustainability

### Purpose

1. This paper updates RKEC on the request from Scottish Ministers that SFC review the provision and sustainability of further and higher education in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Background

2. On 3 June 2020 the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science invited SFC to ‘review how best it can fulfil its mission of securing coherent provision by post-16 education bodies, and the undertaking of research in these changing times. We expect this will cover future provision, delivery, outcomes and targets, funding models and support for research activity across the college and university sector in Scotland.’ The Minister’s letter can be found on our website<sup>1</sup>. Scottish Government also issued a press release and the story was carried by the Scottish press<sup>2</sup>.
3. The letter also asks SFC to “...draw on the analysis of the fundamental strengths in, challenges for and potential of our sector as set out in your own Strategic Plan, the recent Muscatelli Report Driving Innovation in Scotland, the Cumberford-Little Report One Tertiary System: agile, connected, inclusive and other relevant reports.”
4. SFC’s Board discussed this at its meeting on 4 July 2020. The Board noted that the review will be relevant to all four of the Scottish Funding Council’s (SFC’s) core objectives: accessible and high quality learning; excellent research and innovation; a successful, world-leading, coherent and sustainable system of education; and being an excellent, outcome-focused public body.
5. We are likely to bring an updated framework to the Board by the end of the summer, in order to reflect our review recommendations and to better reflect our priorities.
6. We will seek to engage RKEC in the review. The main paper for this meeting

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<sup>1</sup>

[http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/AboutUs/Scottish Government letter reviewing coherent provision and sustainability\\_03\\_Jun\\_2020.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/AboutUs/Scottish_Government_letter_reviewing_coherent_provision_and_sustainability_03_Jun_2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/news/review-of-further-and-higher-education-support/>

'SFC's innovation strategy' is framed in this context.

**Risk assessment**

7. The paper is for noting only.

**Equality and diversity assessment**

8. The paper is for noting only.

**Recommendations**

9. RKEC is invited to note the paper and comment as appropriate.

**Financial implications**

10. There are no direct financial implications associated with this paper.

**Publication**

11. This paper will be published on the Council website.

**Further information**

12. Contact: Keith McDonald, Assistant Director, [kmcdonald@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:kmcdonald@sfc.ac.uk).