

SFC review of coherent provision and sustainability – phase-two

- To develop the input from the Committee to SFC Review over two strands of work: the emergency years 2020/21 and 2021/22, and the longer term.

Recommendations

- Consider the recommendations in the paper annexed (Annex A) and the presentation which accompanies this paper.

Financial implications

- There are no immediate financial implications of the advice of the Committee resulting from this paper. As the Review proceeds, the Committee will be invited to make recommendations which will contribute to Board decisions on funding.

SFC review of coherent provision and sustainability – phase-two

Purpose

1. This paper invites RKEC to continue providing input and advice to SFC's review of coherent provision and sustainability (the review) as a standing item on its agenda.

Background

2. At its 14 October 2020 meeting (RKEC/20/12) RKEC received a presentation on then to be published phase-one report on SFC's review. This report has now been published and is available from the review section of SFC's website¹.
3. The report is structured around priority themes. Themes six and seven relate to research and innovation respectively. The interconnectedness of the themes will be a focus in the review.
4. SFC is now finalising the phase-two deliverables plan which is expected to run over a revised timeline to end of February 2021.

Discussion

5. As was discussed at the October meeting, we have two parallel tasks ahead of us in phase-two:
 - Ensuring our investments, policies and accountability frameworks are contributing to Scotland's recovery over AY2020-21 and 2021-22 (the emergency years).
 - Building a robust evidence base for our longer term options for change and recommendations for phase-three of the review.
6. This paper is aimed at continuing this conversation with RKEC and is thus divided into two sub sections each with own recommendations and which will be introduced separately at the meeting.
 - Annex A – focusses on how we will ensure our current research and innovation investments and frameworks are the best they can be to have a

¹ <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/review/review.aspx>

positive impact in the recovery or emergency years as defined by the phase-one report.

- Presentation – focusses on how we will consider the longer-term strategic direction of SFC’s support and role in Scotland’s research and innovation system or landscape.

Risk assessment

7. As reported at the October meeting the risks to be considered at this early stage of policy development in the Committee’s remit include:
 - The risks to the sustainability and excellence of Scotland’s research base, as a result of international competition, Covid-19 and Brexit.
 - The immediate risk to Scotland’s economic and social wellbeing of the combination of Covid-19 and Brexit.
 - The risk of Scotland’s universities and colleges not being well positioned to contribute to a just transition to a net-zero carbon economy in the medium term.
8. The review has been commissioned to seek mitigations to these risks which can be achieved by Government, SFC, the colleges and universities working together.

Equality and diversity assessment

9. At this stage of the review, SFC is not yet considering major changes to policy, or resulting funding, in the areas of the Committee’s remit and so no assessment is, yet, required. Policy is expected to be changed by the review. Equality and Diversity assessment is being considered early, and will be included as proposals are brought to the Committee for advice.

Financial implications

10. There are no immediate financial implications of the advice of the Committee resulting from this paper. As the Review proceeds, the Committee will be invited to make recommendations which will contribute to Board decisions on funding.

Recommendations

11. RKEC is invited to consider the recommendations in the paper annexed (Annex A) and the presentation which accompanies this paper.

Publication

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

Further information

13. Contact: Keith McDonald, tel: 0131 313 6674, email: kmcdonald@sfc.ac.uk.