

Note of the discussion by Council Board members

12 August 2020, by video-conference

Present: Paul Little (Chair)
Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam
Professor Ewart Keep
Andy Kerr
Sheila Duncan (from item 20/04)

Officers: Donna MacKinnon
Dr Dee Bird
Dr Andre Reibig (Secretary)
Karen Watt
Sharon Drysdale
Keith Coyne
Derek Horsburgh
Nick Stansfeld (Clerk)

Apologies: None

Welcome and apologies

Paul Little, welcomed the board members and Council executive officers to the meeting. A brief round-table introduction from board members and the executive followed.

Minute of 19 September 2019 meeting of the Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee

The minute from the last official meeting of the Learning Enhancement and Skills Committee meeting was noted.

Overview of the Learning, Enhancement and Skills Committee

The attendees noted a paper that provided an overview of developments relevant to the Learning, Enhancement and Skills Committee, in advance of the Council Board's consideration of the remit and membership of a new committee at its next meeting on 20 August 2020.

Discussion of the Remit and Membership of the Learning, Enhancement and Skills Committee

Participants received a paper outlining a revised Terms of Reference, including membership of the Learning, Enhancement and Skills Committee going forward, which participants were invited to discuss. The following points were covered:

- Widening access and participation should be included in the remit and title of the new Committee to appropriately reflect that this policy area remains a high priority for SFC. The participants suggested a new name for the committee and proposed “Skills, Enhancement, Access and Learning” (SEAL) Committee.
- The SEAL committee should give strategic and longer term advice to the SFC Board relating to the four main policy areas: Skills, Enhancement, Access and Learning.
- The SFC executive would review some of the wording in the remit, with the new name, prior to presentation to the Council board.
- Regarding membership of the SEAL Committee, the participants suggested that, in the short term, it should be formed only of the current group of SFC Board members, to allow the Committee to have focused discussions, particularly around matters related to the review of coherent provision and sustainability.
- It was suggested that Maggie Wightman, Joint SFC/SDS Director for Skills Alignment, would be invited to attend future meetings and should present a progress report on the three pilot projects on skills alignment.

SFC Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability

The participants received a presentation on the SFC Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability, which outlined the main areas emerging during the first phase of the Review.

The participants welcomed the overview and noted the Phase 1 report will focus on SFC immediate priorities, our understanding of the key issues and how they will be addressed, focussing on stability, financial sustainability, affordable and high quality provision and an education-led recovery from the Covid-19 crisis.

In the discussion that followed participants also reflected on Professor Ewart Keep’s paper on ‘Scenarios for the Future’, which explored options for the future. Participants also noted that:

- The Review presented an opportunity for real change for the tertiary education sector in terms of structure, provision, learning and teaching, estates strategy and funding arrangements.

- The Review will explore all available options, for short-term and long-term strategies to recover from the Covid-19 crisis and the associated and anticipated challenges facing Scotland's labour market.
- There might be value in establishing a 'Think Tank' group to help develop strategies for the future of further and higher education in Scotland.
- A risk register would form part of the management of the Review.

Any Other Business

There was no other business.