

## Letter of Strategic Guidance

### Purpose

1. This paper provides a copy of the Letter of Guidance received from our Minister, Jamie Hepburn. This paper is for noting.

### Strategic Framework implications

2. The Letter of Guidance will be reflected in the refresh of our Strategic Framework.

### Background

3. The Scottish Funding Council receives a Letter of Guidance annually from Scottish Ministers. The letter for 2022-23 is set within the context of our Review of Tertiary Education and Research, alongside the priorities of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET), the Resource Spending Review and the Shared Outcomes Framework.

### Priority Areas

4. In addition to delivering on the already agreed Review recommendation priorities (Pathfinders, National Impact Framework, and Research & Innovation recommendations), the letter identifies the following priority areas:
  - Development of a co-owned and co-designed Entrepreneurial Campus Strategy.
  - Expansion and delivery of Foundation and Graduate Apprenticeships, responding to Education Scotland's Review of FAs and contributing to an independent evaluation of GAs.
  - Fair Work.
  - Economic recovery through support of the Young Person's Guarantee and Flexible Workforce Development Fund.
  - Widening access, including tackling digital poverty and addressing mental health.
  - Addressing climate change and the transition to net zero.

- Colleges Infrastructure Investment Plan.
  - Development of a revised funding model for colleges.
5. The letter also asks SFC to align its activities with the following wider Scottish Government strategies:
- The Adult Learning Strategy.
  - The Digital Strategy for Scotland.
  - The Just Transition Planning Framework.
  - The wider education reform agenda.
  - The National Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care in Scotland.
6. The themes from the Letter of Strategic Guidance will be reflected in the refreshed Strategic Framework, with specific activities identified in the accompanying Operating Plan which will come to the Board at a future meeting.

#### **Risk assessment**

7. The main risks associated with this paper relate to our ability to deliver as an organisation and are captured on an ongoing basis through our planning and risk management work.

#### **Equality and diversity assessment**

8. The Letter of Guidance does not, in itself, require any change to SFC's existing assessment of equality and diversity impacts across its various strategies, but elements contained within the Letter will be subject to specific assessment as policies develop.

#### **Islands impact assessment**

9. The Letter of Guidance does not, in itself, require an Islands Impact Assessment. However, Impact Assessments will be carried out where appropriate in relation to individual activities that flow from the Letter of Guidance.

#### **Recommendations**

10. The Board is invited to:
- Note the attached Letter of Guidance

#### **Financial implications**

11. There are no financial implications associated with this paper.

**Publication**

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

**Further information**

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