
Board meeting minutes

The 134th meeting of the Scottish Funding Council was held on 11 November 2022 at The Court Room, University of Stirling

Present:

- Mike Cantlay (Chair)
- Karen Watt (Chief Executive)
- Lorna Jack (Deputy Chair)
- David Alexander
- Mhairi Harrington
- Professor Ewart Keep
- Dr Paul Little
- Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam
- Professor Peter Mathieson
- Dr Veena O'Halloran
- Sheila Duncan
- Caroline Stuart
- Professor John Wallace
- Professor Lesley Yellowlees

Officers:

- Martin Boyle
- Helen Cross
- Richard Maconachie
- Lynne Raeside (Secretary)
- Angela Seymour (Clerk)

Observers: Ellie Gomershall (NUS Scotland President) (Virtual)

Apologies:

- Andy Kerr
- David Blaney (HEFCW)
- James Dunphy

22/106 Welcome

The Chair welcomed all present.

22/107 Chair's business: Papers for discussion and declarations of interest

The Chair invited members to indicate if they wished to discuss the starred item on the agenda. The recommendations contained within paper SFC/22/83.

The Chair reminded Board members of their responsibility to indicate if they have, or may be perceived to have, a conflict of interest under any item.

22/108 Minutes of the 2 September 2022 meeting (SFC/22/Min05)

The minute of the 2 September 2022 meeting was confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

22/109 Action Tracker (SFC/22/78)

The Board received an update on the actions from previous meetings of the Board.

22/110 Chief Executive's report: items for report (SFC/22/79)

The Board received an update from the Chief Executive on current operational issues.

In discussion, the Board noted:

- Progress on the Rural & Islands Colleges' Merger.
- That a full People Survey will be carried out in early 2023.

22/111 Corporate Governance Review (SFC/22/80)

The Board was informed this paper will be deferred until further notice.

22/112 Risk Register (SFC/22/81)

The Board received a paper presenting the most up-to-date version of the SFC Risk Register.

The Board:

- Discussed the Risk Register in relation to the new Strategic Plan.
- Identified gaps and changes for management to review and help shape an updated Risk Register.
- Confirmed the new register will be presented to the Board in early 2023.

22/113 Use of Delegated Authority (SFC/22/82)

The Board received a paper reporting the Chief Executive's use of delegated authority during the period 17 August 2022 until 31 October 2022.

The Board:

- Noted the use of the Chief Executive's delegated authority from 17 August 2022 until 31 October 2022, under the SFC's scheme of delegation.

22/114 Committee minutes: Finance Committee 31 May 2022 (SFC/22/83*)

The Board received the confirmed minutes of the Finance Committee meeting of 31 May 2022.

22/115 Long Term Agenda (SFC/22/84)

The Board received a paper informing members of substantive agenda items proposed for future meetings.

22/116 Any other business

Potential Pre-Horizon Europe Decision Additional Research Funding.

The Board received a tabled paper updating them on potential additional research funding ahead of a formal decision on UK Horizon Europe association. It is anticipated that the funding will be allocated directly to SFC from the Department for Business, Innovation and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to be distributed to and spent by institutions before the end of March.

Although no funding decisions were being made, the following members of the Board noted an interest:

- Professor Peter Mathieson in relation to University of Edinburgh
- Professor Irene McAra-McWilliams in relation to Glasgow School of Art
- Professor Lesley Yellowlees in relation to Edinburgh Napier University

The Board:

- Noted this update, the tight timeframe and the state of play with regards to Horizon Europe association.
- Agreed that should funding be confirmed, the Board would delegate authority to the Chief Executive, Chair and Deputy Chair to finalise a funding methodology and allocations to ensure SFC can move at pace to deliver funding to institutions as quickly as possible.

22/117 Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Board would take place virtually on 2 February 2023.