

Board meeting minutes

The 130th meeting of the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council was held on Friday, 11 March 2022 at 10.00am at Forth Valley College, Falkirk Campus.

- Present:** Mike Cantlay (Chair)
Karen Watt (Chief Executive)
Lorna Jack (Deputy Chair)
David Alexander
Sheila Duncan
Mhairi Harrington
Professor Ewart Keep
Dr Paul Little
Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam
Dr Veena O'Halloran
Caroline Stuart (By video)
Professor John Wallace
Professor Lesley Yellowlees
- Officers:** Lynne Raeside (Secretary)
Chris Brown
Dr Stuart Fancey
Richard Maconachie
Gordon Craig
Jacquie Brasted (By video)
Claire MacPherson (item 5) (by Video)
Angela Seymour (Clerk)
- Observers:** Matt Crilly (President of NUS(Scotland)) (By video)
Robin Lee (staff observer) (By video)
David Sweeney (UKRI/Research England)(By Video)
- Apologies:** Andy Kerr
Professor Peter Mathieson

David Blaney (HEFCW)
Martin Boyle
James Dunphy

22/22 Welcome

The Chair welcomed all present.

22/23 Chair's business: Papers for discussion and declarations of interest

The Chair invited members to indicate if they wished to discuss any of the starred items on the agenda. The recommendations contained within papers SFC/22/25 to SFC/22/32 were agreed without discussion.

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

22/24 Minutes of the 4 February 2022 meeting (SFC/22/Min01)

After an amendment to the attendees list the minute of the 4 February 2022 meeting was confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

22/25 Action Tracker (SFC/22/16)

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

A member of the Board requested an update on college art collections which might be eligible for the Museums and Galleries funding.

22/26 Chief Executive's report: items for report (SFC/21/17)

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

In discussion the Board:

- Requested an update on the South Lanarkshire College situation at the May meeting.
- Noted the work on building SFC's capacity and thanked Sheila Duncan for her assistance in recent senior recruitments.
- Welcomed the new members of staff.
- Noted the publication of the Muir Report.
- Noted the impact of global events on the FE and HE sectors.

22/27 Spending Review update from Scottish Government

The Board received a verbal update from Joe Griffin (Director General for Education and Justice) outlining the process for the Spending Review, its priorities and the challenges faced.

In discussion the Board noted:

- The exemplary communications and joint work between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council which has engendered a good relationship.
- The steps taken by SFC to manage a challenging budget settlement for the sectors for the 2022 – 23 allocations.
- The contributions the sector can make to the spending review priorities of:
 - Tackling child poverty;
 - Addressing climate change; and
 - Securing a stronger, greener economy.

22/28 Review implementation: Pathfinders (SFC/22/18)

The Board received a paper giving an update on the approach to delivery of the Regional Tertiary Provision Pathfinders as part of implementation of the SFC Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability and oversight of skills planning.

The Board noted:

- The proposed activity outlined in this paper.
- The link between this work and the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.
- The proposed Shared Outcome Framework developed between Scottish Government, Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland.

22/29 Review implementations: Approach to Research Funding AY 2022 – 23 (SFC/22/19)

The Board received a paper on the developing approach to research funding for AY2022-23.

The following members of the Board with a conflict of interests left the room during the discussion of this paper:

- Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam in relation to Glasgow School of Art and as an Advisory Board Member of University of Edinburgh.
- Dr Veena O’Halloran in relation to the University of Strathclyde.
- Professor Lesley Yellowlees in relation to Edinburgh Napier University.

The Board noted:

- Progress on the developing approach to research funding for AY2022 – 23.
- RKEC Working Group and the Finance Committee will oversee the recommendations to be made to the May Board meeting.

The Board agreed:

- That the indicative allocations announcement would include a statement indicating that any university’s reduction in REG for AY 2022-23 would be limited.

The Board members returned.

22/30 Indicative funding allocations for colleges for AY 2021-22 (SFC/22/20)

The Board received a paper seeking approval for indicative funding allocations for colleges in AY 2022-23.

The following members of the Board with a conflict of interests left the room during this paper:

- Professor Ewart Keep in relation to his role as a Board member of City of Glasgow College.
- Dr Paul Little in relation to City of Glasgow College, Glasgow Colleges’ Regional Board.
- Caroline Stuart in relation to her role as Chair of Dumfries and Galloway College.

In addition, the following Board members left the meeting to avoid any potential conflict should the discussion become more tertiary in nature.

- Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam in relation to Glasgow School of Art and as an Advisory Board Member of University of Edinburgh.
- Dr Veena O’Halloran in relation to the University of Strathclyde.
- Professor Lesley Yellowlees in relation to Edinburgh Napier University.

The following observer left the room during this paper due to a potential conflict of interest:

- Matt Crilly in Respect of his position as President of the Scottish Student Union.

In discussion the Board:

- Noted that this paper had been thoroughly scrutinised and agreed by the Finance Committee prior to coming to the Board.
- Complimented the Finance team on the quality of the paper and the work contained within.

The Board agreed:

- The proposed AY 2022-23 indicative college allocations outlined in the paper.
- To delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the indicative college funding allocations for publication, subject to the finalised indicative allocations being materially consistent with the contents of the paper and the Council board discussion.

22/31 Indicative funding allocations for universities for AY 2022-23 (SFC/22/21)

The Board received a paper seeking approval for University funding allocations to be made within Financial Year 2022-23.

The following members of the Board with a conflict of interests left the room during this paper:

- Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam in relation to Glasgow School of Art and as an Advisory Board Member of University of Edinburgh.
- Dr Veena O’Halloran in relation to the University of Strathclyde.
- Professor Lesley Yellowlees in relation to Edinburgh Napier University.

In addition, the following Board members left the meeting to avoid any potential conflict should the discussion become more tertiary in nature.

- Professor Ewart Keep in relation to his role as a Board member of City of Glasgow College.
- Dr Paul Little in relation to City of Glasgow College, Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board.
- Caroline Stuart in relation to her role as Chair of Dumfries and Galloway College.

The following observer left the room during this paper due to a potential conflict of interest:

- Matt Crilly in Respect of his position as President of the Scottish Student Union.

In discussion, the Board noted:

- This paper had been informed by consultation with the sector and thoroughly scrutinised and agreed by the Finance Committee prior to coming to the Board.
- Complimented the Finance team on the quality of the paper and the work contained within.

The Board agreed:

- The proposed AY 2022-23 indicative university allocations outlined in the paper.
- To delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the indicative university funding allocations for publication, subject to the finalised indicative allocations being materially consistent with the contents of the paper and the Council board discussion.

The Board members returned to the meeting.

22/32 Tertiary funding across the sector (SFC22/22)

The Board received a paper outlining tertiary funding across the sector.

The Board noted the information set out in the paper.

22/33 Non-Core funding allocations (SFC/22/23)

The Board received a paper seeking approval for particular funding allocations for SFC's non-core funding programme highlighting projects of note that fall within the CEO's delegated authority.

In discussion the Board noted:

- That we might want to rename these “non-core” programmes funds as much of this investment is now core to the running of institutions.
- The need for more discussion about the future of these funds and programmes in terms of what we should choose to invest in; what is an essential part of our infrastructure; and how we deliver our statutory functions.

The Board agreed to approve funding for the following programmes:

- **Jisc:** proposed budget of up to £8.074million which is split between college funds (£2.868 million) and university funds (£5.206 million)
- **Advanced Procurement for Universities and College (APUC):** proposed budget of up to £4.815 million is split equally between college and university funds.
- **College Development Network (CDN):** proposed budget up to £1.694 million.
- **Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Scotland:** proposed budget is up to £1.308 million.
- **National Schools Programme:** proposed budget is up to £3.404 million

The Board noted the following programmes and delegated authority to the Chief Executive to approve funding:

- **Scottish Research Networks:** proposed budget for each Network up to £600,000 over four years.
- **Energy Skills Partnership:** proposed budget up to £700,000 over two years.

The Board received a paper inviting it to approve a revised Code of Conduct for Board members and consider and agree a draft Board development plan for 2022-23.

In discussion the Board:

- Noted the implications for the Chairing of SFC committees and managing of potential conflicts of interest arising from a connection with one or more of our institutions.
- Agreed that further consideration by the executive will be brought to a future Board meeting.

The Board approved:

- The revised Code of Conduct for Board members
- The draft Board development plan for 2022 – 23.

22/35 Audit & Compliance Committee minutes (SFC/22/25)

The Council noted the minutes of the Audit and Compliance Committee held on 14 December 2021.

22/36 Capital Decision Point Committee minutes (SFC/22/26)

The Council noted the minutes of the Capital Decision Point Committee held on 13 January 2022.

22/37 Finance Committee minutes (SFC/22/27)

The Council noted the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 7 December 2021.

22/38 Finance Committee minutes (SFC/22/28)

The Council noted the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 27 January 2022

22/39 Remuneration Committee minutes (SFC/22/29)

The Council noted the minutes of the Remuneration Committee held on 30 September 2021

22/40 Remuneration Committee minutes (SFC/22/30)

The Council noted the minutes of the Remuneration Committee held on 16 December 2021.

22/41 Research Knowledge Exchange Committee minutes (SFC/22/31)

The Council noted the minutes of the Research Knowledge Exchange Committee held on 28 October 2021

22/42 Skills Enhancement access and Learning Committee minutes (SFC/22/32)

The Council noted the minutes of the Skills Enhancement access and Learning Committee held on 27 January 2022

22/43 Long-term agenda (SFC/22/33)

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

22/44 Any other business (Oral)

There was no other formal business.