



Scottish Funding Council

Promoting further and higher education

ACC/17/25
Agenda item 7
7 September 2017

Audit Scotland National Report: Scotland's Colleges 2017

- This paper informs the Committee about Audit Scotland's recent report on the college sector.

Recommendations

- Note the contents of the report.

Financial implications

- There are no programme fund or running cost implications arising from this paper that are not already allowed for within the Council's programme funds or running cost budgets.

Audit Scotland National Report: Scotland's Colleges 2017

Purpose

- 1 To inform the Committee about Audit Scotland's recent report on the college sector.

Background

- 2 Audit Scotland carries out regular reviews of the performance of the college sector. This new report follows on from that published in August 2016, entitled "Scotland's Colleges 2016", which was published in August 2013.

Overview report

- 3 The report has three main sections, covering:
 - Report Summary, including key messages and recommendations
 - Part 1: College performance
 - Part 2: College finances
- 4 A copy of the full report is attached at Annex B.

SFC's response to the report's recommendations

- 5 SFC has recently written to the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee with its responses to the report's recommendations, a copy which is at Annex A. This is in advance of a meeting of the Committee on 14 September 2017, at which SFC's Interim Chief Executive, the Scottish Government's Director General Learning & Justice and the Chief Executive College's Scotland will give evidence.

Risk assessment

- 6 There is a risk of reputational damage to the Council from failures in college governance, leadership and management, including financial failure.
- 7 This risk is mitigated by regular monitoring of colleges and any colleges facing heightened challenges to their sustainability are subject to more intensive monitoring and focused reporting to the Council's Audit and Compliance Committee.

Equality and diversity assessment

- 8 There are no equality and diversity issues associated with this paper.

Publication

- 9 This paper will be published on the Council's website following the Committee's meeting.

Recommendation

- 10 The Committee is invited to note the contents of the report.

Financial implications

- 11 There are no programme fund or running cost implications arising from this paper that are not already allowed for within the Council's programme funds or running cost budgets.

Further information

- 12 Contact Martin Fairbairn, Chief Operating Officer (direct line: 0131 313 6524, email: mfairbairn@sfc.ac.uk).