

Access and Inclusion Committee meeting minutes

Purpose

- 1 This paper provides Council with the minutes of the Access and Inclusion Committee from its 16 May 2017 meeting.

Summary

- 2 At the 16 May 2017 meeting the Committee considered:
 - Progress of the Universities Scotland workstreams responding to the Commission on Widening Access recommendations.
 - Progress on publication of the Triennial Review document.
 - Development of the national School Engagement Framework.
 - Development of SFC's Adult Engagement Framework.
 - Changes to the access-related elements of the college and university Outcome Agreement Guidance.
 - The key messages of SFC's recently published Equality Mainstreaming Report.
 - The impact on access of recent funding changes for colleges and universities.

Recommendations

- 3 The Council is invited to note the Access and Inclusion Committee minutes.

Financial implications

- 4 There are no direct financial implications associated with this paper.

Publication

- 5 This paper will be published on the Council website following the meeting.

Further information

- 6 Contact: Fiona Burns, Secretary to the Committee (direct line: 0131 313 6517, email: fburns@sfc.ac.uk), or Sheila Meehan, Clerk to the Council (direct line: 0131 313 6619, email: smeehan@sfc.ac.uk).

Access and Inclusion Committee meeting minutes

The thirty-fifth meeting of the Access and Inclusion Committee was held at 9.30am on Tuesday 16 May 2017 at 99 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh.

Present: Professor Maggie Kinloch(Chair)
Professor Frank Coton
Audrey Cumberland
Vincent Docherty
Heather Dunk
James Dunphy
Dr Veena O'Halloran
Vonnie Sandlan
Dr Edward Sosu

Officers: Fiona Burns (Secretary)
Michael Cross
Halena Gauntlett
Loretta Hamilton
Carina Macritchie
Sheila Meehan (Clerk)
Cathy Mitchell (item 17/25)
Martin Smith (item 17/25)
Nick Stansfeld
Anna Thomson

Apologies: Alan Sherry
Iain MacRitchie
Dr Anne Mullen
Leni Oglesby
Lynn Graham
Lorna Caldwell

17/14 Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed members, Council executive and observers to the meeting.

The Chair also welcomed Dr Edward Sosu, new Committee member, to his first meeting.

The Chair advised the Committee that this would be Vonnie Sandlan's last meeting as she would step down from the role of President of NUS

(Scotland) on 30 June 2017. The Chair warmly thanked Vonnie for her exceptional contribution in the years that she had been on the Committee.

The Chair also advised that it was Audrey Cumberland, Heather Dunk, Frank Coton and Alan Sherry's last meeting also and invited them to attend the November Committee meeting to consider the work undertaken in the last year and future direction of the Committee.

17/15 Declarations of Interests

The chair reminded the members of their responsibility to indicate if they had or may be perceived to have a conflict of interest under any item.

17/16 Chair's business and Council executive update (AIC/17/08)

The Committee received and noted the Chair's business and Council executive update.

Update on Universities Scotland workstreams in response to the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA) recommendations

The Chair and Committee members who were participating in the Universities Scotland workstreams responding to the Commission on Widening Access recommendations advised that there were concerns in timing and outputs from the workstreams. Due to resource issues the second meetings had been postponed so they were unlikely to complete on the original timescale.

The Council executive stated that the main concern was on the bridging programmes workstream as that impacted directly on the SFC recommendation and could mean a delay in progress.

The Committee **agreed** that the Chair would consider writing, on behalf of the Committee, advising of their concerns around the delays of progressing the work of the Universities Scotland workstreams.

Triennial Review

The Council executive advised that, following feedback from the Committee in May 2016, the data reported in the Triennial Review document had been significantly enhanced and expanded to improve relevance and focus. This has now been approved for publication by our Interim CEO and was submitted to the Scottish Government as per the Act.

The Scottish Government has asked that publication be delayed to allow them to brief the Minister on the document and the new data. The Scottish Government have also requested that an explanation be provided in the document stating what data is provided and explaining why it may differ to already published data. The Council executive are completing this explanatory section and working towards publication post-election period.

The Committee **agreed** that it was important the document provided clear context to the differences between the college and university sectors and their cohorts, and that an amendment be made to the draft document to clarify this.

Gender Action Plan

The Chair stated that all institutions were preparing their Gender Action Plans and that the Council executive is assisting institutions with this wherever possible. The Council executive also reported that institutions were very engaged in developed their institutional GAPs.

Enterprise and Skills Review

The Council executive provided an update on the Enterprise and Skills Review, confirming that the Board of the Scottish Funding Council would be retained and there would be accountability to the Strategic Board that would oversee all of the agencies involved. Alignment work was ongoing between SFC and SDS. A Ministerial announcement on Phase Two of the Review was expected post-election.

The Council executive advised that Learner Journey workstream was also ongoing and would continue during the course of this Parliament and probably beyond. An implementation plan was being created and there was a clear mandate from the Government that the Learner Journey and CoWA workstreams were expected to work together to progress the national ambitions. The Council executive is engaged in the relevant workstreams from the Enterprise and Skills Review, including the Learner Journey one.

17/17 Minutes of 28 February 2017 meeting (AIC/17/Min1)

The minute of the meeting of 28 February 2017 was confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

17/18 Matters arising (AIC/17/09)

The Committee noted the matters arising from the last meeting of the Committee.

17/19 Long-term agenda (AIC/17/10)

The Committee received a paper informing members of substantive agenda items proposed for the next meeting.

The Chair reminded members that they had suggested (at their workshop in November 2016) that a future meeting has an item considering leadership and cultural change. This is scheduled for November and the Chair asked Committee members to email Fiona Burns with suggestions for the focus of this discussion such as keynote speakers or suggestions on a facilitator for this discussion.

The Committee stated that the focus should be on gaining foresight on the connections between the Learner Journey, CoWA recommendations, work-based learning pathways etc with the aim of creating greater cohesion. It was also suggested that the session includes the use of scenarios for the future.

17/20 Update on Council business (Oral)

The Chair gave an oral update to the Committee on the recent Scottish Funding Council Board business meetings.

The Committee noted that, at its recent meetings, amongst other things the Council had considered:

- The Enterprise and Skills Review. The Board received updates and considered the potential impact on SFC.
- Jobs and Skills in Scotland, including a presentation from Skills Development Scotland.
- Outcome agreement progress (for 2016-17) and negotiations (for 2017-18).
- The final college and university funding allocations.
- The SFC Equality Outcomes annual report.
- The fully-operational fundable body status of Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board (GCRB).

17/21 School Engagement Framework (SFC/17/11)

The Committee received a paper providing an update on the development of the national School Engagement Framework.

The Committee noted:

- The links to CoWA recommendations and the direct ask that universities, colleges, local authorities, SFC funded access programmes and early years providers work together to deliver a coordinated approach to access, removing duplication and increasing coherence.
- The potential to change the SFC funded access initiatives if appropriate.
- That early intervention was key, with co-ordinated regional discussions.
- That the focus should be on pupils, not schools.
- That MD40 pupils were particularly at risk, especially if there were no programmes taking place in their schools
- That refocussing the programme would increase participants.
- A tiering system and digital approaches were being considered.
- A longer term funding programme, with a ten year commitment, should be considered.
- Alignment of current benchmarks to new ones would be undertaken.
- For evaluation and reporting, the aim was to not increase the burden on institutions.
- Stakeholder meetings were taking place and all relevant feedback was being sought.

The Committee advised that:

- They were impressed with the paper and delighted to see that the focus was on pupils.
- A regional partnership approach would work well and should be sought.
- Wide consultation should be undertaken with the aim of full inclusiveness and the raising of pupil aspirations to achieve.
- It may be beneficial to engage guidance staff.
- Evaluation of potential outcomes should be undertaken regularly, as impact may be seen in the short term.
- A tiered system, providing different levels of intensity for pupils when they were choosing courses, would be beneficial.
- It was important to get buy in, from Directors of Education, University Principals etc, use a collaborative approach, and to ensure that our investment was focussed in the correct place.
- Flexible provision was important to aid pupil choice.

- There is a massive scale of change proposed, which required a longer timescale with built in review points but, in time, this would need to be embedded.
- Unique identifiers for each pupil would be the way forward so that changes could be assessed.

The Committee **agreed** that:

- There should be full inclusiveness for all pupils at all levels.
- The final School Engagement Framework be brought to the February 2018 Committee meeting.

17/22 Adult Engagement Framework (AIC/17/12)

The Committee received a paper providing an outline assessment of the work required to develop an Adult Engagement Framework, and the anticipated development stages.

The Committee noted:

- The outline assessment of the Adult Engagement Framework which highlighted development stages.
- The aim to undertake fuller engagement going forward and present a more defined Framework to the Committee in Autumn 2018.

The Committee advised that:

- They welcomed the Framework but were frustrated by the limitations of the Scottish Government's Learner Journey work which was limited to a younger age cohort.
- A partnership approach was vital to ensure that full consideration was given to the learners' circumstances, needs and other services that could be provided to the household.
- The two Frameworks should work together to cover from schools, end of school, as well as those outside of education who have an educational need.
- Going forward the Adult Engagement Framework should focus on adults disengaged from education rather than all adults.

Outcome Agreement Guidance for AY2017-20 (AIC/17/14)

The Committee received a paper proposing changes to the access-related elements of the college and university Outcome Agreement (OA) Guidance to be published in the summer.

The Committee noted:

- That the aim was to simplify the outcome agreement guidance.
- That the draft and near final outcome agreements had been reviewed.
- Concerns remained on the gender information provided but institutional Gender Action Plans would help with this.
- Other specific areas that outcome agreement managers would seek clarification or improvement on.
- The more specific guidance on the Widening Access Retention Fund to improve the reporting on the use of this funding. The last review on the use of WARF was positive and highlighted no current concerns on the use of funding. This concern is about how that is being reporting in the OAs.
- The plan to publish the Access and Inclusion approaches of institutions as part of their OAs and to encourage institutions to publish their approaches on their websites.

The Committee advised that there should be complete clarity with institutions in the outcome agreement process on the publication requirements of access commitments.

The Committee **agreed** to recommend that:

- The Council executive strengthen the university outcome agreement guidance in relation to the Widening Access and Retention Fund.
- In the college outcome agreement guidance, a measure of successful completion of care experienced students be included.
- A new college national measure on the successful completion of Full-Time FE students aged 16-19 be included.
- The need for the retention rate of students by age be emphasised.
- SFC asks colleges to publish on their website their Access and Inclusion approaches and asks for an update for the next three year Outcome Agreement cycle in 2020-23.

17/24

SFC Equality and diversity update 2017 (AIC/17/15)

The Committee received a paper providing the key messages of SFC's recently published Equality Mainstreaming Report.

The Committee advised that:

- The minutes of each Access and Inclusion Committee should be discussed at Council Board meetings which helped raise awareness and consideration of equalities issues through the Board
- Board members should be advised to encourage those with the appropriate skills, and bearing in mind diversity gaps also, to apply for Board member positions.

The Committee **agreed** that a review of the diversity of SFC's committees should be undertaken.

17/25

Changes to funding/impact on access (AIC/17/13)

The Committee received a paper informing them on the recent changes to college and university funding and how this impacts on access.

The Committee noted that:

- Most of the changes had been to the college funding model and the transitional period from an old to a new funding model was ongoing.
- The objective was simplification of the funding model and, being conscious of college stability, there had been a transition period as well as a parallel run taken forward.
- A new funding model for the Access and Inclusion Fund was being developed in consultation with the sector.
- Rural funding was also under review and further consultation was taking place with the sector before any changes would be implemented.
- There were concerns on the level of 1+ and additional credits and work had been undertaken with the sector to review this.
- European Social Fund (ESF) projects were ongoing, with one due to end in 2017 and a review was being undertaken to assess the allocation of future funding.

The Committee advised that:

- In relation to the allocation of Access and Inclusion Funds, they were concerned on the impacts to individual colleges and welcomed further consultation with the sector and implementation taking place no earlier than 2019-20.
- The changed environment created by the impact of national bargaining had to be incorporated into the consideration of the funding model in the longer-term.

The Council executive advised that:

- As the funding model was simplified it would be easier to make changes going forward and react to feedback from the sector.
- The intention was to undertake scenario planning taking the assumption that ESF funding would end.
- The proposed aim was to embed as much of the Access and Inclusion Fund as possible to support access and inclusion and retain a small pot to respond to regional differences. This plan was still at the modelling stage and would undergo further consultation with the sector.

The Committee **agreed** that members would provide feedback to the Council executive on the Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment for the 2017-18 Outcome Agreement and Funding Allocations.

17/26

Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Committee would take place at 9.30am on Tuesday 21 November 2017 at 99 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh.