

**Annex A**  
**Fol - 202000105894**

**Fol document 1**

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 30 September 2020 15:30

**To:** [redacted]; [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]

**Subject:** Briefing - Follow up meeting with SFC on review of coherent provision and financial sustainability- 01 October - 14.15-15.00

[redacted]

Please find attached briefing pack for tomorrow's follow up meeting with SFC regarding the review of coherent provision and financial sustainability.

I hope you find this helpful and happy to provide anything further you require.

Many thanks

[redacted]

[redacted]

### Fol document 3

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 19 October 2020 11:36

**To:** [redacted] ; [redacted] > ; [redacted] > ; [redacted] > ; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]

**Subject:** RE: In confidence and not for further circulation: near final draft of SFC REview Phase 1 report for comment by Monday 19 October

Hi

Have we shared with [redacted] what the review is saying about possible changes to the senior phase? Some of that has the potential to be quite controversial particularly with [redacted] .

[redacted]

## Fol document 4

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 19 October 2020 12:39

**To:** [redacted] >; [redacted] ; [redacted] >; [redacted] >; [redacted];[redacted];  
[redacted];[redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]

**Subject:** RE: In confidence and not for further circulation: near final draft of SFC  
REview Phase 1 report for comment by Monday 19 October

[redacted]

I haven't as [redacted] has requested a very tight circulation – but you are right we need to give them the heads up.

I will send it to [redacted] and [redacted] now, flagging that this is an SFC report which acts as a capture of consultation responses and key themes for further exploration. [redacted] have been briefed on and were comfortable with the key themes and ideas, and are not asked to take any decisions on the back of this report. There is scope for close engagement with SFC in Phase 2.

[redacted]

## Fol document 6

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 20 October 2020 11:50  
**To:** [redacted]; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>  
**Subject:** RE: Tweet - SFC on Phase 1 of review

Perfect – thanks.

[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]>  
**Sent:** 20 October 2020 11:45  
**To:** [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>  
**Cc:** [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>  
**Subject:** RE: Tweet - SFC on Phase 1 of review

Sure thing [redacted]. [redacted] hadn't yet come back on the lines below that [redacted] sent yesterday; we'll use these as the basis for a tweet shortly.

"If we are to maintain a world class further and higher education system, we have to emerge from the Covid pandemic even stronger.

"This initial report highlights the ways we can do that such as deeper collaboration between institutions and industry, greater integration between universities and colleges and using digital tools to create high quality online teaching and learning.

"I look forward to the SFC developing more detailed thinking through the next phase of its work.

[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 20 October 2020 11:41  
**To:** [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>  
**Cc:** [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>; [redacted]>  
**Subject:** RE: Tweet - SFC on Phase 1 of review

**Subject:** Tweet - SFC on Phase 1 of review  
**Importance:** High

Hi,

[redacted] can't see any social media activity from us welcoming SFC first phase report. [redacted] would like a tweet out from him as a matter of urgency please given he commissioned it?

[redacted]

## Fol document 7

**From:** [redacted] [redacted]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** Tue 20/10/2020 12:27

**To:** [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]

**Subject:** SFC Review - Phase One Report: Insights to Develop

Good Afternoon Colleagues,

SFC have today published the SFC Review of Coherent provision and Financial Sustainability, Phase One Report: Insights to Develop Further.

I have attached a link below;

<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/corporate-publications/2020/SFCCP052020.aspx>

The report acts as a capture of the consultation responses received to their call for evidence, and highlights key themes and ideas for further exploration.

Key themes are;

**Theme 1: Keeping the interests of current and future students, and equalities, at the heart of everything we do**

**Theme 2: Supporting the digital revolution for learners**

**Theme 3: Towards an integrated, connected tertiary education and skills system for learners and employers**

**Theme 4: Recognising colleges and universities as national assets and civic anchors**

**Theme 5: Building long-term relationships with employers and industry**

**Theme 6: Protecting and leveraging the excellence of our research and science base**

**Theme 7: Driving the innovation agenda**

**Theme 8: Enhancing collaboration**

**Theme 9: Making the most of the sector's global connections**

**Theme 10: Focusing on the financial sustainability of colleges and universities, and current funding models**

SFC will now move into Phase 2 of the review process and there will be further opportunity to engage with the review as this progresses.

Many thanks

[redacted]

## Fol document 8

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 05 November 2020 15:19

**To:** [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]

**Subject:** IMMEDIATE: Note of meeting between [redacted], [redacted]and [redacted]  
3 November 2020

[redacted]

I attach a note that [redacted] and [redacted] have put together of Tuesday's meeting between [redacted], [redacted]and [redacted].

Subject to your views and after this afternoon's meeting with [redacted], we will circulate this more widely (to [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted]and perhaps [redacted]?)

[redacted]

Attendees – [redacted] and [redacted]

Attendees [redacted] – [redacted] [redacted], [redacted]

Attendees [redacted] – [redacted]and [redacted]

### SFC Review

- [redacted] very pleased with how Review Phase One Report has been received – sector(s) have engaged with the issues. Very positively reviewed by commentators in other parts of the UK including [redacted] – constructive, collaborative, more sophisticated debate than in other parts of the UK.
- [redacted] – the review has engaged the sector and not in a defensive way and that is a welcome position to be in. Good engagement. Not too much political noise or controversy at this stage.
- [redacted] – really good employer engagement. CBI now part of Review Programme Board.
- [redacted]- Important to engage with [redacted] and [redacted] in next phase given links to schools and senior phase. ACTION FOR [redacted].
- [redacted] – won't be complacent with next two phases of the review. This is the [redacted] big chance to develop proposals for the FE HE sectors for next decade and we will proceed with great care.

### College Funding and Sustainability/Liquidity

- [redacted]- A lot of fragility in the college sector. However, we have also been able to identify some savings recently. We are keen to put a submission to you about prioritising our budget to support colleges including through funding for transformation/restructuring.

- [redacted] the position is “tightening” (i.e. getting a bit worse). Number of colleges on watch list is getting bigger. Worry about number of colleges drawing cash early. Uncharted territory.
- [redacted] [redacted] position for this financial year looking better than 3 months ago. [redacted] must prioritise keeping colleges afloat and funding additional university entrants. That is the priority ahead of either identifying savings for wider SG or putting funding into transformation fund/restructuring. Need to be sighted on where these conversations are going. No.1 priority for this financial year – keeping colleges afloat without having to ask SG Finance for additional funding. Then need to look to help SG Finance with wider pressures whilst also seeing if some funding can be found for transformation.
- [redacted] – need an extra £65m /£100m needed to cover next year.

#### Other issues

- [redacted] – 18th Nov Education and Skills committee meeting – good to be able to make Committee aware of any additional funding for colleges and provide an up to date position for universities international students.
- [redacted]– has been invited to appear at E and S Committee also. [redacted] is also giving evidence soon to the Scottish Affairs Committee in Westminster.
- [redacted] and [redacted] – please let us know if there is anything we can provide in advance of 18<sup>th</sup> November. (ACTION FOR [redacted])
- [redacted] – we have helped universities and I would like to do more to help colleges. [redacted] has suggested that colleges have to bid/apply for 71 different pots of money, is this true?
- [redacted] – Core funding is relatively straightforward but [redacted] is right about general fragmentation of funding pots beyond that. 71 pots is a little exaggerated. Is it possible to have one funding pot? - probably not realistic.
- [redacted] – [redacted] also recently saw a suggestion that college staff costs have increased from 65% of total costs to about 80%. Can’t remember where. Is that correct?
- [redacted] – staff costs have increased and [redacted] will get figures. There will be further increase in staff costs when support staff discussion conclude and it could be very significant.
- [redacted]– Philosophical differences between [redacted]and [redacted] [redacted] appear to favour centralised, national approaches and national funding of skills. [redacted] want to empower institutions to develop their own proposals and solutions to regional needs and issues.
- [redacted]– [redacted] have been struck in discussions about the 5 tiers and blended learning about the lack of voices speaking up for the benefits of face to face teaching, SG seems a lone voice. Why do you think that is?
- [redacted] – will take that away. We have seen some principals speaking up in favour of the value of face-to-face teaching (ACTION FOR [redacted])

[redacted]

**Fol document 9**

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 09 November 2020 16:07

**To:** [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]; [redacted]

**Subject:** SFC Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability

Hi [redacted],

Just on the back of your recent meeting with US, I just wanted to share the report from Phase 1:

[http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/corporatepublications\\_sfccp052020/Review\\_of\\_Cohereent\\_Provision\\_and\\_Sustainability\\_Phaae\\_1\\_Report.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/corporatepublications_sfccp052020/Review_of_Cohereent_Provision_and_Sustainability_Phaae_1_Report.pdf)

It identifies ten key themes that emerged from the Phase 1 process and set out the priority areas for Phase 2. You'll see Theme 8 is 'Making the most of the sector's global connections'.

I hope this is helpful.

[redacted]

[redacted]

## Fol document 10

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 16 November 2020 10:20

**To:** [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]

**Subject:** FW: SFC REVIEW OF RSBS - URGENT AND IN CONFIDENCE - Advice please

Good morning again [redacted]

I sent you this for comment on 20 October. These were my initial thoughts on the RSB part of the SFC review. The next stage was I think to advise Ministers of the findings of the review in relation to RSB. This hasn't been done as yet as I was waiting for feedback/discussion etc. [redacted] is now asking for info to be put into a letter from [redacted] to the [redacted] in time for the MLG this week – [redacted] looking for it for tomorrow.

I am quite happy to work up a submission – none of this is a secret now and the proposed dissolution of the Lanarkshire RSB was in The Herald weeks ago. However, we may need a holding line in the letter that [redacted] wants.

I can send a submission to [redacted] setting out what was in the report, But what about the views of others ie CS, TUs, the RSBs themselves etc? Last week, on [redacted] instructions, I did send advise [redacted] that GCRB were undertaking their own review and [redacted] noted this. You were both copied in. I'm just not sure what you want me to do now.

More than happy to draft a submission on the findings, background to RSBs etc – basically what's in the attached. **I would welcome your advice.**

Regards

[redacted]

## Fol document 12

**From:** [redacted] [redacted]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 20 November 2020 07:23  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: SFC phase one review

Hi [redacted]

I have attached a draft pending the detail on the RSB's.

Many thanks

[redacted]  
[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 19 November 2020 21:05  
**To:** [redacted] [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted] >; [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: SFC phase one review

All

Apologies if I have missed or lost this but did we manage to get a draft of this letter started ?

[redacted]

[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 12 November 2020 13:05  
**To:** [redacted]; [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted] <[redacted]>  
**Subject:** RE: SFC phase one review

Hi [redacted]

Of course. I will start working on a draft tomorrow.

[redacted] - I will pick up with you on the RSB's point on Monday.

Many thanks

[redacted]  
[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 12 November 2020 12:51  
**To:** [redacted]; [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted] [redacted] **Subject:** SFC phase one review

[redacted], [redacted]

SFC have asked for a letter from Ministers regarding the above. Are we able to do that please.

In the main I think it should be fairly high level setting out :

- Welcome the completion of phase one
- Commend the inclusive consultative approach that has been taken
- Note positive external commentary on progress to date
- Looks forward to regular updates as phase two progresses

SFC have met Ministers in bilateral on phase one and it has been discussed at MLG so I am hoping you can simply draw on notes of those meetings for tone and content

Where we need to be more specific in our response is around the recommendations on the RSBs \_ [redacted] I know you were doing some work on this but I'm not sure where that is at. This letter needs to spell out what Ministers reaction /thinking is on those recommendations and if necessary steer how they would like to see that going forward

I am on leave now until Tuesday - Is it humanly possible to at least have a very initial first draft of this letter for my return ?

Many thanks

[redacted]

[redacted]