

Enterprise and Skills Reform and Strategic Board – Core Briefing

Background

In May 2016, the First Minister announced an end-to-end review to ensure that all public agencies are delivering the joined-up support that our young people, universities, colleges, training providers, businesses and the workforce need.

The Review was led by the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work, and was supported by a Ministerial Review Group, including members of the Council of Economic Advisers. The Review's aims as stated in its original remit are:

- To make a step-change in enterprise and skills support to help progress towards our ambition of Scotland ranking among the top quartile of OECD countries in terms of productivity, equality, wellbeing and sustainability.
- To be driven by evidence, to listen to the views of users, and put forward proposals that respond to their needs.
- To ensure a simpler and more coherent enterprise and skills support system.

In June 2017 the [overall Phase 2 Report](#), plus associated feeder reports for each of the projects (with the exception of Governance) were published.

Strategic Board

One of the key actions emerging from Phase 2 was the creation of a new Strategic Board to align and co-ordinate the activities of the enterprise and skills agencies.

The aims of the [Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board](#) are as follows:

- Improve the overall performance of the economy by ensuring that the whole Enterprise and Skills System delivers Scotland's Economic Strategy and supporting strategies, in all parts of Scotland
- Through collective responsibility ensure hard alignment between agencies to drive improvement in Scottish productivity and better support business and users of the skills system
- Hold agencies to account for performance against agreed measures
- To actively engage with other agencies and bodies who support the economy with a view to increasing alignment and challenging others where collaboration is not happening
- To deliver wider collective leadership, based on common culture and values, and which inspires and empowers delivery

Chair of the Strategic Board

On 31 August, the First Minister announced that Nora Senior has been appointed Chair of the Strategic Board. Ms Senior is Chair, UK Regions & Ireland of global PR firm Weber Shandwick, former Chair of Scottish Chambers of Commerce and has more than 25 years' experience working with clients across a wide range of sectors.

In May 2017 she stepped down as Chair of Scottish Chambers of Commerce after serving a four-year term, and is a former President of the British Chambers of Commerce.

Membership of the Strategic Board

On 27 November, the Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work announced the membership of the Strategic Board.

It features members with a wealth of business experience encompassing a broad range of sectors, sizes and locations, with further representation covering education, research, trade unions, local authorities and the new South of Scotland enterprise agency. Members are as follows:

- Wendy Alexander – University of Dundee
- Karen Betts – Scotch Whisky Association
- Liz Cameron – Scottish Chambers of Commerce
- Mike Cantlay – Scottish Funding Council
- Sara Carter – University of Strathclyde
- Lorne Crerar – Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Audrey Cumberland – West College Scotland
- Jeanette Forbes – PCL Group
- Russel Griggs – South of Scotland Economic Partnership
- Poonam Gupta – PG Paper Company
- Steven Heddle – COSLA
- Bob Keiller – Scottish Enterprise
- John McClelland – Skills Development Scotland
- Gerry McCusker – Dog Digital, Chair of BIMA Scotland
- Scott McLarty – Spirit Aerospace
- Grahame Smith – STUC

The Strategic Board has so far met twice, most recently for a Strategy Day on 17 January at which a series of early priorities were identified.

South of Scotland Enterprise Agency

A further key action to emerge from Phase 2 is the creation of new enterprise agency for the South of Scotland. The new agency will drive inclusive growth, increase competitiveness and tackle inequality in the area through supporting a diverse and resilient economy, sustaining and growing communities and capitalising on people and resources.

Establishing a new agency will require legislation which we intend to introduce in 2018 which will need to progress through Parliament – the body should be up and running by the beginning of the financial year 2020.

As an interim measure, a South of Scotland Economic Partnership has been formed to lay the foundations for the new agency. Professor Russel Griggs has been

appointed private sector chair of the interim body, with the initiative backed with additional resources of £10million to boost economic development activities.

Other key actions emerging from Phase 2

- A more coherent, collaborative and streamlined system of business support, including development of a single digital access point
- Piloting a £500k College Innovation Fund to support Scotland's colleges to work with businesses on innovation activity
- A new, five-stage skills planning model developed jointly by the skills agencies
- Strengthened engagement with regional partnerships, including closer work with the private sector
- A review of the learner journey for 15-24 year olds to ensure it provides the best path to success
- Boosting trade and investment in Scotland by better co-ordinating international activity
- A cross-agency analytical unit set up to drive performance and ensure business support decisions are based on the best data available

Next steps

Under normal circumstances the Strategic Board will meet once every two months.

Following the Strategy Day, the Enterprise and Skills PMO is developing a remit around each of the themes identified with the support of policy colleagues.

Work continues to progress on the full range of actions which emerged from other parts of the Enterprise and Skills Review, with ongoing consultation with stakeholders forming a key part of the process.