BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

DATE:	7 June 2022
AGENDA REF:	33-22
TITLE OF REPORT:	Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education
REFERENCE	
AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS	Alan Sherry, Acting Principal Alan.Sherry@slc.ac.uk, Stella McManus, Depute Principal Stella.McManus@slc.ac.uk
PURPOSE:	To provide members with information relating to key policy changes affecting the education sector.
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/ DECISIONS:	Members are recommended to: • note the contents of this report; • note the contents and recommendations set out in Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education; • note the Scottish Government response to the recommendations contained in the above report; and • require the Acting Principal and Depute Principal to bring forward an update report to an appropriate future meeting of the Board on the progress made to establish Qualifications Scotland, the new national education body and the reformed Inspectorate.
RISK	• That the College does not engage with or influence national policy changes which may adversely impact on the South Lanarkshire College community. • That the failure to be aware of changes to the external policy environment will impact adverse on strategic decision making.
RELEVANT STRATEGIC AIM:	• Successful Students • Highest Quality Education and Support • Sustainable Behaviours
SUMMARY OF REPORT:	• This report summarises the findings of the review conducted by Professor Ken Muir, on the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and Education Scotland. This was in response to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report into Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future. • The key principles included, learners recognising the impact and importance of climate change on their future, closing the poverty-related attainment gap,

	allocation resources to support local decision making and a redistribution of power, influence and resource within Scottish Education. • The report contains 21 recommendations of which the Scottish Government has fully accepted five, broadly accepted eleven and accepted in principle, five. • Recommendations which will impact on the College include, a new qualifications body, Qualification Scotland and a new independent inspectorate. It is also anticipated that the organisation proposed to replace Education Scotland will have some impact on the work of the College. Invitations to shape the narrative and national decisions will be issued to key stakeholders.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As members will be aware, the Scottish Government commissioned Professor Ken Muir, CBE, to provide independent advice on structural and functional changes to the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and Education Scotland (ES). This was in response to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) report into Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future. Members can access the OECD report here

1.2 Members will also be aware that Professor Muir was given a short timeframe in which to produce his report and, as a consequence, Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education, was published in March 2022. Members can access a copy of this report here.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide members with a summary of the key recommendations contained in Professor Muir's report.

2 PUTTING LEARNERS AT THE CENTRE: TOWARDS A FUTURE VISION

2.1 ***Key Principals***

2.2 The Scottish Government welcomed the above report accepting that it identified key principals which set out a compelling vision for the future of Scottish Education. Members should note, however, that this future vision focusses predominately on school-based education and makes limited reference to the role of colleges. Members can access the Scottish Government responses at: www.gov.scot/publications

2.3 Professor Muir set out fifteen principles in his report, including:

2.3.1 the current generation of learners see climate change as one of the most significant issues facing their futures and, as such, must be recognised as a key driver influencing the future of education;

2.3.2 increasing competitiveness across economies and in the labour market re-emphasise the importance of setting high standards and creating the conditions for these to be realised;

2.3.3 excellence, equity and steps to close the poverty-related attainment gap remain vital drivers of any education reform;

2.3.4 … wherever possible, the allocation of resources should support local decision making; and

2.3.5 a redistribution of power, influence and resource within Scottish Education to one that reflects the principle of subsidiarity, genuinely empowers teachers and practitioners and where learners' voices, experience, perspectives and rights are central to decision making.

2.4 It is anticipated that the principles set out by Professor Muir and accepted by the Scottish Government will have wider implications for education in Scotland, particularly for the college sector, which, in partnership with schools, offers extensive senior phase provision and recruits learners to full-time programmes from S4 onwards

2.5 ***Key Recommendations***

2.6 The report contains 21 recommendations of which the Scottish Government has fully accepted five, broadly accepted eleven and accepted in principle, five. There are a number of recommendations which are anticipated to have an impact on the work of the College. These include:

2.6.1 initiating national discussion on establishing a compelling and consensual vision for the future of Scottish Education;
2.6.2 invitations to shape this narrative should be issued to all partners and stakeholders;
2.6.3 a new body, Qualification Scotland, should be established with responsibility for the design and delivery of qualifications, the operation and certification of examinations and the awarding of certificates;
2.6.4 the governance structures of this new body should be more representative and more accountable to all stakeholders;
2.6.5 a new national agency for Scottish education should replace Education Scotland; and
2.6.6 a new Inspectorate body establish by legislation independent from government, funded by the Scottish Parliament and staffed by civil servants appointed by Her Majesty via the Privy Council.

2.7 The Scottish Government has set out in its response, how it will seek to move forwards on the recommendations. Members should note that in terms of the proposed structures for Qualifications Scotland, the new national education body, and the Inspectorate, the Scottish Government has some reservations about the detail of the recommendations made by Professor Muir, and that it is likely that there will be further discussion and consultation before the final structure of these organisations is agreed.