

**NATIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM – EIGHTEENTH MEETING: 12 MAY 2017
DISCUSSION REPORT: ENTERPRISE & SKILLS REVIEW: A STRATEGIC PLAN
TO DELIVER INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND GREATER PRODUCTIVITY**

Host: Keith Brown MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs & Fair Work
Co-host: Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
Speaker: Stephen Boyle, RBS
Scribe: Gary Sharp

Summary

The session on Enterprise and Skills Review provided an opportunity for businesses to engage with Ministers, promoting an environment where businesses and government can engage and explore particular themes. The aim of the session was to build a solid understanding of the ambition of the Enterprise and Skills Review and how the Strategic Board will deliver greater collaboration, innovation and common purpose across the enterprise and skills system through the Strategic Plan; offering participants the opportunity to explore priorities to be included in the Strategic Plan.

Introduction and Background

Mr Brown, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work, opened the session by offering some background.

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

The Review's aims are:

- Building on the evidence of 'what works' and national and international benchmarking to achieve the step-change needed in Scotland's economic performance;
- Capturing the user journey and experience to understand what might be simplified and improved; and
- Shaping which services should be prioritised and how they should best be organised and delivered.

The report on Phase 1 of the Enterprise and Skills Review was published on 25 October 2016. The Phase 1 decisions focused on ensuring coherence and a simpler, more flexible and cost-effective system of national and local support.

Topics discussed:

Role of government – The role of the Scottish Government is to establish the conditions for success, setting the direction and policy ambition, therefore 'moving aside' and leaving delivery to further education, private and third sectors. This should be partnered with a drive to 'waken' the business sector to the realisation that they play a significant role in driving improvements in the economy.

Greater collaboration – Better, stronger links between the public, private and third party sectors was universally supported.

Investment – There was strong support for Government to champion further the investment in key enablers for success. This would include investing in digital platforms, infrastructure, and technologies and advice for business.

Engagement – More work is needed around how Government engages effectively with partners and/or facilitates engagement across parties.

Closing Comments

Mr Brown thanked participants for the helpful debate on early priorities for the Strategic Board and agencies, all of which designed to improve the economic conditions and performance in Scotland.

All views would be considered as part of the Strategic Plan development.

Scottish Government
May/2017