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The Scottish Parliament
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Thank you for your letter of 26 November, following the evidence session the previous day, requesting the following further information:

Linkston Review

- I can confirm that I met the family of Francis McGeachie on 4 November 2015 and have agreed to meet again early next year to review progress in implementing the Linkston Review.
- In terms of the Linkston Review itself, after the death of Mr McGeachie and my predecessor's discussions with his family in April and May 2014, a senior Scottish Government official wrote to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on 13 June 2014, asking it to undertake a bespoke review of the management of the merger of Coatbridge College and New College Lanarkshire, including the impact on senior staff. We asked that the review report to the SFC as quickly as possible. The SFC received the report from Mr Linkston on 14 November 2014, and sent a copy to senior SG officials the same day. A senior member of the SFC gave a copy of the report to the McGeachie family's representative on 18 November, making clear its commitment to implement the report in full. As you know, I took over from Michael Russell on 21 November.
- I would like to add to my evidence to the Committee on the handling of the Linkston Review. The SFC advise that, at the time of providing the report, the family representative indicated she did not wish the report to be put in the public domain. Furthermore, it was agreed that if either the family or SFC discovered it was likely to become of wider interest they would keep each other informed. (For example, SFC sought permission from the family to share the report with Audit Scotland and the college's external auditor who wanted to review it as part of their audit of the college's accounts in February 2015. Additionally, the SFC provided an executive summary of the report to former members of Coatbridge staff who requested it.)

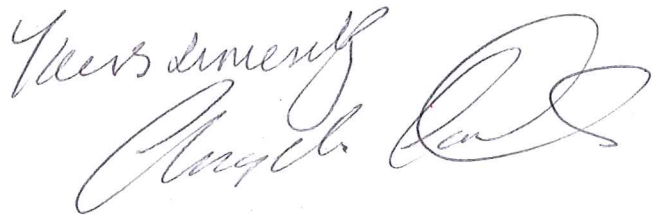


- In terms of the Committee's access to the report, I understand that, in early October, SFC officials discussed with the Clerk its contents, and the possibility of redaction should it be made publicly available. Subsequently, in the light of your Committee's interest, I asked the SFC to give the report to the PAC, having obtained the family's agreement to do so.

Roger Mullin

- Roger Mullin's contract with SG started on 3 August 2011. His role was to provide expert advice on merger to colleges who had requested support. In some colleges, he undertook culture studies. I can confirm that voluntary severance was not part of Mr Mullin's role and therefore he was not involved in discussions on colleges' planned arrangements. Consistent with this, Mr Mullin did not attend any meetings with Edinburgh colleges on their severance arrangements.
- In Edinburgh, Mr Mullin had a facilitation role which I understand included a number of sessions for the senior staff and board on key reform measures such as outcome agreements. Additionally, Mr Mullin met the Principals of the merging colleges and the SFC at different times to discuss the merger.

I hope this is helpful.



ANGELA CONSTANCE