



Working Together

Sustainability Framework

March 2010



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This framework document summarises the position Borders College has taken with regard to sustainability planning and provides details of the measures that the college is undertaking to invest in its infrastructure. The College believes that, in conjunction with the themes and ambitions laid down in its Corporate Plan 2010-2013 and the strategies supporting that Plan these measures will help ensure that the College's adaptive capacity is not only maintained but also enhanced over both the medium and long-term.
- 1.2 In developing its Corporate Plan, The College has undertaken a comprehensive strategic review of all of its activities, including scenario planning, to reflect wider economic trends and local and national political and social drivers. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the College was an integral part of the review. The review was informed by an appraisal of teaching and learning provision, appraisal of the requirements for investment and scope for efficiency savings, and financial modeling of the consequences of different courses of action.
- 1.3 The outcome of this review sees the College focus on maintaining an adaptive portfolio to enable it to meet changes in demand, building and maintain partnerships to enhance the learning experience where appropriate. Integral to this is the maintenance and further improvement of estates and other resources to support learners. At the same time, learners will be as fully as possible involved in shaping their own learning and the current and future plans of the College. This framework, along with the measures of performance within the Corporate Plan and the Balance Scorecard annexed hereto, sets out the processes and mechanisms the College has established to monitor performance and progress in achieving its outcomes.
- 1.4 The Corporate Plan and Balanced Scorecard set out key actions and key indicators which will be monitored to ensure that the College remains on course to achieve its ambitions. The Board of Management will periodically be updated on the key performance indicators, using benchmarking as appropriate, enabling the Board to take a view on whether there are any particular aspects of the College's performance which are a matter of concern or require closer scrutiny. The above arrangements demonstrate the

College's intent to embed sustainability as part of its strategic planning processes.

2.0 Vision, Mission and Values

2.1 The Board of Management reviewed the College's vision and mission during 2009/10 and agreed the vision as: -

"To be a College which will inspire growth, create opportunity and raise aspirations."

2.2 The College's mission is stated as: -

"Borders College will contribute to the economic and social development of the Scottish Borders through excellence in the provision of education, training and skills."

2.3 Supporting the delivery of its mission, the College will: -

- Put the learner at the heart of everything we do
- Act with integrity and mutual respect
- Communicate clearly and openly
- Value each and every individual
- Recognise innovation and success
- Support and encourage team working

2.4 This vision, mission and values were key in informing the creation of the Corporate Plan and this Sustainability Framework.

3.0 Governance

3.1 The College is committed to exhibiting best practice in all aspects of Corporate Governance with regards to its business and that of all its subsidiaries. The College has applied the principles set out in the

revised Combined Code on Corporate Governance issued by the London Stock Exchange in July 2006 and Guide for College Board Members issued by the Association of Scotland's Colleges in 2006.

- 3.2 The College has effective strategic and operational planning arrangements and involves staff, students and other stakeholders in developing the plan. Teaching, financial, human resource and estate management performance are reported to and monitored by sub-committees of the Board of Management. An effective relationship has been established between the Board and members of the Senior Management Team, with clearly defined responsibilities of executive and non-executive management.
- 3.3 The college considers that it complies with the provisions of the Financial Memorandum, including all mandatory requirements.

4.0 Finance and Procurement

- 4.1 Financial planning is integrated with physical and academic planning and forecasts are prepared on a conservative basis, with full sensitivity and risk analyses performed. The college has conducted scenario planning in light of possible reductions in public funding and the wider implications of changing economic conditions and has developed strategies to manage the most significant risks.
- 4.2 The College has maintained a position of achieving an operating surplus for each year since 2003-04. The College regards the achievement of a modest surplus as key to remaining on a sustainable trajectory as this will generate sufficient cash reserves to meet the college's need to finance long-term investments.
- 4.3 The College, through innovation, strives to provide its services as efficiently and effectively as possible. The recent co-location with Heriot-Watt University at Scottish Borders Campus has, through shared service provision, enabled the achievement of significant reductions in running costs for both institutions. The College has an ongoing commitment to business process effectiveness reviews.

- 4.4 The College is reviewing other opportunities to improve income generation, from delivery of commercial courses and the utilisation of the Campus facilities.
- 4.5 The College's Procurement Policy adopts best practice and the College has a commitment to using collaborative contracts wherever possible.
- 4.6 The College has set a target of maintaining cash reserves at a level of at least 40 days expenditure on staff and operating costs. The College works to the principle of minimising debt, increasing reserves and reducing its gearing ratio. The College has an effective treasury management policy in place and maintains adequate insurances in respect of its assets and activities.
- 4.7 The College is continuing to develop its financial management systems and has refined its planning and budgeting system to better support managers' ability to make informed decisions. It adopts an approach to financial management which devolves responsibility to the lowest level consistent with maintaining sound financial control. The College's resource allocation mechanisms are designed to create headroom such as to encourage and fund innovation. The generation of non-SFC income is key in achieving this.

5.0 Human Resources and Organisational Development

- 5.1 It is the College's objective to attract, retain and develop the best possible staff for the organisation. The Human Resources Strategy confirms the importance of staff communication, engagement, individual objective setting aligned to the College's aims and a strong focus on professional development intended to improve the quality of services. The College enjoys high retention rates of teaching and support staff which gives great stability to the College.
- 5.2 The College focus on continuing professional development begins with a comprehensive on-line and face to face induction system and continues throughout the employment period. The College operates a highly effective and well-embedded individual staff review process which provides feedback on performance, identifies development needs and sets individual objectives. The College places great

emphasis on continuous improvement in teaching quality and efficiency and the development of leadership and management capability. The College has maintained Investors in People accreditation for over 12 years.

- 5.3 The College has worked to become an employer of choice through the use of effective pay and rewards systems and wider use of a range of advertising methods to reach an increasing number of candidates. Industrial relations are positive and the College has developed an effective working partnership with trades unions.
- 5.4 The College has a workforce profile which it uses to inform succession planning. A higher than sector average percentage of permanent staff members possess a teaching qualification. Published studies have established that teaching staff salaries are in line with averages for college lecturers in Scotland. The College also engages in good practice absence monitoring.
- 5.5 The College demonstrates best practice in HR Management and ensures that members of the HR Department are suitably qualified to carry out their roles. The Board of Management has in place a sub-committee to provide proper governance arrangements in relation to HR matters.

6.0 Estates and ICT

- 6.1 Following the co-location to Scottish Borders Campus in Galashiels and the new-build of the Hawick Campus, the College is focusing on expanding and enhancing its Newtown St. Boswells Campus, with an estimated spend of £600k in 2010. In parallel, the College's estates strategy is firmly focused on maintaining the quality of all its assets, while at the same time considering how best to provide for the population of the Scottish Borders through the College's outreach centres and through partnership working.
- 6.2 Key to the investment at Hawick and Galashiels was the consideration of whole-life costs. Revenue consequences were fully accounted for and are included in the College's annual budget. This includes the provision for a full planned and preventative maintenance programme and a sinking fund to allow for re-

- investment in the estate as elements of the buildings require replacement.
- 6.3 Additionally, the configuration of the College's estate is such that it will enable future changes of use. The College also utilises leases for a number of its smaller centres and this also supports the concept of flexibility.
- 6.4 Through the co-location project, the College invested significantly in ICT, with intensive deployment of technology in all centres. The focus of the College's ICT Strategy is now on maintaining a network and end-user fleet that continues to provide an up-to-date service for all users, while at the same time researching and investigating new technologies which can benefit the learner and business of the College.
- 6.5 Continuous improvement in estates and ICT are aimed at supporting recruitment, retention and reputation. Any investment will be financed principally through surplus generation; the College does not currently have any expectation of increased debt in this regard. SFC support through its capital formula funding will continue to be essential to maintain current properties and fund future developments.
- 6.6 The College's Corporate Plan fully takes account of infrastructure needs and decisions which relate to property are taken at the highest level of decision making. The College retains appropriate in-house expertise and seeks external opinion and advice where appropriate. Informed decisions are taken based on robust data and appropriate levels of option appraisal. The strategy for estates development is communicated widely, both internally and externally and there is regular dialogue with external stakeholders. The college structures its programmes and timetable in order to optimise space management.
- 6.6 All new projects over a certain limit or those considered to carry a high risk of adverse impact are subject to a full written business case and risk assessment. This includes a full option appraisal. Project boards are established to carry out all major projects and post-implementation reviews carried out. Regular reports are submitted to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

6.7 Environmental sustainability is addressed through the college's Sustainability Committee. The College has developed good practice in environmental management. It has adopted and published a clear statement on its policy with regard to the environment, prepared a travel plan and an environmental action plan; this plan includes action on climate change and progress is reported to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

7.0 Learning and Teaching

7.1 The College is committed to the provision of high quality education and training opportunities. Decisions relating to quality are considered at governing body level and a number of innovative changes have been made to the curriculum over recent years resulting in updates to the portfolio of courses and an improvement in the learner experience.

7.2 The College has implemented outcomes from the previous (2006) Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) quality review and carries out comprehensive reviews of its curriculum on a regular basis in order to ensure that it remains relevant to changing student needs. The College also actively participates in best practice dissemination and monitors quality reviews published routinely by HMIe and similar organisations. The College has undergone a further review in March 2010 and is looking forward to receiving the output from that review.

7.3 The quality of provision is demonstrated by improved retention and achievement rates of students over recent years. In the current year, as in previous years, the college is projecting to be operating at around 36,000 weighted student units of measurement (WSUMs) activity level (target 35,615 WSUMs). Robust reporting arrangements are in place to monitor enrolment levels.

7.4 The College expects to enroll around 98% of its students from the Scottish Borders catchment area and has a positive perception with its local community based on student surveys and media coverage. The College demonstrates a commitment to public value and makes a significant educational, economic, social and cultural contribution to the local economy through its portfolio of activities and subject range.

- 7.5 The College has established a good reputation for positive collaborations and participates in benchmarking activity with other colleges. It is an active member of the local community planning partnership and collaborates closely with schools and other stakeholders on key initiatives. The College has collaborative arrangements in place with Heriot-Watt University with which it is co-located. A joint academic coherence committee operates to make the most of collaborative opportunities and both institutions are committed to extend the range of jointly planned programmes.
- 7.6 The College is committed to widening participation and enhancing equality and diversity practices and has a proactive approach to meeting the needs of students and staff with special needs. Regular profiling of age, gender, ethnicity and disability takes place. Compliance with relevant key legislation and the regulatory frameworks are important considerations for the College. The College firmly believes that a robust model for learner engagement is essential in maintaining relationships with students that will benefit both current and future learners and inform future planning for the curriculum. This is achieved through Department Councils which are chaired by students, focus groups for support and academic services, and student representation on standing executive management committees. The College also liaises closely with the Students Association with a view to maintaining good communication and improving the overall student experience.
- 7.7 The College has an Environmental Action Plan and progress towards this plan is monitored by the Environmental Committee which includes student representation. The College takes its Corporate Social Responsibility seriously and this is reflected in policies including the Procurement Policy and Environmental Policy Statement.
- 7.8 The College has implemented consultative processes with staff and key stakeholders and regularly carries out self-evaluation exercises of its activities and processes. The College also publishes an annual report.
- 7.9 Finally, the College has a business continuity plan in place, together with appropriate insurances to enable it to recover should a disaster occur.

8.0 Marketing and Communications

- 8.1 The College believes that, in order to support sustainable learning and teaching, an appropriate strategy for marketing and communications is essential. To achieve this, the College engages with key stakeholders, including the local community planning partnership, local employers, staff, learners and local schools.
- 8.2 The College ensures engagement in a variety of ways intended to influence College planning, from holding sessions for stakeholders to engage in direct dialogue, to the feedback from various surveys and the opportunity to influence planning through the College development planning process.
- 8.3 In turn, the College uses a wide variety of marketing materials and techniques, appropriate to the intended audience. These include the College website, social networking, prospectuses and other course publicity materials, holding open days for potential school-leavers and targeting employers in industry sectors.
- 8.4 Through these marketing and communications techniques, the College ensures that its curriculum meets the needs of all local stakeholders and will continue to do so through changing economic circumstances.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 Borders College is confident that it is able to secure its core activities and has the capacity to respond to new challenges. It is committed to innovation and continuous improvement in all aspects of its delivery. It believes that the measures it has in place will enable it to meet the aspirations of its current and future student populations.

Sustainability Framework

SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK – BALANCED SCORECARD

Finance and Procurement

Goals	Evidence	Monitored by
Generate sufficient level of operating surplus to finance other key resources	Operating surplus as % of total turnover – positive surplus achieved in each financial year	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Diversify income streams	Non-SFC income as % of total turnover – minimum 24% in 2010/11, rising to 25% in 2012/13	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Maintain sufficient cash reserves to deal with unexpected events	Ratio of days cash to total expenditure – minimum 40 days	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Retain flexibility in Budgeting for Expenditure	Staff Costs as a % of total turnover – maximum 64% in 2010/11, falling to 62% in 2012/13	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Efficient staff deployment	Weighted SUMS per FTE Staff	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Sound budget setting and financial management arrangements	Internal, external audit reports	Audit Committee
Effective risk management and scenario planning arrangements	Internal, external audit reports	Audit Committee
Engagement in Best Practice Procurement	Delivery of efficiency savings	Audit Committee

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Human Resources and Organisational Development

Goals	Evidence	Monitored by
Effective staff training and development programme	Comprehensive induction and CPD programme, number of days per employee invested in training and development, external accreditation, ISR system	HR and Remuneration Committee
Maintain low levels of staff turnover	Staff turnover % - maximum 10%	HR and Remuneration Committee
Maintain and manage low levels of sickness absence	Working days per employee lost through sickness absence, absence management procedures implemented	HR and Remuneration Committee
Appropriately qualified teaching staff	Percentage of permanent teaching staff with a teaching qualification – minimum 96% in 2010/11, rising to 98% in 2012/13, HMIE reports	HR and Remuneration Committee
Staff input to and awareness of college strategic plan	Strategic and Operational Planning process, staff consultations, events, staff satisfaction survey	HR and Remuneration Committee
Effective staff communications	Staff meetings, newsletters, staff satisfaction survey	HR and Remuneration Committee
Committed and effective governing body with appropriate mix of skills and experience	Board recruitment, induction, training and succession planning arrangements, audit reports	Nominations Committee

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Estates and ICT

Goals	Evidence	Monitored by
Provide high quality facilities and services for staff and students	Staff and student satisfaction surveys, estate condition data, estates strategy, ICT strategy, effective PPM Programme	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Efficient space utilisation	Space Utilisation Data	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Buildings accessible to students with profound and complex needs	Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance measures and evidence of reasonable adjustments	Finance and General Purposes Committee
Good practice in environmental sustainability	Climate action plan, energy consumption, emissions reporting	Finance and General Purposes Committee

Sustainability Framework

Learning and Teaching

Goals	Evidence	Monitored by
Effective marketing and delivery to ensure appropriate levels of student activity	Activity Targets: SFC Weighted SUMs Target – minimum 100%	Finance and General Purposes Committee & Curriculum and Quality Committee
Appropriate range of provision that is relevant to the needs of the community and the wider economy	Student satisfaction survey, user survey, performance against activity target, use of new learning technology, 'flexibility' of curriculum, self-evaluation	Curriculum and Quality Committee
Courses meet the expectations and abilities of learners	Early retention% - minimum 95% in 2010/11, rising to 96% in 2012/13, Retention % - minimum 92%, rising to 94% in 2012/13	Curriculum and Quality Committee
Learners achieve their potential	Student outcome/achievement % - minimum 95% in 2010/11, rising to 96% in 2012/13, Learner Success % - minimum 83% in 2010, rising to 86% in 2012/13	Curriculum and Quality Committee
Commitment to equality and diversity	Impact Assessment for all relevant policies, Equalities Scheme and Action Plans. Monitoring of student and staffing statistical information for equalities and diversity	Equalities Committee & Board of Management
High quality of provision	Self-evaluation and Internal Review, HMIE review reports, student satisfaction survey	Board of Management
Commitment to environmental sustainability	Development of climate change action plan and monitoring of progress against plan	Finance and General Purposes Committee & Curriculum and Quality Committee

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