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REGIONAL BOARD

26 October 2023

BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD

Board Self-Evaluation and Development Plan

1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER

For discussion

1.1 The Board are invited to discuss the proposed development plan.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Each year the Board undertakes a self-evaluation process the results of which are collated by the Board Secretary and fed into a Board Development Plan for the upcoming year. The results of the self-evaluation can be found in Appendix 1 and the proposed Board Development Plan in Appendix 2.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION(S) REQUIRED

3.1 I recommend that the Regional Board: -

3.1.1 discuss the proposed development plan and suggest, and agree, any changes required.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Code of Good Governance requires that Boards "have in place a robust self-evaluation process" which should comprise an annual internal review. The Board Self-Evaluation was sent out to all Board Members on 24 May 2023 with a request to complete by 7 June 2023. A response rate of 62% was achieved and the Board Secretary collated the results and any comments (anonymised).

4.2 The Board Development and Enhancement plan aims to outline the key actions that the Board and the Chair of the Board will progress in the 2023-24 academic year. This Board Development and Enhancement Plan is largely informed by the feedback provided by Board members in their own evaluations of the Board and by the self-evaluations from each of the Board Sub Committees. As Chair of the Board, my own development plan based on my review with the SIM and Board member feedback [which will be discussed via a separate item on the agenda] also includes actions that may be led by me but inevitably involve the Board as a whole in taking forward via the Board Development and Enhancement Plan.

4.3 Board member feedback: regardless of the setting in which it was made, has been instrumental in this Development and Enhancement Plan. Without restating all the actions in this cover text, Board members have sent out a clear message about being better informed and involved between Board meetings. Within the Board and Sub Committee meetings there is also consistent feedback on the need for more time to be spent on strategy and strategic decision making and for meetings to be managed in a way that provides enough time for these discussions and for the Board to contribute to decisions before they are made.

4.4 In a similar vein the future will be challenging and some very difficult decisions most likely lie ahead. Before asking the Board to make these potentially difficult decisions with their Executive colleagues, there is a need for Board members to better understand the sector in its "as is" state before they are asked to decide on its "to be future". To that end future development days and Board meeting will provide some of that context that will make strategic options easier to understand and lead to better more informed decisions

5.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

5.2 Learner Implications

5.3 Staff Implications

5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment

5.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications

6.0 RISK COMMENTARY

6.1 The Board should ensure that it is aware of the requirements of it and the role and responsibilities of the Members. The Board should be fit for purpose and consist of people who have the appropriate and relevant skills and experience to carry out Board business most effectively. A self-evaluation and development plan are part of the process to ensure that Board and Members are able to discuss and make decisions around items knowing that they are as informed as possible.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 Across this Board Development and Enhancement Plan and the action plan I have agreed with the SIM following my own review, I am hoping that Board members will see how their feedback has shaped both plans and that the actions proposed will: if achieved, enhance the Boards contribution to the college and improve the colleges overall efficiency and effectiveness"

Previous Board or College Committee Approvals: None

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For publication ☒	**Not for publication** ☐ **If not, why not?**

Appendix 1

Regional Board Self Evaluation 2022-23 to inform Development and Enhancement plan for 2023-24

1. Background and Introduction

The *Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges*[1] *("the Code")* has been developed and is owned by the college sector. The Code establishes standards of good governance practice for all boards, and provides the essential foundations for compliance within the legislative framework. The Board must also comply with all other statutory requirements.

The Code requires that Boards "have in place a robust self-evaluation process" which should comprise an annual internal review and an externally facilitated effectiveness review every three to five years.

The following is an analysis of the results of the self-evaluation questionnaires returned for 2022-23. In total there were eight returned questionnaires, a response rate of 62%.

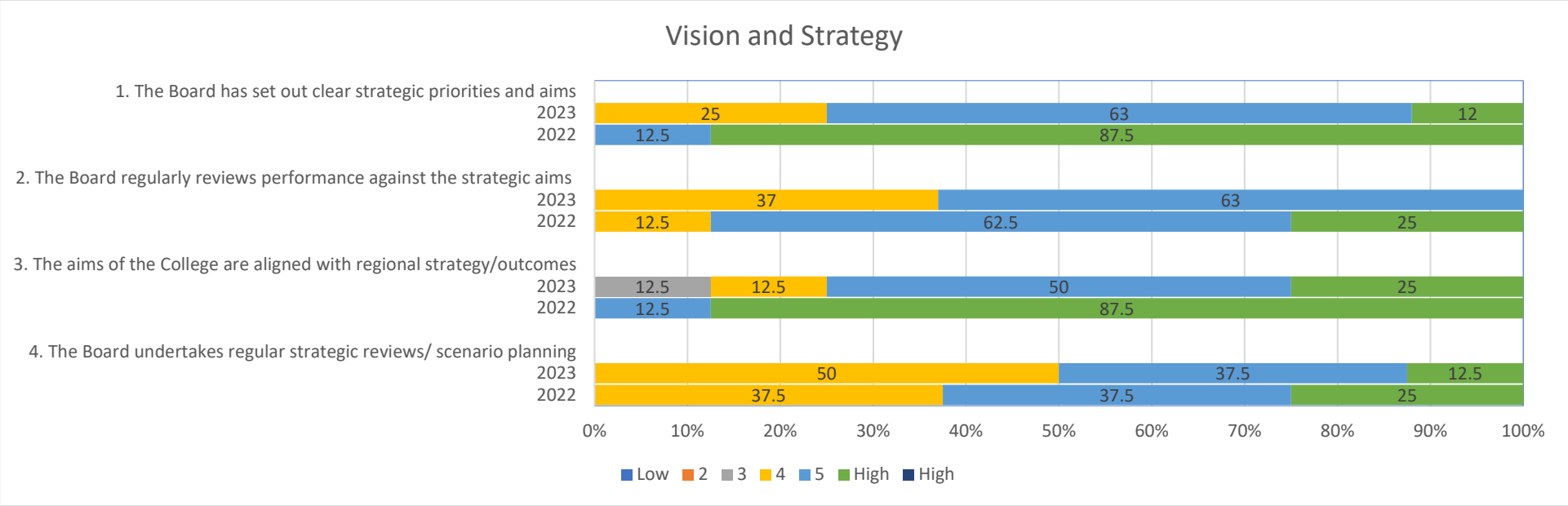
The questionnaire answers were ranked from one to six with one being Low/Disagree and six being High/Agree.

Overall responses were scored at a lower level than in the previous year with 33% of responses at the highest ranking compared to 63% in the previous year. There were 4% of responses scored at three or below compared to 1.6% of the previous year. All those who responded provided a response to each question.

The areas with the fewest responses at level four or below were Section 8: Postholder Effectiveness followed by Section 9: Board Member Development and Evaluations. The areas with the highest number of responses at four or below were Section 2: Vision and Strategy and Section 10: Partnership Working.

[1] Code-of-Good-Governance-for-Scotlands-Colleges-September-2022.pdf

2. Vision and Strategy



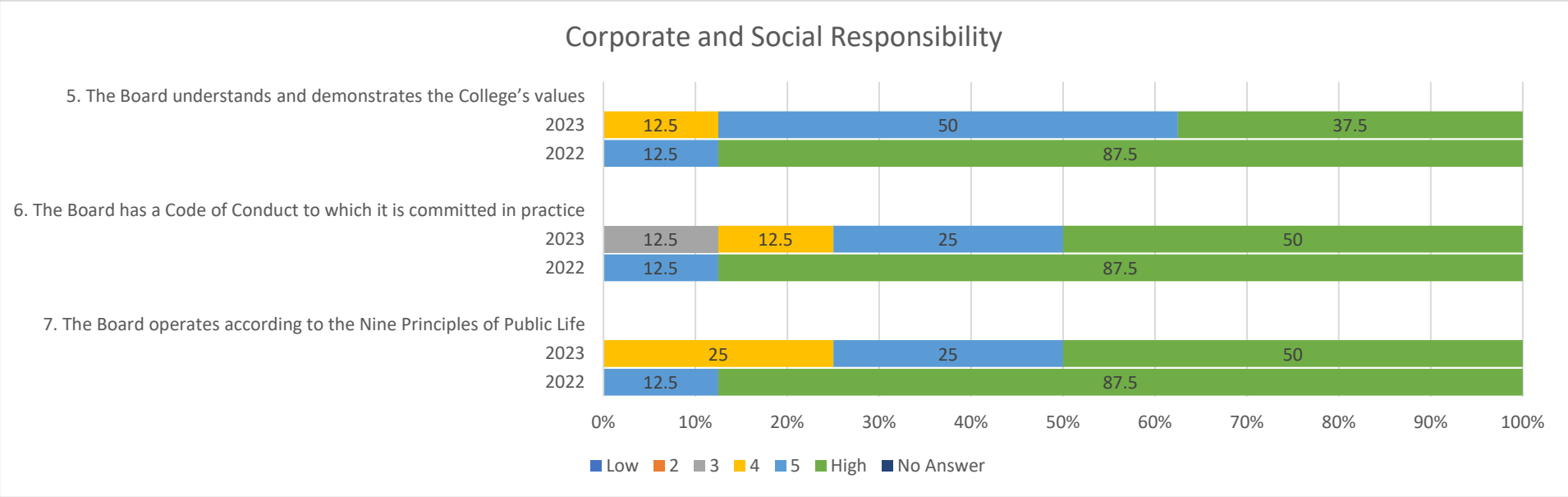
66% of responses were at points five and six, compared to 87.5% the previous year.

The statement that received the lowest ratings was statement three relating to alignment with regional strategy and outcomes. For the previous two years the lowest rating was statement four, perhaps indicating that the introduction of more strategic discussion and specific strategy items on agendas is improving ratings for statement four. However, more focus is required on regional strategy and the College alignment with it.

Comments

We've discussed the need for a regular snapshot/balanced scorecard about performance, which would include progress in achieving strategic aims.
I think that we have done a lot of talking about strategic concepts/possibilities but without the reality of the resources and therefore I think that we aren't aligned to the full implications of the resource environment apart from it is bad. We have had a lot of late/emergency information on financial positions and forecasts and sometimes I've felt "cornered" between the deadline and having appropriate time to consider.

3. Corporate and Social Responsibility



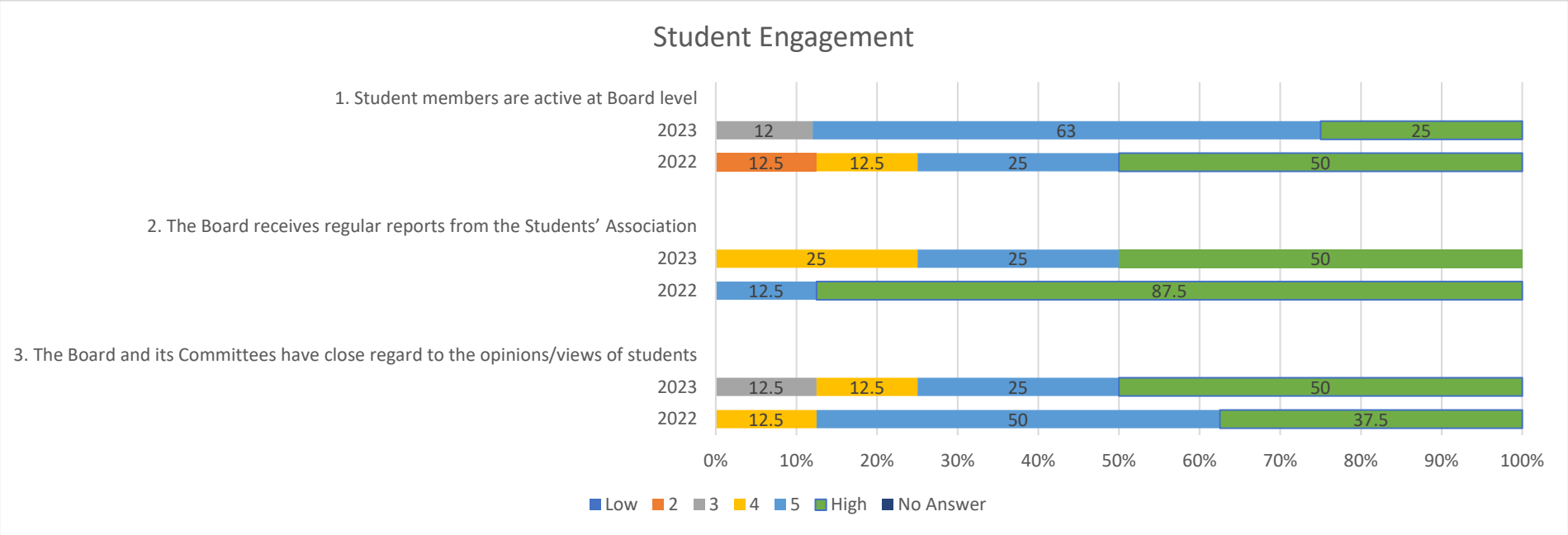
11% were ranked the highest, a considerable decrease from 87.5% the previous year when all responses were also at points five and six.

The Board Secretary will continue to regularly remind Members of the Code of Conduct and the Nine Principles of Public Life. The low score for statement six should be scrutinised as to whether Members feel there is no Code of Conduct or that there is and Board is not particularly committed to it.

Comments

Linked to gifts and hospitality I think there is more work to be done in this area.

4. Student Engagement

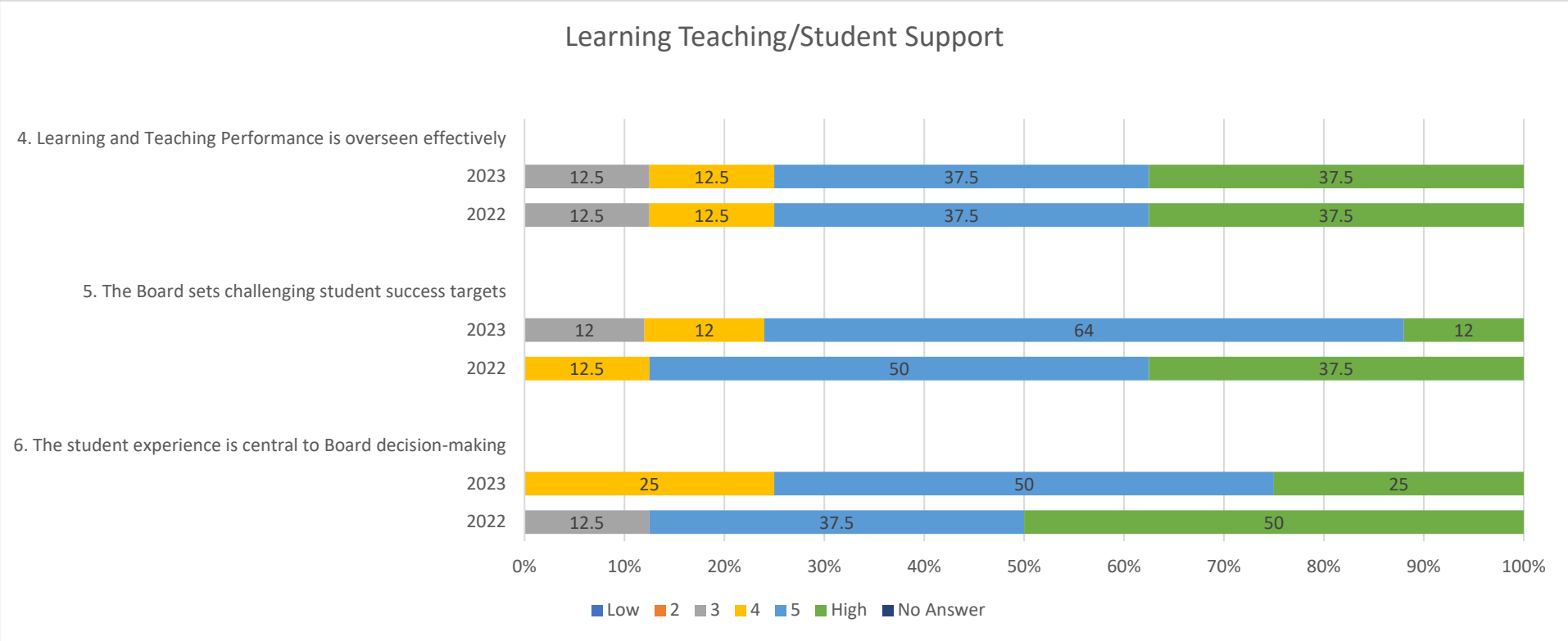


Overall, the scores for this section are good but a reduction on the previous year when 87.5% were ranked five and six against 79% in the current year. Going into 2023/24 an active and committed Student President has been appointed who has been attending Board and Committee meetings in the latter part of 2022/23 so this should help significantly in the area of student participation and engagement. There is clearly still work to be done in this area and this will be built into the Board Development plan.

Comments

There has been considerable improvement in this area which, I believe, will only get better.
Recruitment of student members has proved difficult.
I think we'll need to keep working to ensure we're listening to the student voice.
Whilst the student members attend the Board meetings I'm not sure I feel as fully informed on their experience as I could be.

5. Learning and Teaching/Student Support

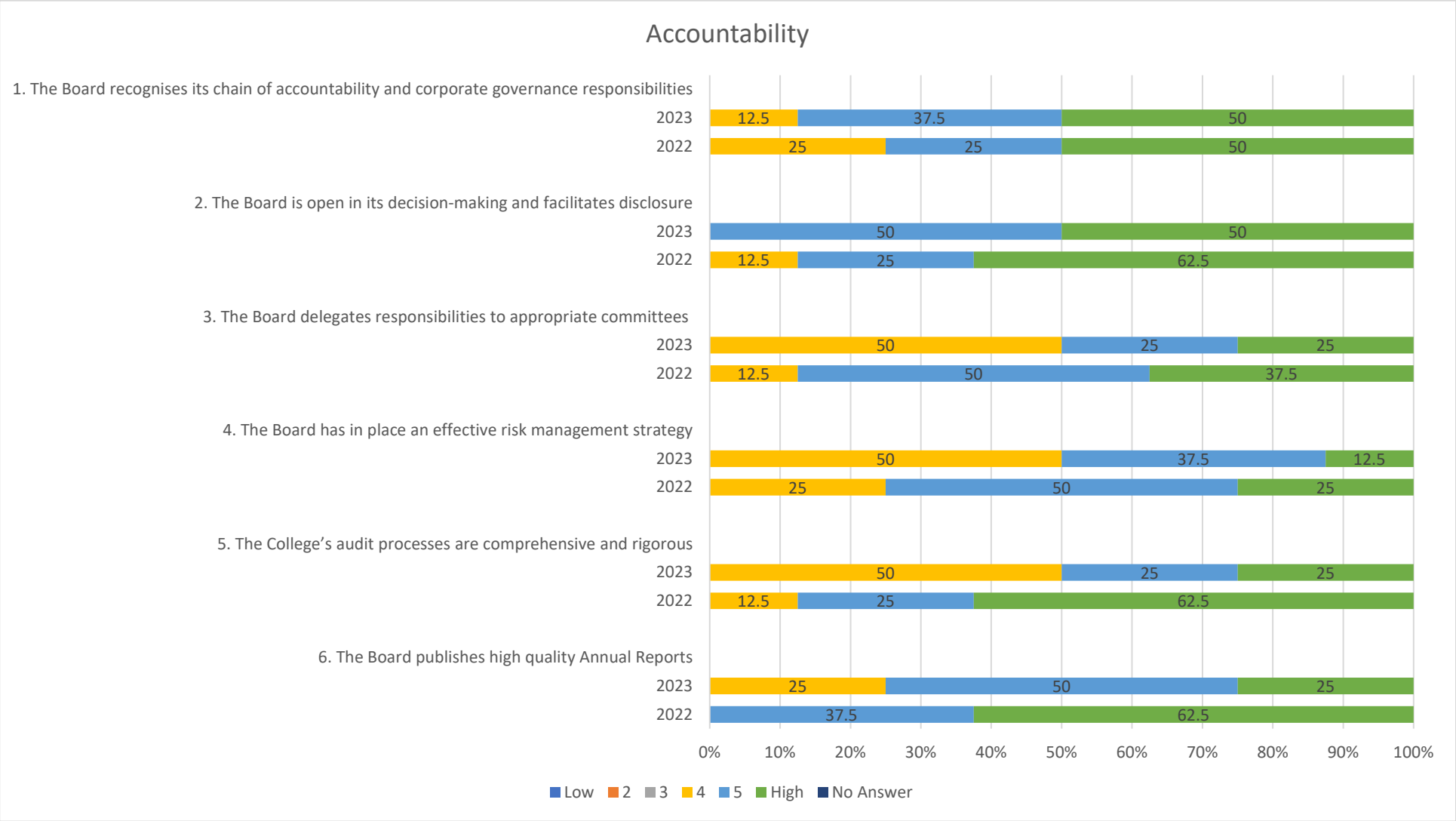


Responses at level five and six are similar to the previous years.

Comments

There could be improvements in this area, effectiveness of management could improve and lecturers could be supported more. It would be good for Board Members to understand the student experience more by meeting them and hearing their stories and experiences.
As per above comment about ensuring we're listening to student voice. Plus also the term 'challenging student success targets' – I feel we value (and regularly discuss) the wider student outcomes and experiences beyond academic attainment, plus impact of Covid etc.

6. Accountability and Delegation; Risk and Audit

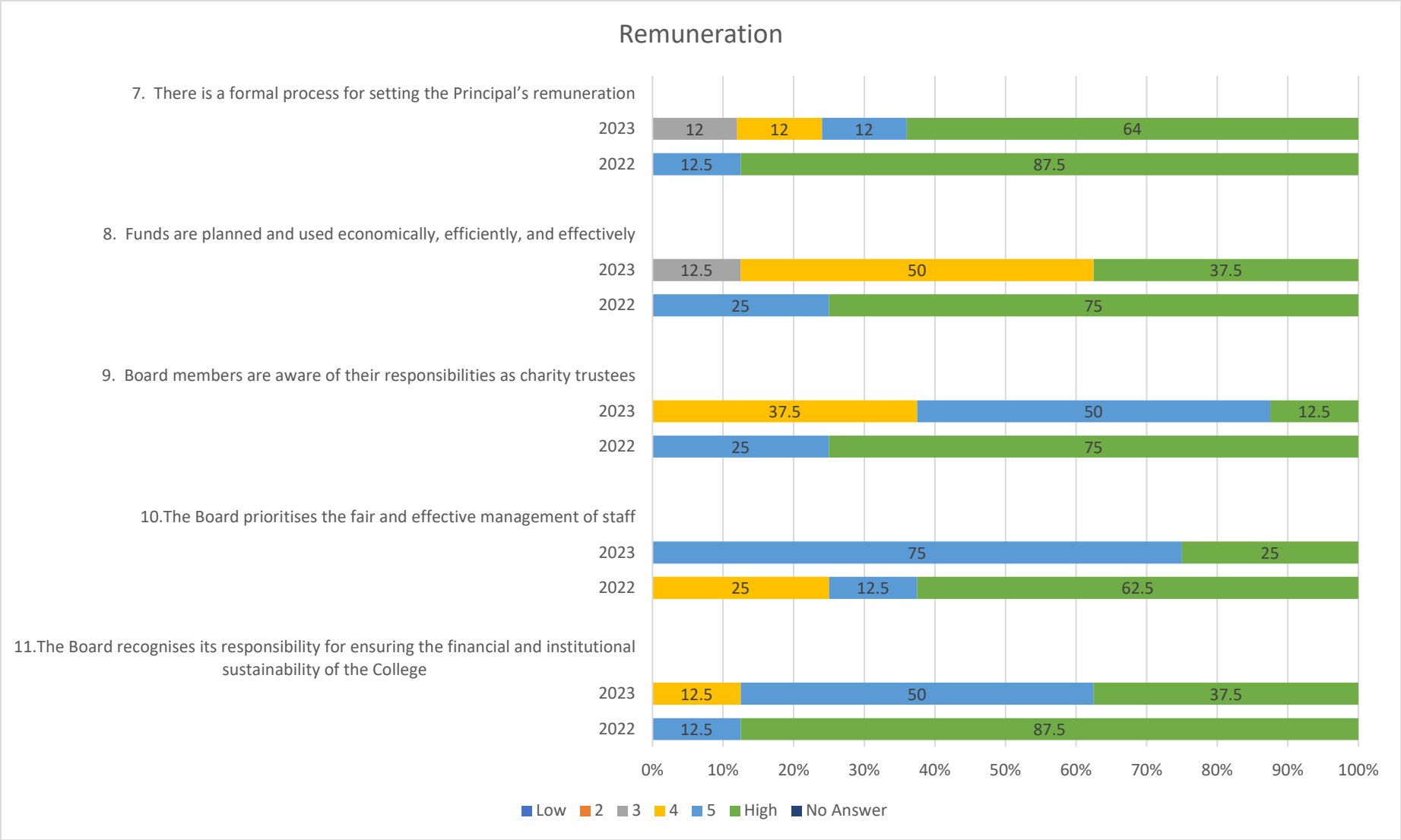


Statements five and six have seen the largest shift from positive responses in the previous year. The reduction in scoring for statement five re audit processes should be scrutinised to identify the causes for this shift.

Comments

It feels as though there has been improvement in this area, particularly on point 2.
There is more work to do to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the Committee.
The risk register needs review.
We're looking at the role of risk management and ensuring our approach is fit for purpose. I'm not sure it's a process that will ever end….!
I still think that on the annual accounts process the F&R and Audit Committee responsibilities are possible still too overlapping.

7. Remuneration, Sustainability and Staff Governance



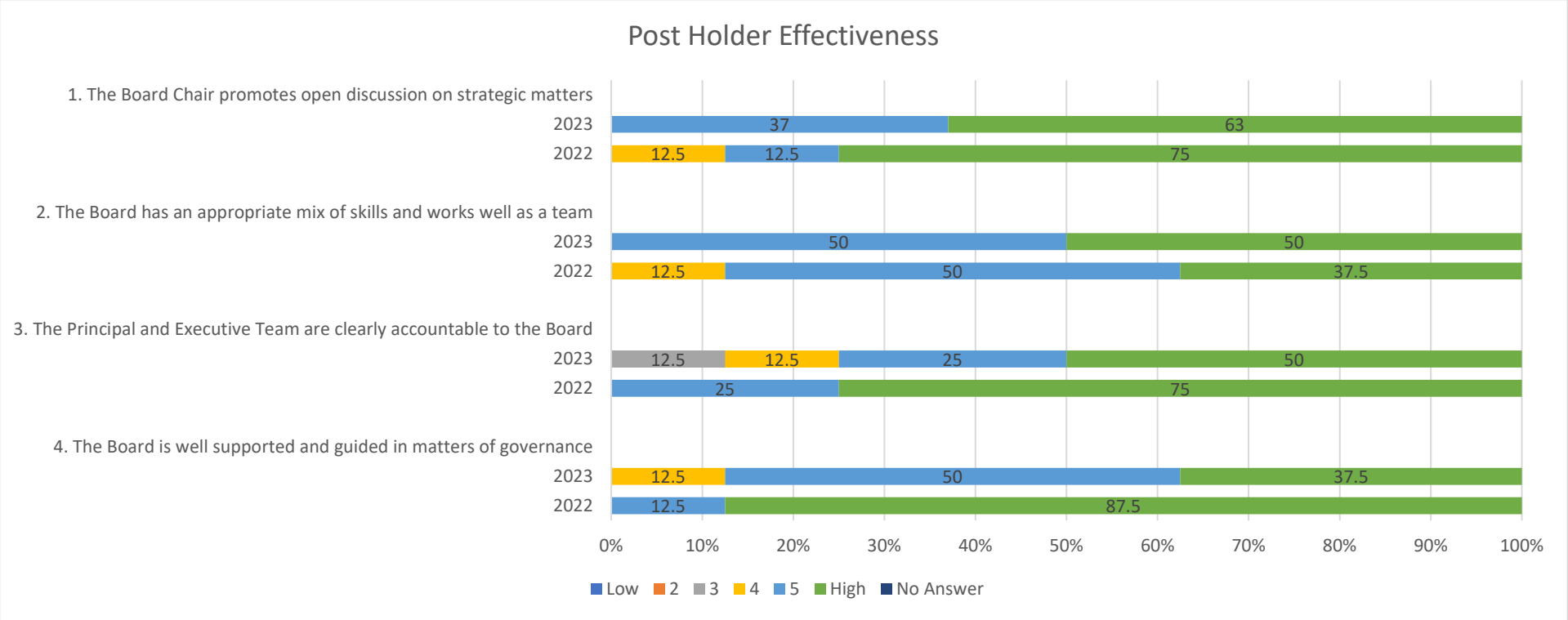
All statements have scored lower than in the previous year other than statement 10 which now has now scores lower than five or six. For statement seven the Board is provided with the minutes of the Remuneration Committee but it is accepted that the process may not be clear to those not on the Remuneration Committee. The Board Secretary has informed all Members of the process and will do so on an annual basis.

Taking into account Member comments regarding statement eight this should be investigated further too to ensure clarity across all Board Members.

Comments

Not sure of what the process is for Principal's remuneration so don't feel I can comment.
Not sure if point 8 means are Board happy with way funds are used or do we believe funds are used efficiently by senior management. Sometimes, it seems, money is spent on things – eg ilearn or immersive classroom and then these rooms/equipment are not utilised to the extent they should be and seem to be a high outlay for not a high return.
Ref n.7 I don't actually know this process nor how it works.
There needs to be increased focus by the Board on its financial strategy.
I think 'The Board prioritises the fair and effective management of staff' but I cannot recall any discussions on this.
As above some of the turnaround in information to the Board about major resourcing challenges/returns to SFC have been very tight and I have sometimes felt uncomfortable at having insufficient detail of the implications/consequences. I think that the covering report needs to include more information about alternatives considered and implications of the recommendations if there is going to be this urgency presented.

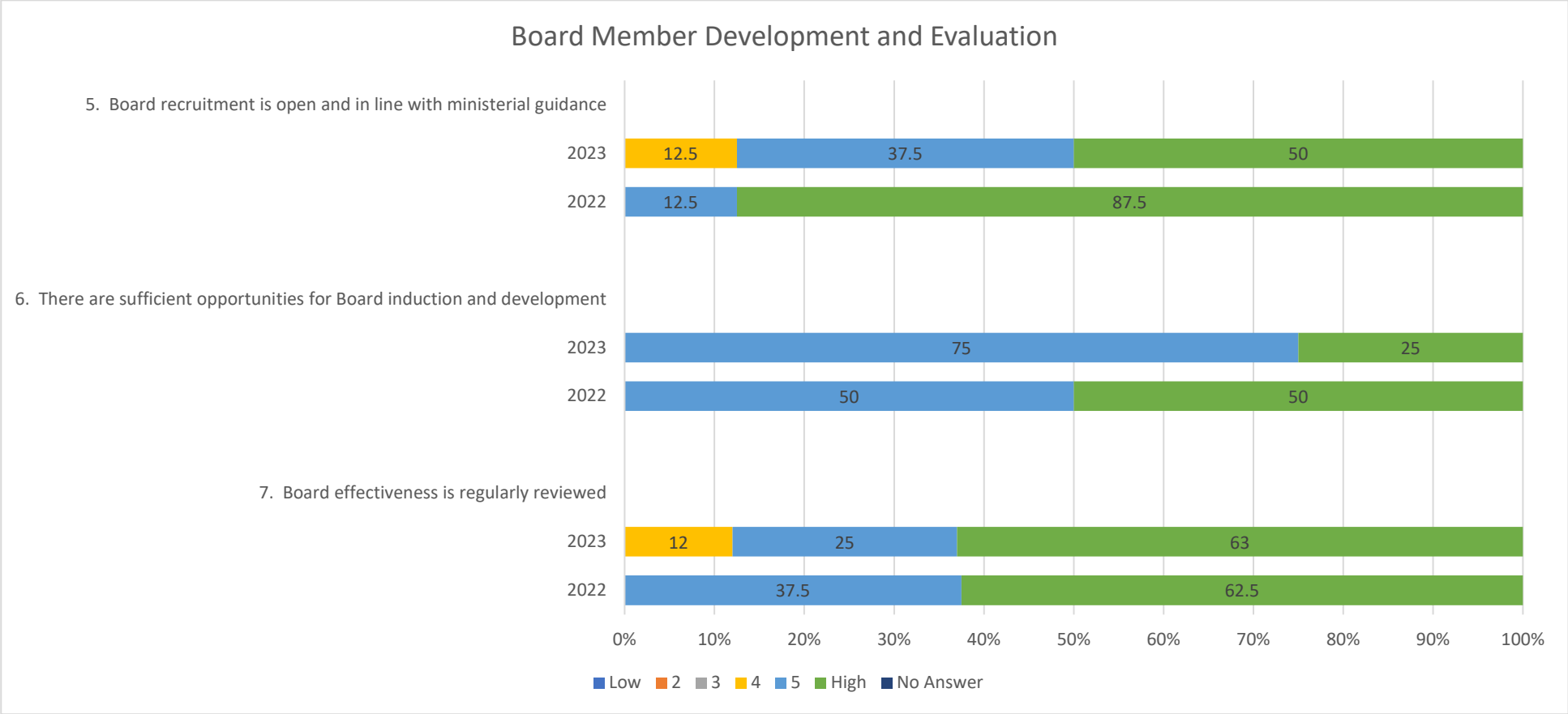
8. Post Holder Effectiveness



Comments

It seems that there has been improvement in this area in the last year.
The chair continually invites comment, reflection, challenge and ideas for improvement.
Board Secretary supports Board very well. Not sure we drive sufficient Board member training – left very much up to the individual and maybe there is a need to use joint Board training sessions to ensure everyone is on same page.
It occasionally feels that the Principal/ET feels we are focused on the wrong areas for questioning and as a result I have felt “fobbed” off with the odd answer. If we are focused on the wrong thing then maybe we need to look at how the covering report is set out and ensure that it leads us in the correct direction. This doesn’t happen often but I have felt this way.

9. Board Member Development and Evaluation

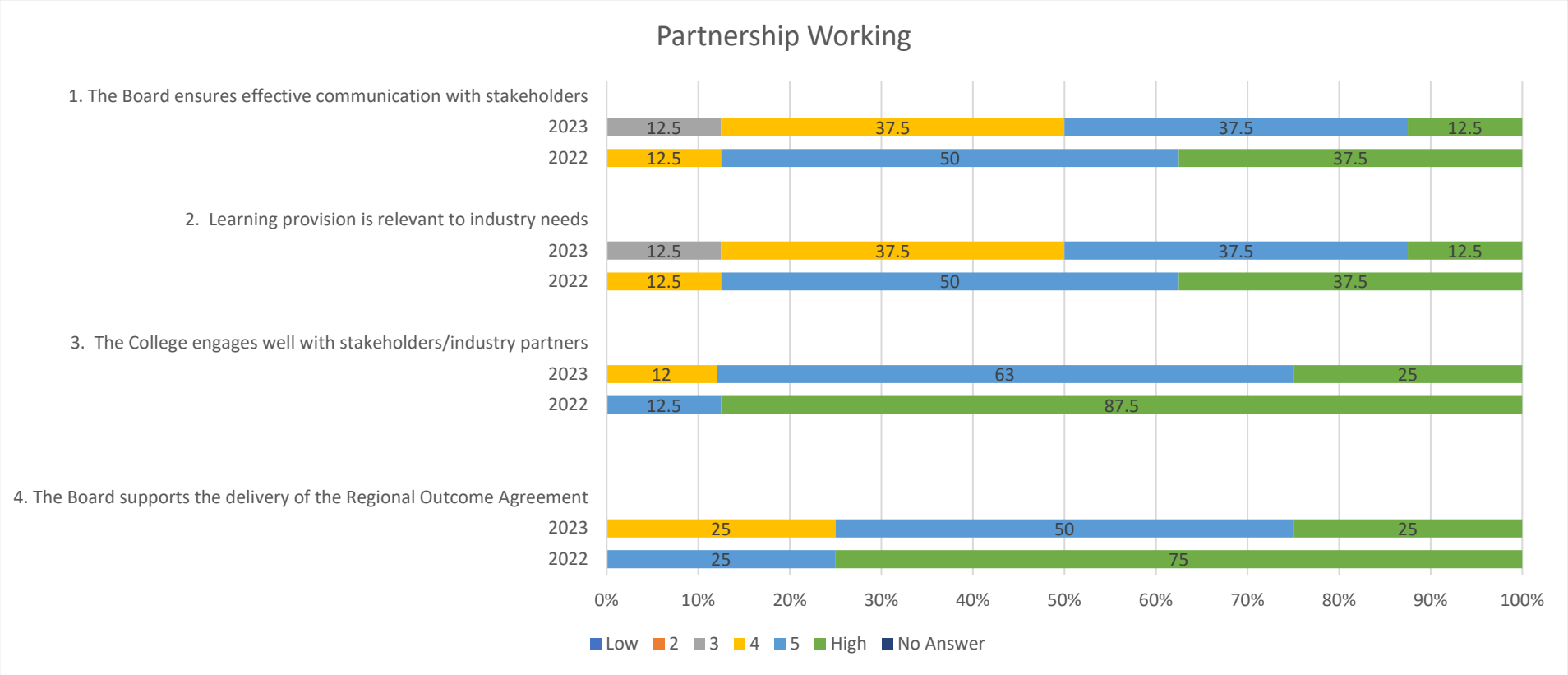


Again, a very similar result to the previous year however some responses at level four appearing.

Comments

More visits for the Board Members individually into college to meet staff and students to understand the challenges and success stories of student life.

10. Partnership Working



Comments

I wonder if it would be helpful for the Board to get an insight into how the College interacts with the Community Partnership or other collaborative partnership work across the Borders as I feel a lot of the focus is on SOSE and the SFC, but we don't hear so much of the voice of those who employ our students, and need our services to deliver the services to the community.

Appendix 2

BORDERS COLLEGE

Board Development and Enhancement Plan 2023-24

Regionally Focused — Globally Engaged

BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN (2023-24)

The feedback received from the Board Self-Evaluation which takes place towards the end of the academic year and outcomes from individual Board Member reviews with the Chair inform the content of the Plan.

Any statements in the Board Evaluation results that received a score at level three or less and/or received a score of 50% or more at level four have been included as areas for development.

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2023)
1	**Vision and Strategy**				
	The aims of the College are aligned with regional strategy/outcomes.	College is a trusted organisation with local businesses that can be relied on to deliver to local and regional need. Board are assured that College is aiming to deliver, or contribute to delivery of, the regional strategy and is conscious of the current environment and the 'bigger picture'.	Ensure Board are 'au fait' with the relevant regional strategies. Add strategies to resources list. Have a session on regional strategy.	Chair/Principal/Exec Team/Board Secretary	**Board Planning Day on 9th November will include a session on regional strategy driver's alignment to them and a proposed revisioning of the College where regional objectives are our number one priority.**
	The Board undertakes regular strategic reviews/scenario planning. (Also in the previous year Plan).	Scenario planning, and evidence of, will provide Board with reassurance that the challenges of the upcoming years have been considered and planned for as much as possible.	Exec share high level info about their internal scenario planning. Make this the focus of a planning session.	Chair/Board Secretary/Principal	**Planning day scheduled for 9 November and planning evening on 25 April will focus Board on strategic issues. The challenges in the external environment, the emerging financial pressures and a discussion on the strategic options**

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2023)
			Dedicate time for scenario planning away from regular meetings to allow focus on specific items (and agree what this commitment will look like in terms of days/hours).	Chair/Principal/Board Secretary	**available on how the College responds to these.** **Need to determine what this looks like and whether it is feasible. Can this initially be done via a Chairs Committee with proposal then developed for the full Board to consider.**
2	**Corporate Social Responsibility** The Board has a Code of Conduct which it is committed to in practice.	The Code of Conduct is one of the key documents for the Board and the governance of the College. All members should be aware of the Code, which will help inform their decision making and they approach they take to Board membership. If Members feel there is not the commitment to the Code within the Board they should raise this with the Chair, SIM or Board Secretary. Such a lack of commitment could be	Board Secretary already delivers a Board paper once a year to remind Members of the Code and the importance of it. It is also listed on the governance web pages as a key document. More focus and attention to be paid to this at new Member induction. Members to be encouraged to share any concerns about non-	Board Secretary Board Secretary Chair/SIM/Board Secretary	**Feedback from Board Sub Committees suggest that some members are less aware of this than they should be. Rather than direct members to the code we will proactively re-issue the Code of Conduct to all members to raise awareness and knowledge and to reinforce expectations.** **In addition to the Code of Conduct the Principal and Chair have discussed and agreed that all College stakeholders should revisit and have an extended College wide discussion on the College's values.**

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2023)
		detrimental to the overall function of the Board.	compliance with the Code.		
3	**Student Engagement and Student Board Member Participation** Student Members are active at Board level, and the Board and Committees pay close regard to Student Member participation. (Also in the previous year's plan).	Student Board Members feel empowered and able to contribute fully to Board business and are encouraged to undertake this with the needs and requirements of the student body in mind. All Members are informed at first hand of the student experience and have opportunity to engage with the Student Members.	Continued and ongoing support for student members from the Student Mentor. Encouragement from Board Secretary to attend training where possible. Review of timings for recruitment of student Board Members. The current process means that usually at least one student Board Member each year misses the specific student focused CDN Board Member Training. They also tend to join very near to the first Board Meeting allowing little time for induction.	Student Mentor/Board Secretary	**The appointed Student President was not available for much of the academic year, however two students attended meetings as observers. One of these has been appointed Student President for 23/24 so joins the Board with more understanding of the processes and procedures and having already met fellow Board Members, and in good time to attend the CDN Student Board Member training.** **The Chair has been meeting with the student observers regularly too. This will continue into 2023-24 with the aim of enabling the Student President and Vice Presidents to be engaged and empowered to raise their voice and to continue to improve dialogue between BCSA and the Principal and Chair.**

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2023)
4	**Learning and Teaching/Student Support** Learning and Teaching performance is overseen effectively and the Board sets challenging student success targets. (Also in the previous year's plan).	Board receives a more rounded view of the learner experience. Board is reassured that targets are achievable but challenging and that the College has ambition to continue to grow.	Continued focus on improving the presentation and content of papers to allow Members to 'see the wood for the trees' Comprehensive reports from Curriculum Quality and Student Experience Committee to full Board, as those not on CQSE do not always see the full extent of this work.	VP for Student Experience/Chair of Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience Committee/Board Secretary	**Continue to remind all Board Members that they can attend CQC even if not an official Committee Member.** **Student retention and success rates will be an integral part of a planned suite of College wide KPIs that will provide both in-year reports and an end of year review for the Board against a number of strategic indicators.**
5	**Accountability and Delegation; Risk and Audit** The Board delegates responsibilities to appropriate committees.	Board business is dealt with as efficiently as possible making best use of Member's time.	Ensure business is not duplicated or replicated too much whilst ensuring that all Members have an 'across the board' view and sight of the key information. There is a balance to be struck.	VP Finance and Corporate Services/Committee Chairs/Principal/Board Secretary	**The Risk Register continued to be an item for discussion and the VP Finance and Corporate Resources previewed some potential layouts for the revised Risk Register at the last Board meeting of the year.** **There is now a clearer segmentation of the respective roles and**

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2023)
					responsibilities of and between the Audit and Risk Committee and Finance and Resources Committee and between the respective Sub Committees and the Board.
	The Board has in place an effective risk management strategy (in previous year plan too).	In ever challenging times the Board should be assured that the College is aware of the risks it faces and that they are being handled effectively with appropriate plans in place. If the Board does not have this reassurance there will be uncertainty and potential for loss of confidence in the Exec Team.	Clear and concise Risk Register (content and format) to be agreed on and each risk allocated to a Committee or direct to Board. Monitor at each meeting.	Principal/VP Finance and Corporate Services/Committee Chairs/Chair	**There is clearer roles and responsibilities for risk between the Board and its Sub Committees. Each Sub Committee has been allocated designated risks to oversee and confine their scrutiny to these risks and not duplicate the work of other committees. Where appropriate some risks are, or will be, reserved to Board.**
	The College's audit processes are comprehensive and rigorous.	The Board should have no doubt that the audit processes are comprehensive and rigorous, anything other than complete confidence could be destabilising.	All Members, and especially Audit and Risk Committee Members to be encourages to undertake the CDN Audit Committee training if they are new to this area. Discussion at Audit and Risk to be held as to why Members may feel the processes are not entirely comprehensive.		**Chair of Audit and Risk has wide ranging and extensive experience and is providing excellent leadership in this area. Revised ToRs for the Audit and Risk Committee provide clearer delegated authority to Audit and Risk Committee and its relationships to other committees.** **Some new Members may not have been through the whole process over the full academic year and may not be aware of the Annual Accounts that come to Board in the Autumn.**

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2023)
6	**Remuneration, Sustainability and Staff Governance** There is a formal process for setting the Principal's remuneration. Funds are planned and used economically, effectively and efficiently.	All Board decisions and processes should be transparent.	Details of process to be drawn up and included in induction pack.	Board Secretary	**Email circulated to current Board with the information re the established process.**
7	**Post Holder Effectiveness** The Board and Executive Team are clearly accountable to the Board.	If there is a lack of accountability to Board, Members may question the purpose of the Board and have lack of confidence in the exec team and College overall.	Appropriate self-evaluation and review processes for Principal and Executive Team and for the Chair and Board Members	Chair and Principal	**The Principal and all Board Members have participated in a self-evaluation process prior to a formal review meeting with the Chair. An action plan and targets have been agreed between the Principal and Chair to be approved by the Remunerations Committee. Board members have agreed an individual development plan and [where appropriate] CPD. The Chair too has completed a self-evaluation prior to**

	Area for Development	Impact	Actions to be taken	Responsibility	Current Update (October 2023)
					a review meeting with the SIM. A plan of action has been discussed and agreed to be approved by the full Board in October 2023.
8	**Partnership Working** The Board ensures effective communication with stakeholders (in previous year plan too).	Members and stakeholders have increased awareness of the role of each other and the impact they can make.	All parties invited to College events, to allow for, and encourage interaction. Hold specific events for stakeholders and Board Members to meet.	Chair/Principal/Board Secretary Principal	**Further discussion on this is required at upcoming development days to provide a shared understanding between the Executive and the Board on the College's current engagement with key external stakeholders, how they fit with the College's Business Strategy and how the Board might support their future growth and development.**
	Learner provision is relevant to industry needs (in previous year too).	Board is assured the College is aware of Regional and stakeholder requirements and the curriculum is flexible and responsive.	Clarity in reporting of these areas to Committees and Board. Make clear the work the College has undertaken to meet industry needs.	Principal/VP Student Experience	**Future development sessions and/or Board/ Board Sub Committee meetings will discuss any proposed changes to curriculum and the extent to which they meet regional economic and skills needs.**