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BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD

REGIONAL BOARD

14 December 2023

Sustainability Strategy Update

1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER
For discussion

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Board with an update on key sustainability activities undertaken since the Board update on 22 June 2023.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 The College Sustainability Strategy agreed in 2020 and sets out a clear vision and objectives for the Colleges sustainability journey.

2.2 The strategy contains 8 workstreams and the activities undertaken over the last 6 months on each of these workstreams is contained in section 5 of the report.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION(S) REQUIRED

3.1 It is recommended that the Board note the activities undertaken over the last six months.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Sustainability Strategy sets out how the climate emergency has redefined sustainability, taking it from a component of corporate social responsibility, escalating it to become a leadership essential, to be placed at the heart of all of our plans. The College demonstrates the importance of moving towards a more sustainable society through the work as an instigator of behavioural change, ensure relevance and impact on a global scale by committing to the circular economy and developing it's staff and students to become global citizens.

4.2 Borders College is committed to working towards a more sustainable world, and over the last eleven years has implemented big projects and little actions, which together have resulted in a significant reduction in our carbon emissions. Borders College continues on this sustainability journey, with net-zero by 2045 as the ultimate destination. The strategic objectives are shown below and the Strategy can be found here:

- Influence positive, sustainable behaviours across the wider community

- Develop awareness of, and implement, good sustainable practice in all of our learning programmes
- Promote sustainable innovation and the adoption of technological breakthroughs with our employers and students
- Adopt best ethical, sustainable and social practice in our operations and supply chain.
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4.3 The workstreams agreed in the strategy are listed below:

- Carbon management
- Waste management
- Travel and transport
- Procurement
- Curriculum
- Community
- Biodiversity
- Behavioural

5.0 WORKSTREAMS UPDATES

5.1 Carbon Management

5.1.1 The College have submitted our annual Public Bodies Climate change declaration for 2022/23. The report has highlighted a slight increase in Co2 emissions, however this was in line with expectations but is still within our target of 50% reduction in Co2 emissions by 2025 based on 2015 baseline.

5.1.2 The project to remove the remaining gas boilers within the Galashiels Campus and the grant application to the Scottish Government remains on hold. Before a application for grant funding can be submitted two outstanding issue require to be resolved:

- work with Ofgem to make sure the RHI application which is provided to support the Sharc system is not affected and
- Quote received by Scottish Power to upgrade electricity supply to main Building circa £100k. Current funding model does not support electrical supply upgrades, currently evaluating further options.

Once both have been resolved an application will be submitted. It is likely to require an amendment to the funding model to enable this project to progress.

5.1.3 Further works on decarbonisation opportunities have been identified for the Hawick campus and progress has been made to identify funding. A application for Product Support funding through Mott Macdonald submitted has been submitted and is awaiting a response.

5.2 **Waste Management**

5.2.1 Waste management contract has been now operational been operational for 7 months. The data being collected will allow the College to base it's current waste. As future projects are identified to reduce waste this will allow us to show progress against a baseline.

5.3 **Travel & Transport**

5.3.1 The College Cycling officer post has commenced. Application for circa £10k worth of cycling facilities including cycle stands and secure cycle storage have been submitted and approved. The role will promote and improve cycling opportunities to all college campuses and assist in the development of a e-cycling.

5.3.2 Two new minibuses have been included in capital program which replace will existing fleet. Due to the high costs currently of EV/Hybrid alternatives the new minibuses will traditional diesel mini buses but will still result in a emission reduction of around 50% from the buses they will be replacing. Due to a high demand we have been unable to complete orders for the new buses due to lack of availability via Crown Commercial portal. Its unclear at this stage when this will be resolved. In the mean time we have been working with SBC on possible asset sharing and procurement moving forward with further discussions planned.

5.4 **Procurement**

5.4.1 The top 10 supplies of the college have been identified and work is underway with Advance Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC) to review the engagement routes and available sustainable reporting information with these supplies. The sustainability specialist at APUC will be meeting with the College to review options.

5.5 **Curriculum**

5.5.1 The College continues to deliver both the "Climate Change" and "Sustainability and Me" modules to students during their induction to college and has also developed a baseline of where Sustainability is being delivered across the curriculum using the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to reference from. To take this forward we have developed an MS Form to gain a better understanding of what that delivery actually looks like (screenshot attached in Appendix 1).

5.5.2 The Countryside Skills and level 6 Animal Care course all include an ecology and nature skills award in the block 2 timetable.

5.5.3 Construction - Schools project: building a high spec timber frame panel to show energy efficient building. Full time students & apprentices: training on insulation/heat loss and air tight construction. All courses focus on efficient use of resources, recycling and reuse of materials to minimise waste and all

plumbing students undertake awareness and/or training on low carbon heating systems and renewable technology

5.6 **Community**

5.6.1 The College continues to deliver a range of short courses as part of the usual programming. The college has now received funding via the Shared Prosperity Fund to deliver additional retrofit training to both RSLs and the wider business community.

5.6.2 The DEBI team have been working with RSLs to agree a programme of courses and these are currently being prepared for wider marketing with delivery to commence in early 2024. There are specific target in relation to the number of businesses and participants for these course and reporting is required on a quarterly basis.

The agreed course list at present is:

- Basic Introduction to Domestic Retrofit
- Introduction to Domestic Retrofit (NOCN)
- Intro to Sustainable Construction
- Air source & Ground Source Heat Pumps Installation & Servicing
- Introduction to Renewables (Electrical)
- Unvented Hot Water
- Electric Vehicle Charging
- Mechanical Ventilation & Heat Recovery
- Heat pumps - basic introduction
- Heat Pumps - Awareness Advanced Introduction

5.7 **Biodiversity**

5.7.1 Tree/Hedge planting grant application has been submitted for additional planting in Galashiels and Hawick. Funding decision is expected in January and planting would commence before spring.

5.7.2 In preparation for planting a wildflower meadow a area has been fenced off at the Whitelee field. The wildflowers will encourage insects and bees.

5.7.3 New compost bins have been constructed for animal and vegetable waste at the Newtown Campus. These were constructed by the landscaping students and will utilise the both animal and glasshouse waste.

5.7.4 A study on the impact of conservation grazing with Hebridean sheep is about to commence at the Hawkslee field. The field has been divided and will see Hebrideans and Scotch Mules grazing the different areas to compare the impact on grasses and wildlife usage.

5.8 **Behavioural**

5.8.1 Sustainability Champions - A communication channel has been set up both on the Student Hub and the Staff hub where individuals interested in Sustainability are able to share information, events and discuss topics relevant to Sustainability.

5.8.2 Sustainability Events continue to be advertised through the use of an annual calendar of events. Monthly emails are sent identifying the event linked to Sustainability Development Goals. E.g. November was National Tree Planting Day. Staff are encouraged to undertake actions relevant to the event and to include activities for their students. The Sustainability Calendar activities for 2023/24 can be found in Appendix 1.

5.8.3 Activities around the Campus encourage sustainable behaviours e.g. no plastic bottles, disposable food containers or paper cups available for purchase on campus. We are also now investigating further recycling opportunities e.g. tin can bins and are working in association closely with Borders College Student Association to implement new initiatives.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

6.1.1 There are no direct financial implications from the contents of the report. All activities

6.2 Learner Implications

Sustainability is incorporated into learner activities. This report has no direct learner implications but highlights some of the activities undertaken during the reporting period.

6.3 Staff Implications

There are no direct staff implications from the contents of this report.

6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment

There are no direct equality implications from the contents of this report.

6.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications

Although there are no direct sustainability implications from the contents of this report, the activities and actions contained in the report all ensure the College is able to meet the agreed outcomes in the sustainability strategy**.**

7.0 RISK COMMENTARY

7.1 The ability of the College to meet its objectives within the Sustainability is contained in the strategic risk register. The actions and activities contained in report are all key mitigation actions for this risk.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 Progress has continued across all areas of the Sustainability workstreams ensure Borders College remain at the forefront of the sustainability journey and on track to meet its sustainability objectives.

Kirsty Robb, Vice Principal Finance & Corporate Services

Previous Board or College Committee Approvals: Regional Board, 22 June 2023

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

APPENDIX 1

Forms
Borders College - Progress on the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (Copy) (Copy) - Saved
Questions
Responses 4
Preview
Style
Collect responses
Borders College - Progress on the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals
Text overflow
Dec 7, 2023
The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.
To be filled in by course tutors; the goals apply to what we are doing in the UK in our courses and in our college role. For Support areas, Departmental Heads should please complete.
1
Please look at this link
https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zgsjwnb/revision/1
This will outline a summary of the goals. Any comments below please. *
Enter your answer