

Strategic Implementation Plan

1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER For discussion

- 1.1 This paper updates the Board on actions identified in the Strategic Implementation Plan 2024-26.
- 1.3 The paper is for discussion.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 At its meeting of 27 June 2024, the Board agreed to create a Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) to monitor actions based on our *Statement of Strategic Intent*. The draft SIP was considered further at the Board meeting of 24 October and now also incorporates actions and priorities agreed at the Board Development session of 07 November 2024.
- 2.2 The attached, updated SIP provides further detail on the status of individual priorities as at June 2025.
- 2.3 Many of the actions have been further developed in meetings between Executive and the Board's Development group and should now be considered as part of a programme of work to take us to a sustainable Academic and Business Model.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 I recommend that: -
- 3.1.1 Board discuss progress shown in the SIP.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In 2020, the College published its Strategic Ambition 2020-2025, identifying the following three strategic objectives: -
- We will create high quality learning and training opportunities which are relevant, enabling and flexible;
 - We will proactively engage with our community and stakeholders to ensure our practice reflects their needs; and
 - We will take a leading role in enabling an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland.

- 4.2 To support the Strategic Ambition, the College also has a suite of supporting strategies, as follows: -
- Future Skills
 - Business Growth and Employer Engagement
 - Sustainability
 - Workforce Development
 - Asset Management
- 4.3 The supporting strategies are monitored via the Board's committee structure.
- 4.4 While the Strategic Ambition remains in place until July 2025 and we are currently in the process of developing a new Vision for 2025-30, the imperatives resulting from reducing public funding and the impact of Heriot-Watt University's decision to retract from shared facilities and services means that we must re-shape our business to ensure our model is sustainable.
- 4.5 We have used this to inform our thinking, along with the usual external influences of the Regional Economic Strategy, Community Planning Partnership, direction from the Scottish Funding Council and intelligence from business and school networks. This led to the creation of a "*Statement of Strategic Intent*", alongside a Strategic Implementation Plan 2024-26, which was approved by the Board at its meeting of 24 October 2024, with subsequent additions incorporated from the Board development day on 07 November.
- 4.6 The current SIP is attached at **Appendix A**, with updates as at June 2025, including financial targets showing those achieved to date, as reported via financial monitoring, and those planned over the next two years.

5.0 UPDATE ON PROGRESS

- 5.1 Good progress has been made in a number of areas. Work on curriculum planning and design is being shaped around our ambitions to work more closely with partners and broaden opportunities in the Borders.
- 5.2 Our Estates Projects are also progressing well although we are acutely aware of the funding challenge this brings and are continuing to liaise with SFC to make a case for investment in our College. Going forward, progress will be reported to Finance and Resources Committee, who may take a view that additional, more regular reports or meetings are necessary. We will further use our Committee structure to monitor impacts as they apply to curriculum, IT, business processes or people.
- 5.3 Our new single delivery model is in place; however, we will continue to review our structure to ensure we are as efficient and effective as possible.
- 5.4 We continue to review all non-staff spend.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

- 6.1.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this paper; financial implications of the actions are reflected in the Plan and are intended to deliver financial sustainability.

6.2 Learner Implications

- 6.2.1 There are no direct learner implications as a result of this paper; learner implications will be considered throughout the course of implementing specific actions.

6.3 Staff Implications

- 6.3.1 There are no direct staff implications as a result of this paper; structural and staff implications are included in the actions.

6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.4.1 There are no direct implications for equalities, diversity or inclusion as a result of this paper. Impact assessments will be made where necessary.

6.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications

- 6.5.1 There are no direct sustainability or environmental implications as a result of this paper.

7.0 RISK COMMENTARY

- 7.1 There are no additional or increased risks resulting from this paper. The framework outlined is intended to assist in mitigating and monitoring risk.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The College is making good progress toward the actions in the SIP.
- 8.2 To ensure sustainability, the further actions identified in the Development Plan will be required to reach a balanced financial position.

P D SMITH

Principal & CEO

13 June 2025

Previous Board or College Committee Approvals:

Regional Board – 27 June 2024, 24 October 2024, 12 December 2024, 27 March 2025

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APPENDIX A

BORDERS COLLEGE
Strategic
Implementation Plan
2024-26

Curriculum Planning and Design

The College will continue
to review our
programmes of learning,
to ensure they meet the
needs of the Borders

Priority / Action	Lead SLT Member	Executive Sponsor	Success Measures	Notes	Financial Target (saving / increased income)			RAG	Progress (December 2024)	Progress (March 2025)	Progress (June 2025)
					2024/25	2025/26	2026/27				
Engage with the Scottish Funding Council to build the case for increased student activity in our Region.	VP - Student Experience	Principal & CEO	Agreed 10% increase to activity (Credit) target, currently assumed phased over two years. Budgets will include increased income for activity, with 85% contribution	Success measures clearly not within sole control of College	-	-	(503,000)	Amber	First quarterly meeting with outcome manager has been completed. Discussions pertaining to reallocation of credits. On track to remain within the 1.5% threshold of provision outside the senior phase.	Further discussions with senior SFC team indicate that much of this may be addressed through changes to the funding model and re-alignment of Credits over next two years. Financial targets will be refined following funding announcement and agreement of Development Plan.	Funding for 2025-26 has been announced with no re-allocation of Credits; although there is acknowledgement from SFC of our request. We expect further meetings to take place over the coming months.
Engage with other institutions to broaden and enrich learning pathways, progression opportunities and partnership delivery	VP - Student Experience	Principal & CEO	Increase number of articulation agreements from 4 to 7 and places from 50 to 60 Publish clearly-defined learning pathways for all programmes	No direct impact on income/expenditure	-	-	-	Green	In discussion with Napier for Nursing degree provision starting Sept 2026. In discussion for paid placements with care providers. Working with Edinburgh University for entrepreneurial placements	Meeting held with Queen Margaret University to agree articulation for advanced standing to BA Primary Education and BA in Podiatry. Continued meetings with ENU to progress Nursing and Human Health Innovation lab as part of Borderlands bid.	Awaiting feedback on Borderlands bids. Further exploratory meeting to to take place with SRUC to expand rural pathways.
Engage with employers to supplement the data in Regional Skills Assessments and better-inform our decision-making	Director of Enterprise and Business Innovation	VP - Student Experience	Hold 4 employer/industry events each year. Clearly define planning process which includes employer data	No direct impact on income/expenditure	-	-	-	Green	Engaged with 11 new employers so far this AY against target of 30. Some meaningful discussions around employability and paid placements. SSSCYP event held online November 2024. Follow up with one employer as a result.	Engaged with 22 new employers against a target of 30. Employer forums now being held regularly across a number of subject areas. Team have attended 30 networking events (target was 23) and have hosted 3 employers events (target 7).	Engaged with 29 new employers against a target of 30. Employer forums are continuing to be held across all areas on a monthly basis. The Team have attended 35 networking events (target 23) and have hosted 6 employers events (target 7)
Work with partners across the South of Scotland and Edinburgh and the South East of Scotland to develop robust regional skills planning and delivery propositions, and implementing those propositions as appropriate.	VP - Student Experience	Principal & CEO	Agreed preferred skills planning model for South of Scotland. Agree College delivery for ESECRD - NZAH DEBI aligned to curriculum to ensure efficient delivery model for upskilling Review awarding bodies and implement changes as necessary Review curriculum delivery model to ensure maximum efficiency	Scottish Government/SFC may not accept our preferred model ESESCRD has yet to identify funding for NZAH Success here will enable potential for additional commercial delivery reflected elsewhere	-	-	-	Green	Work ongoing	Continued membership on skills planning Board and VP currently chairs Skills Group for Local Employment Partnership. Consortium bid with other ESES colleges to be made to Scot Gov / SFC re regional apprenticeship planning and delivery.	Prinipal met with colleagues at Scottish Government and SFC, along with other Principals to get feedback on principle. Positively received and further meetings to be arranged. This will have to run parallel to reform of skills funding bodies.

Develop additional commercial programmes to supplement our government-funded activity	Director of Enterprise and Business Innovation	VP - Student Experience	Noting that we also seek to increase volume with existing customers, we will also target the development of five new commercial courses each year. Linked to curriculum planning, we will ensure our course costings/pricing are robust	This is intended to reflect purely commercial delivery, rather than "funding" or grants from other public sector agencies identified in Financial Planning	(25,000)	-	(15,000)	Green	Bespoke course on intermediate/advanced excel delivered for one employer. £1241.	FCR Delivery of £1530 in Jan/Feb	No further update at this time. With the restructure now in place , we will look to build on our contacts and develop new programmes.
Engage with Scottish Borders Council to enhance pathways & choices for young people leaving school and enabling them to remain within the Region	Assistant Principal - Curriculum & Sustainability/ Director of Student Support Services	VP - Student Experience	Complete Review of Schools Academy provision for 2024-25. Enhance schools academy retention from 12.8% to 10% and maintain school academy numbers of 481 to. Student and stakeholder satisfaction above 85%	No direct impact on income/expenditure	-	-	-	Green	Schools Academy withdrawals are 2.9% as of Nov 24, enrolments +29% compared to 23-24. This is an indication of the success of running schools academy on Friday. Currently working with SDS and Education department on January offers. Working with SDS and SBC as part of regional Careers Collaborative	Pathways were discussed at the recent COP meeting and looking at how we can have a more joined up approach. Discussions to continue. Review of Schools Academy completed with all parties agreeing 2024-25 model has been successfully implemented and we will seek to repeat this in 2025-26.	Attended the last COP Senior Phase meeting for this session and it was agreed that this group needs to continue with the same partners getting around the table in next academic year although it may not be called Community of Practice. In September there will be a SLWG set up to look at Schools Academy delivery for 26/27 this will allow us to look at opportunities to enhance pathways and identify any gaps that need addressed. Operational evaluation completed May 2025 with actions being determined. Withdrawal at 10.4%, just above target. Applications: 652, Offers: 532
Enhance measures to review our offer to ensure it is relevant and future-focused	Assistant Principal - Curriculum & Sustainability/ Director of MIS & Quality	VP - Student Experience	Five year curriculum plan created, clearly linked to regional skills need. Increase FT FE success from 67.2% to 70% and FT HE success from 65.5% to 70%	No direct impact on income/expenditure	-	-	-	Green	Curriculum planning completed for academic session 2025/26. Early withdrawal has decreased so that is an early indication to improve student outcomes.	Withdrawals continue to remain lower in comparison to last year, increasing the potential for improved students outcomes. Delivery teams have prioritised tracking and monitoring, using the two progress and achievement weeks so far to offer extra support to students in need.	The Progression and Achievement Weeks (PAWS) have been extremely useful to allow dedicated time to offer that additional support that some students need.
Continue to enhance our Student Support Services to provide support to those who require additional help to succeed.	Director of Student Support Services	VP - Student Experience	Embed new Student Support Services as designed by students and staff. Improve outcome for care experienced students by 2%. Introduce a Student Support Satisfaction survey	No direct impact on income/expenditure	-	-	-	Green	Action plan developed as a result of service co-creation activity with actions either complete or progressing well - to be complete by June 2025. Submitted bid to Robertson's Trust to identify additional funding to support care-experienced students - outcome expected March 2025. More care-experienced students retained over the last 3 years. Among groups of interest, care-experienced students had the most significant decrease in total withdrawal rate in 23-24. Working with BCSA to gather feedback on satisfaction rates. Survey in development as part of new student support referrals	Student Support Survey in development. Student Support action plan progressing well and reviewed regularly at team meetings. Withdrawal for CE students is 13.6%, compared to 35.04% at the end of last academic year.	Withdrawal for CE students is 17.8%, compared to 35.04% in 2023-24. Robterson's Trust bid unsuccessful, further bid submitted to National Lottery - awaiting outcome. Student support satisfaction ratings collected via students association surveys.
Continue to support our Borders College Students Association in ensuring our students engage in the design of our current and future curriculum and estates	Director of Student Support Services	VP - Student Experience	Ensure over 70% of class representatives attend & provide student feedback at course team meetings. Agree student representation at relevant standing and project committees.	No direct impact on income/expenditure	-	-	-	Green	72% of full time classes have reps in place with more training taking place in the coming weeks. 44% of class reps have provided feedback this academic. % expected to rise, full figure anticipated Dec 2024.	72% of classes with reps in place have provided student feedback. Student representation at all relevant committees - complete.	87% of classes have Class Reps in place.

BORDERS COLLEGE
Strategic

Estates and Infrastructure Planning
new Estates and Digital
Strategies with a focus
on consolidation and

Priority / Action	Lead SLT Member	Executive Sponsor	Success Measures	Notes	Financial Target (saving / increased income)			RAG	Progress (December 2024)	Progress (March 2025)	Progress (June 2025)
					2024/25	2025/26	2026/27				
Create a new space plan for Scottish Borders Campus	Director of Estates & Facilities	VP - Finance & Corporate Services	Space Plan Created and matched to anticipated curriculum plan [30/1/2025]	Linked to five-year curriculum plan and dependent on actions below. Financial impacts are reflected in those actions	-	-	-	Amber	Nearing appointment of Architect who will begin work to develop Campus master plan followed by detailed planning, working group has commenced to contribute to and evaluate design options as they become available.	Mott Macdonald appointed, Master plan completed awaiting SLT approval. Plan consists of outline design and costs to relocate all priority 1 disciplines to Galashiels post October 2026. Priority 1s will progress to detailed design stage post SLT approval. Priority 2,3 & 4 designs are incorporated into master plan, no decision/costing to progress onto detailed design approved.	Detailed design for priority areas 1&2 has progressed very well and currently working on RIBA stage 4. To be completed with planning application expected by end of 2024/25 academic year.
Implement an IT network refresh to ensure our facilities remain fit-for-purpose	Director of IT & Digital	VP - Finance & Corporate Services	Network Upgrade Specified [31/8/2024] Procurement Process Completed [05/12/2024] Install completed with ongoing maintenance reductions agreed [30/8/2025]	Project will be staged. Not expect to deliver significant financial efficiencies on its own	-	TBC	TBC	Green	Procurement process now scheduled to complete Jan 2025 - no impact on implementation dates.	Winning supplier awarded. Planned completion date for network refresh end of July '25.	Network refresh scheduled for July 2025.
Plan for and move our current provision from Tweedbank to Galashiels	Director of Estates & Facilities	VP - Finance & Corporate Services	All functions currently at Tweedbank now based at Galashiels - April 2027.	Linked to space plan. Savings totalling £68k are already included in financial plans (part year)	-	-	(62,000)	Green	Once detailed design has been completed and approved work will commence to plan relocation of Tweedbank disciplines post May 2027.	Linked to Mott MacDonald work and master planning exercise above	Works are progressing with negotiations underway with current landlord. Operational plans are still aligned to a relocation prior to 2027/28 academic year.
Consider an options appraisal for Hawick Campus and implement any resultant moves	Director of Estates & Facilities	VP - Finance & Corporate Services	Finalise Options Appraisal - November 2024 Implement resultant changes - December 2026 Savings already included in financial plans	Consider accelerating plans if viable. Linked to space plan. Savings totalling £65k are already included in financial plans (part year)	-	-	(85,000)	Green	Commissioned and received Market Valuation and commercial options from Ryden for Hawick premises, further works on other potential options ongoing.	Preferred option is sale with a retention of educational delivery onsite.	Sale progressing with Heads of Terms being developed.
Agree appropriate marketing for lease and/or sale of surplus property and implement as timescales allow	Director of Estates & Facilities	VP - Finance & Corporate Services	Commission valuation - [30/09/24] Agree preferred disposal option Appoint agents and undertake marketing Excess property leased or sold [30/03/2027]	-	-	-	-	Green	Commissioned and received Market Valuation and commercial options from Ryden for Hawick premises, further works on other potential options ongoing.	Ongoing discussions with SOSE in relation to evaluating Campus options.	As Above
Plan for and implement exit programmes from our shared facilities and services contracts at Scottish Borders Campus	Director of Estates & Facilities	VP - Finance & Corporate Services	Services re-specified, and appropriately sized, de-couple from shared agreements [27/10/26]	Linked to space plan. Savings totalling £156k are already included in financial plans, off setting in part loss of income of £897k. Linked to Workforce Planning	(16,000)	-	(182,000)	Green	Transition group established and discussions progressing with HWU. Plans for both organisations being dovetailed to ensure seamless transition. Design of new structures being developed for consultation with staff.	Transition group operating well with BC staff involved in discussions and decisions. Dilapidations report completed with expectation of serving on HWU by end March. Further works on title deeds required. separation of BC/HWU FM contracts advancing well.	Transition group still operating well, awaiting HWU response on dilapidations report, working through title deeds amendments with HWU.

Develop additional commercial opportunities for our estates	Director of Estates & Facilities	VP - Finance & Corporate Services	Stretch Targets agreed for marketing/events Agree strategy for long-term tenants Clear links made to departmental commercial targets.	Long-term tenancies may require initial investment. £0.6k for 2024/25 included in financial plans	(5,600)	-	(5,000)	Green	' - events team held open day to promote facilities and currently working on some large events for 2025. - review undertaken of requirements and suitability of buildings to host weddings. Previous complaints to Environmental Health for noise pollution will be a restricting factor. - Opportunities being investigated to allow research wing of building to be separately. This would help facilitate offering space for long term rent.	- Events enquiries are increasing in number. - Room booking prices being reviewed for 2025/26 - Top floor of Research Wing has been set aside in draft Master plan for Campus	No Change
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BORDERS COLLEGE
Strategic

Financial Planning
new Estates and Digital
Strategies with a focus on
consolidation and

Priority / Action	Lead WLT Member	Executive Sponsor	Success Measures	Notes	Financial Target (saving / increased income)			RAG	Progress (December 2024)	Progress (March 2025)	Progress (June 2025)
					2024/25	2025/26	2026/27				
Review our business processes to deliver increased efficiency	Programme Manager	VP - Finance & Corporate Services	Key business processes will be defined and prioritised. Processes will be analysed and re-engineered to provide better service for the user and/or reductions in cost/resource usage.	Savings may only be realised by reducing staff and will be linked to Workforce Planning. Schedule of processes created and being prioritised	TBC	TBC	TBC	Green	Prioritization of key business processes is being agree and work has commenced on a number including Excursions and Room bookings.	- Work underway on a number of processes in linked to upgrades to finance system - Structure review consultation underway, which recommends establishment of Business & Project Support Team, which will allow standardisation and review of business support processes.	- Work continuing on a number of processes in linked to upgrades to finance system - Structure review completed and Business & Project Support Team established. Work to commence to identify prioritisation of the business support processes to be reviewed.
Seek to maximise opportunities from non-governmental funding	Director of Enterprise & Business Innovation/Assistant Principal	VP - Finance & Corporate Services	Minimum of two additional sources of funding identified each year. Additional funding yield net financial benefit to the College.	This is intended to capture additional funding or grant income. Commercial courses are reflected in curriculum planning. Note that the College is not always eligible for funding and this target must therefore be seen as aspirational.	-	(25,000)	(25,000)	Green	- funding bids submitted to Borderlands for capital funds - Bid submitted to Robertson Trust to assist provide student support services - Bid submitted to BEFT to fund IT infrastructure - 2 bids to Local Employment Partnership (LEP) submitted - 2 grants confirmed for staff and student foreign travel	- £6000 realised through DPS bid. - Funding of around £20k achieved through PEF and NOLB for delivery of accredited qualification. - BEFT bid for £165k for IT infrastructure was successful	-Currently pursuing grant opportunities for student long term loan laptops. - grants income being monitored and reported to Finance & Resources Committee, forecast £2.6m for 2024/25 which is £0.3m above initial budget
Minimise fixed costs of our estates and infrastructure	Director of Estates & Facilities	VP - Finance & Corporate Services	Projects identified for "spend to save" as part of lifecycle costs. Efficiencies delivered in variable costs. Estates rationalisation savings included in Estates and Infrastructure Planning	This reflects efficiencies in how we manage our estates functions, over and above savings from rationalisation or the ceasing of shared service delivery. Assumed £40k saving based on in house gym being established			(47,000)	Green	Being considered as the plans for the future estate are developed	- Paper discussed at SLT on future reduced opening hours of Galashiels campus. - Campus master plan to agreed at SLT and to be presented to Board on 17 April	- reduced opening hours agreed at SLT for Galashiels Campus - Staff from Hawick Campus have now transferred and equipment to move over the summer
Reduce non-essential expenditure across all our functions	Director of Finance & Procurement	VP - Finance & Corporate Services	System of Review implemented to identify and eliminate non-essential spend	This reflects ongoing practice of budget review	(61,000)	-	(5,600)	Green	All PO's reviewed by finance before sign off; spend challenged wherever possible e.g. SBCC membership	All PO's reviewed by finance before sign off; spend challenged wherever possible e.g. office equipment - and will be included in future budgets	Ongoing review of all PO's with continued challenge to spending

BORDERS COLLEGE
Strategic

Workforce Planning

Actions will reflect outcomes from other workstreams and will

Priority / Action	Lead WLT Member	Executive Sponsor	Success Measures	Notes	Financial Target (saving / increased income)			RAG	Progress (December 2024)	Progress (March 2025)	Progress (June 2025)
					2024/25	2025/26	2026/27				
Re-specify and re-size current facilities and IT services in line with ceasing of shared service model	Director of People Services	Principal & CEO	New service models reflect business need. Note that cost reductions already included in financial plans	Closely linked to changes in Estates and Infrastructure. Savings already included in Budget/FFR to and offset against loss of income	(42,000)	(1,000)	(95,000)	Green	Initial planning meetings to develop future structures have taken place with Directors of the effected areas. An initial meeting to discuss TUPE has taken place with HWU HR represetnative.	Further meeting with HWU. Awaiting confirmation of intent with regard to IT service and whether TUPE may apply. Staff members moved from High Mill to vacancies within main campus to reduce TUPE within Facilities - back filled with fixed term contracts.	Further meetings planned to conclude initial conversations on impact ahead of October 2026
Keep under review staff structures in line with student activity level changes	Director of People Services	Principal & CEO	Workforce Strategy and actions support our curriculum delivery model	This will not, in itself, create financial savings; however, savings have been achieved through VS.	(36,800)	(2,400)	-	Green	A WLT workshop has taken place to help to inform structures to support the delivery model. The outputs of this will be used to inform the future "two circle" model of delivery and support.	Consultation underway - closing 28 March - to create single delivery model. Proposal is intended to create a more responsive, efficient service. Currently estimated to reduce staff numbers by 3.73 FTE and reduce annual expenditure by £160k	Consultation closed and proposals implemented. New structure in transition and will be fully in place by 1st August, 2025. Continuing to keep all structures uder review, including recent changes to Finance team.
Keep under review structures and roles to reflect any changes to business processes	Director of People Services	Principal & CEO	Any structural or role change is managed in accordance with fair work principles.	Savings already identified in Financial Planning - Process Review action Further consider opportunities for outsourcing, amalgamation of roles, etc	-	-	-	Green	Now utilising APUC shared Procurement service (instead of replacing Procurement Officer directly). All vacancies are only being replaced on a fixed term basis and not as permanent replacements.	VS applications being considered to enable additional savings and to meet future structural changes.	VS Scheme remains open and opportunities will be considered as they arise. VS approved for Director of Finance role (efficiencies in processes which have been achieved)
Keep under review management structures to ensure we are best placed to support internal business and external commitments	Director of People Services	Principal & CEO	Workforce Strategy and actions support our commitment to our region and sector	This will not, in itself, create financial savings; however, savings have been achieved through VS.	(84,000)	(189,000)	(47,000)	Green	A WLT workshop has taken place to help to inform strutures to support the delivery model. The outputs of this will be used to inform the future "two circle" model of delivery and support.	Consultation underway - closing 28 March - to create single delivery model. Proposal is intended to create a more responsive, efficient service. Currently estimated to reduce staff numbers by 3.73 FTE and reduce annual expenditure by £160k	Consultation closed and proposals implemented. New structure in transition and will be fully in place by 1st August, 2025