

BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD

Actions from the meeting of the Regional Board meeting
held in the Board Room at 17:30 on Thursday 12 December 2024.

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Action Status
92/24	Annual Accounts and Financial Statements to be signed and submitted to SFC before 31 December 2024.	VP Finance & Corporate Services, Principal & Chair	Completed
93/24	Audit letter of representation to be signed.	Principal	Completed
95/24	Borders College Annual Student Partnership Agreement 24-25 to be signed.	Principal & Student President	Completed
100/24	H&S Annual Report – Future reports will be contextualised for Regional Board following discussion at Health & Safety Committee. Severity level of accident statistics would be a positive addition to future reports.	H&S Manager	Noted - For inclusion in future reports.

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Meeting of the Regional Board held in the Board Room at 17:30 on
Thursday 12 December 2024.

ITEM	MINUTE
Present:	Ray McCowan (Chair) Chris Alder Heather Boyce Paul Cathrow Mark Catto Gordon Donald Jessica Elder Carol Gillie Lindsey Hastie Vernice Key Philip Macdonald Ugo Mbaezue Dave Roberts (Vice-Chair) Pete Smith (Principal) Nick Sparks
In Attendance:	Ingrid Earp (Governance Specialist/Board Secretary) Robert Hewitt (Director of Estates & Facilities) Professor John McKendrick (Scotland's Commissioner for Fair Access) Kirsty Robb (Vice Principal of Finance & Corporate Services) Anne-Marie Sturrock (Vice Principal of Student Experience) Lorraine Sulo (Minutes)
87/24	Chair's Opening Remarks The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended a warm welcome to Professor John McKendrick.
88/24	Apologies for Absence Apologies have been received from Cherene Thomson, Garry Dickson, Anne-Marie Sturrock and Katrina Fitzgerald.

	Presentation – Fair Access Members received a presentation from Scotland’s Commissioner for Fair Access, Professor John McKendrick. The presentation provided an overview of the Commissioner’s role and responsibilities, along with data and insights in to the positive work which is underway to improve access to higher education for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Commissioner has recommended to the Scottish Government that the remit of the Commissioner be extended to the whole of tertiary education. Following an interesting discussion, the Chair thanked Professor McKendrick for his time, who then left the meeting at this point.
100/24	Health and Safety Annual Report 23-24 (Paper J) The Director of Estates and Facilities, on behalf of the Health & Safety Manager, provided an overview of the paper which provided details of health and safety activities during the last academic year, together with planned activity for the forthcoming year. Key points highlighted included: • No RIDDOR reportable accidents since December 2022; • Overall reduction in accidents during the reporting period. Further work is underway with Carpentry/Joinery department following an increase in accidents; • All statutory inspections are up to date; • College is a member of the Lothian & Scottish Borders CONTEST Group and continues to monitor progress with Martyn’s Law; • Health & Safety expenditure is within budget. There will be a focus on personal protective equipment (PPE) and better value for money. Points raised from discussions: • The report contained too much detail regarding sensitive mental health information. It was agreed that future reports will be contextualised for the Regional Board following discussion by Health & Safety Committee. It was noted that the College currently has five Mental Health First Aiders; • Chair of Audit and Risk sought assurance that all necessary health and safety training is being completed with further information on targets requested; • There are regular awareness campaigns to ensure near misses are reported by students and staff. The recording of near misses provides very important information; • Accidents which happen within a controlled environment also prepare individuals for the workplace. The College provides industry health and safety knowledge through lecturers and student work placements; • Severity level of accident statistics would be a positive addition to future reports. ACTION: H&S Manager Members thanked that the Director of Estates and Facilities who left the meeting at this point. J Elder also left the meeting.

89/24	Minutes of previous meeting held on 24 October 2024 (Paper A) The minutes from the previous meeting on 24 October 2024 were approved as an accurate record.
90/24	Matters Arising All actions from the previous meeting had been completed or status updates provided. Item 79/24, Chair's Committee meeting, will be added to the new meeting schedule in March 2025.
91/24	Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest/Register of Interests Update No items were raised.
92/24	Annual Report and Financial Statements 23-24 (Paper B) The VP Finance & Corporate Services advised that the Annual Report and Financial Statements have been completed within the required directions and have been subject to an external audit by Azets, who have provided an unqualified opinion with no management recommendations. It was noted that the External Auditor's report was presented to the Audit & Risk Committee on 3 December 2024. Following a question from a Member regarding the implications of the job evaluation for support staff, the VP Finance & Corporate Resources advised that a change in accounting treatment of the project removes the certainty of receiving government funding to cover the cost of the project which has increased the Colleges deficit position by £1.166m. Funds have been returned from SFC to the Scottish Government, who have verbally indicated their commitment to supporting the financial outcomes of the project. The Board were advised that the College treating this job evaluation item as a projected increase to its deficit, with the knowledge and agreement of our auditors, is consistent with the rest of the sector and is following the guidelines issued, on the matter, from Audit Scotland and SFC. The Chair thanked the VP Finance & Corporate Services and Finance Team for their work throughout the audit process. Members approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements of 2023-24 for signing and submission to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The Chair and Principal would receive the documentation for electronic signature which would require to be submitted to the SFC before 31 December 2024. ACTION: VP F&CS, Chair & Principal
93/24	Audit Letter of Representation (Paper C) The VP Finance & Corporate Services outlined the paper. The Letter of Representation is a requirement of the Annual Report and accounts process which must be issued to the external auditors. Members approved the letter which would be signed by the Principal. ACTION: Principal

94/24	Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 23-24 (Paper D) The VP Finance & Corporate Services outlined the paper which provided the 23-24 Annual Report of the Audit & Risk Committee. The report will be submitted to SFC as part of the requirements of the Annual Accounts submission. Members approved the Annual Report.
95/24	Borders College Annual Student Partnership Agreement 24-25 (Paper E) The Student President outlined the 24-25 Student Partnership Agreement which details how BCSA and the College will work as partners over the forthcoming academic year. This is a continuation of the previous partnership agreement in order to provide consistency with a transition period in March 2025 for the new Student President. The Chair complimented the report which highlighted the positive work of BCSA, which was reciprocated by the Principal. Members approved the new agreement which would be signed by the Principal and the Student President. ACTION: Principal & BCSA President
96/24	Board Development & Planning Day Progress (Paper F) The Chair apologised for not being able to attend the recent Development Day and thanked the Vice-Chair for stepping in at short notice. The paper provided an overview and outline of the plans to respond to the current and ongoing financial challenges. A Board Sub-group will be working with the Executive Team who will meet once a month beginning in January 2025 with a plan presented at the March 2025 Board meeting for formal approval. A Member highlighted the need for a governance process to be in place. It was noted that the sub-group will be the pre-approval body with a plan including costs for each element. The Finance & Resources Committee Chair confirmed that progress was being monitored under the remit of the F&R Committee. Members raised the importance of the plan being treated as a formal project with a Project Manager in place. V Key confirmed satisfaction of the wording used for the level three actions. The Principal provided feedback from a recent meeting with SFC when the financial issues facing the College were discussed. He was relatively comfortable with the outcome of the meeting and felt that recognition had been received that the region requires more student activity. The Principal had also attended a briefing by Colleges Scotland to all college principals following the draft budget announcement. With only around £7.8m of new funding to be divided across the sector and no funding for the increase in teachers' pension scheme or NI contributions, funding challenges remained. Members noted the contents of the paper.
97/24	Strategic Implementation Plan – Update on Priority Actions (Paper G) The Principal provided an overview of the paper which provided updates as at December 2024 on the priority actions of the Strategic Implementation Plan

	(SIP). It was noted that this was a dynamic document which focused on learners as well as the financial aspects. Members noted the contents of the paper.
98/24	Strategic Risk Register Update (Paper H) The paper presented the risks assigned to the Regional Board with details of the progress on actions to be implemented during 2024/25. The VP Finance & Corporate Services advised that the Finance & Resources Committee had fully discussed the register with a focus on the financial risk 1.2 with additional actions outlined under item 5.7 of the paper. The Chair of F&R Committee was pleased to see an expansion of the actions in relation to risk 1.2. All five risks assigned to the Board are within or under the agreed risk appetite level with more detailed information being monitored through the Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP). A Member referred to the report from the F&R Committee and discussions on the Asset Management Strategy which referred to potential errors through manual input of data. The VP Finance & Resources clarified that this was in regards to the College's MIS system with assurance provided on the training of staff. An in-depth statutory Further Education Statistics (FES) audit is also completed on an annual basis. Members noted the contents of the paper.
99/24	Sustainability Strategy Update (Paper I) The paper provided an update on key sustainability activities over the last six months. The VP Finance & Corporate Services advised that the current strategy will end in 2025, therefore work on a new strategy has started which will include more measurable areas. Other key points highlighted included: • The annual Public Bodies Climate change declaration for 23/24 has been submitted with a slight increase in Co2 emissions due to a lower than anticipated heat output from the renewable Sharc system; • The College remains on course to meet the target reduction of 50% in Co2 emissions by 2025; • The project to remove the remaining gas boilers has been unable to proceed due to a lack of funding; • The waste management contract which has been operating for one year has resulted in zero waste to landfill; • A new fleet of minibuses are due for delivery in June 2025; and • Students are participating in a number of community projects which are providing excellent student experience. Members noted the contents of the paper.

101/24	Audit and Risk Committee Report (Paper J) The paper provided the key items of approval and discussion from the recent Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 3 December 2024. The Audit & Risk Committee Chair highlighted the very positive outcomes of the internal audit assignments which had received no recommendations as well as the external auditor's report all of which is an excellent achievement. Members noted the contents of the paper.
102/24	Finance and Resources Committee Report (Paper L) The F&R Committee Chair thanked the Board Secretary for the preparation of the report. The Committee had discussed the Business (Finance) Review with the forecast deficit increased by £170k to £500k. This was largely due to the fall in fee income and the increase in employer national insurance contributions. Following the relevant procurement process, the Committee approved the appointment of architectural services for the redesign of the Galashiels campus to ensure it is fit for purpose going forward. The contract of around £250k will be funded from the Life Cycle Maintenance Fund (LCMF). Following a question from a Member regarding the reporting of the LCMF, the VP Finance & Resources advised that the fund, which is shared with Heriot-Watt University (HWU), is reported on at the Campus Management Committee and is audited through the College's annual accounts. When the fund comes to an end in 2026, the College will be returned £800k which will help fund a programme of capital projects. It was noted that the relocation of the Tweedbank campus to Galashiels could cost between £2-3 million. The source of funds for this is not yet known although Heriot-Watt will pay dilapidations when they vacate their current space. The exact amount this will be has not yet been agreed. Members noted the contents of the paper.
103/24	Principal's Report The paper provided an update from the Principal on activities since October 2024. The Principal highlighted that the recent plans for Center Parcs near Hawick will provide a significant opportunity for the College and that meetings are already being held with them. Visitor economy discussions are being held with the South of Scotland Destination Alliance and Dumfries & Galloway College with a meeting next week scheduled with South of Scotland Enterprise. An understanding from Center Parcs on their training needs will also be sought. Members noted the contents of the paper.

104/24	BCSA Report (Paper N) The Student President outlined the paper which provided a progress update on the Operational Plan for 2024/25. The BCSA team meets regularly to review and update the plan which is a live document. An increase in survey work has been completed with 29 class visits targeting those classes who did not traditionally participate and a number of activities have been held, including bake sales, Dungeons and Dragons being live streamed along with a number of Christmas Wellbeing activities. The Student President conveyed his thanks to the facilitation of the class visits by the Heads of Sectors and lecturers. Members noted the contents of the paper.
105/24	Board and Chair's Development Plan Members noted the contents of the paper.
106/24	Voluntary Severance Scheme – Update on Impact Noted as paper for information.
107/24	Board Secretary's Update Noted as paper for information.
108/24	Standing Items <u>Health & Safety</u> No items were raised. <u>Equality & Diversity</u> No items were raised. <u>Environmental & Sustainability</u> No items were raised.
109/24	Board Papers for Publication No draft or confidential papers would be published.

110/24	Any Other Business a) Board Members The Chair expressed his gratitude and thanks to Carol Gillie for her contributions to the College during her time as Board Member. This was Carol's final Board Meeting before her term comes to an end in January 2025. The Chair also highlighted the excellent contributions of Bernie Quinn who had recently tendered his resignation. The Chair wished everyone a very enjoyable Christmas and New Year holiday.
111/24	Date of Next Meeting The next Regional Board meeting will take place on Thursday 27 March 2025 at 17:30 in the Board Room, Scottish Borders Campus, Galashiels.

Signed:..... Signed:.....
Chair Board Secretary