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## BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD



Actions from the meeting of the Regional Board meeting  
held in the Board Room at 17:30 on Wednesday 22 October 2025

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Action Status
47/25	Learning for Leading – CQSE Committee will oversee and monitor.	Board Secretary	Ongoing
61/25	Annual Finance & Resources Committee Report - Key financial headlines for inclusion.	Board Secretary / F&R Chair	
62/25	Sustainability Strategy – Typos to be corrected.	VP Finance & Corporate Services	Completed
63/25	Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure – Flowchart for inclusion.	VP Student Experience / Principal	Completed
64/25	Schools Academy withdrawals to be measured from October in next SIP.	Principal/VP Student Experience	Ongoing
65/25	Strategic Risk Register:  Cyber-attack & Failure of IT systems to be separate entry.  Link to cyber security training will be forwarded to all Members.  Develop an assurance framework	Director of IT  Board Secretary  Board Secretary	Completed  Completed  For March Board

## BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD

Meeting of the Regional Board held in the Board Room at 17:30 on  
Wednesday 22 October 2025

ITEM	MINUTE
Present:	<p>Ray McCowan (Chair) Heather Boyce Paul Cathrow (Chair of Curriculum, Quality &amp; Student Experience Committee) Mark Catto (Teaching Staff Member) Garry Dickson (Teaching Union Member) Gordon Donald Vernice Key (Senior Independent Member) Ugo Mbaezue (Chair of Finance &amp; Resources Committee) Douglas Ormston Dave Roberts (Vice-Chair &amp; Chair of Audit &amp; Risk Committee) Pete Smith (Principal) Nick Sparks</p>
In Attendance:	<p>Mark Cockburn (Observer) Ingrid Earp (Governance Specialist/Board Secretary) Kirsty Robb (Vice Principal - Finance &amp; Corporate Services) Anne-Marie Sturrock (Vice Principal - Student Experience) Lorraine Sulo (Minutes)</p>
<b>55/25</b>	<p><b>Chair's Opening Remarks</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for the positive review meetings which were held over the summer. The sessions were very helpful and interesting, with a special thank you extended to those who have offered more of their time out with the regular Board and committee meetings.</p> <p>Members were advised of recent discussions regarding an alternative room for Board meetings in order to provide a better layout given the current meeting room limitation, such as blind spots. The Chair proposed that if everyone is planning to attend the meeting in person then another room will be used, however, hybrid meetings would require to remain within the Board Room due to technical requirements. The proposal was agreed by Members.</p> <p>It was noted that the VP Finance &amp; Corporate Services would be joining the meeting later, therefore, the Sustainability Strategy would be discussed later on the agenda.</p>
<b>56/25</b>	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were noted from Phil Macdonald, Sonia Phythian, Lindsey Hastie and Cherene Thomson.</p>

57/25	<p><b>Minutes of previous meeting held on 26 June 2025 (Paper A)</b></p> <p>The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.</p>
<p>58/25</p> <p>29/25</p> <p>35/25</p> <p>37/25</p> <p>47/25</p>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>The following updates were provided on the previous actions:</p> <p><b>Equality and Mainstreaming Report</b></p> <p>H Boyce advised that a general discussion with H Broatch has been held, with signposting to relevant data sources provided. The College’s diversity calendar of events was shared and contact will be maintained as this progresses. A follow-up meeting has been scheduled for November 2025.</p> <p><b>Honorary Fellowships</b></p> <p>It was confirmed that due diligence had been completed with no issues raised.</p> <p><b>Vision 2030</b></p> <p>Printed copies of the Vision 2030 were available for Members this evening.</p> <p><b>Learning for Leading</b></p> <p>It was suggested that the provision of some key areas which Members could cover during their visits would support consistency and highlight emerging themes. The discussion also covered how and where to capture feedback from the visits and it was agreed that the most appropriate aligned committee would be Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience, ensuring actions from Learning for Leading visits are progressed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: Board Sec</b></p>
59/25	<p><b>Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest/Register of Interests Update</b></p> <p>No items were raised.</p>
60/25	<p><b>Annual Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience Committee Report (Paper B)</b></p> <p>The Chair of the CQSE Committee outlined the annual report for 2024-25, highlighting the good attendance levels by Members. There had been a slight adjustment to the ToR during the year due to the end of the Outcome Agreement which has been replaced by the Self-evaluation Action Plan.</p> <p>The Board approved the report.</p>

<p><b>61/25</b></p>	<p><b>Annual Finance &amp; Resources Committee Report (Paper C)</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Finance &amp; Resources Committee outlined the report for 2024-25 and thanked Members and College staff for their continued support. All committee papers are available via the College website should anyone wish to view.</p> <p>Following a discussion, it was agreed that key financial headlines for the year would strengthen the annual report.</p> <p>The Board approved the report subject to the above addition.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: Board Sec</b></p>
<p><b>63/25</b></p>	<p><b>Whistleblowing Policy &amp; Procedure (Paper E)</b></p> <p>The Principal presented the paper on behalf of the Director of People Services. He advised that during an internal audit the need for a review of the Whistleblowing Policy &amp; Procedure had been identified as it had not been updated for a significant period. The paper provided the updated policy and procedure which had been reviewed and approved by the Joint Consultative Committee on Policies (JCCP) and which is based on Internal Audit best practice.</p> <p>Discussion points noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The document could be a challenging read for students. Should there be a summary or easy read version? It was agreed that there should only be one document, however, a flowchart of the process would be added to the document to provide clarity for the reader.</li> <li>• The importance of differentiating between complaints and whistleblowing was highlighted.</li> <li>• There should be an appropriate process worked through with the Principal/Exec Team regarding confidentiality should the Principal require to be excluded.</li> <li>• Escalation to Ombudsman is available for individuals unsatisfied with decision.</li> </ul> <p>The Board approved the paper, subject to the points raised.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: Principal/VP Student Experience</b></p>
<p><b>64/25</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic Implementation Plan 2024-26 Update (Paper F)</b></p> <p>The Principal outlined the paper which provided updates on the status of the individual priorities as of September 2025. The targets within the new College strategies which are in the process of approval will closely link to the actions within the Strategic Implementation Plan.</p> <p>A Member asked whether there is confidence that additional credits will be allocated to the College. It was noted that this remained as an Amber RAG status with SFC aiming to provide indications of budget availability to colleges before Christmas. The Chair advised that it was likely that an extraordinary Board meeting would need to be arranged in January given that there would not be an announcement in time for the December Board to discuss and make any decisions.</p> <p>A Member highlighted the withdrawal rates of 12.8% for the Schools Academy which seemed inconsistent with the positive feedback of the new delivery format. The VP Student Experience explained that withdrawals were primarily due to</p>

	<p>students registering in June, then receiving their exam results in summer and subsequently deciding to return to school. It was noted that student outcomes have improved by 7.9%. The VP Student Experience noted the significant efforts made and the meetings which are held with head teachers with offers issued by the end of March; however, choices did not open until April for one school.</p> <p>Following a discussion, it was agreed that a more accurate comparison for Schools Academy withdrawals would be achieved by measuring from October onwards.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: Principal/VP Student Experience</b></p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the paper.</p>
65/25	<p><b>Strategic Risk Update (Paper G)</b></p> <p>The Chair advised that the intention this evening was to thoroughly review the current Risk Register in order to ensure everyone was comfortable with the current position. The forthcoming Development &amp; Planning session on 6 November will also provide further time for more in-depth consideration.</p> <p>The Vice Chair added that the Risk Register had been discussed during previous strategy days, although these discussions had not been formally recorded. He highlighted that individual risks are reviewed by each committee; however, there appears to be a gap in terms of how interactions and impact of any changes are addressed between committees. The importance of verifying that no critical matters are being overlooked was highlighted and that full Board will regularly review the Strategic Risk Register and minute decisions accordingly.</p> <p>The Principal added that the Board's risk appetite will be revisited at the forthcoming Board event, including a review of whether the risks have been appropriately scored and how they interlink. It was acknowledged that the annual review cycle of the full Risk Register could be improved.</p> <p>The Chair asked Members whether the current register captures the appropriate risks. Points highlighted included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broader context of risk appetite and financial deficit which may be viewed differently.</li> <li>• Reputational Risk – individuals who could bring the College into disrepute.</li> <li>• SIP and Estates Strategy Risk – Register is ongoing business without capital projects; however, this is an area which is becoming critical. Funding is reliant on Scottish Government.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair referred to the recent incidents at Dundee University and the subsequent investigations and reports as a reminder of the importance of good governance. The Board Secretary emphasised the importance of an assurance framework to provide further clarity on how assurance is provided and understood.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Action: Board Sec</b></p> <p>The Vice Chair noted the positive ongoing discussions around student withdrawals, which were a good example of the nature of discussions being held. The Principal added that the work of the subcommittees, along with internal audit processes are also key. A Member expressed confidence in the College's governance arrangements.</p> <p>The Chair emphasised the importance of exhausting all possibilities to ensure the College is operating with absolute assurance. A Member highlighted the role</p>

	<p>of professional standards, and requirements for all staff to remain current with their certifications. Caution was raised regarding the over-reliance on auditors.</p> <p>A Member expressed no current concerns, with a clear paper trail to the Board. It was noted that where risks exceed the College's appetite, these should be given focused attention. The Chair reiterated that all Members are empowered to raise any concerns they may have.</p> <p>The following points were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk 1.2 – Delivery of College outcomes unaffordable – mitigations are in place, but are we doing as much as Board expects?</li> <li>• Risk 3.4 – Recommendation that Cyber-attack &amp; Failure of IT systems is separated out. These areas will be discussed further with the Director of IT at the next Board event.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: Director IT</b></p> <p>A link to the recent cyber security training will be forwarded to all Members. <b>ACTION: Board Sec</b></p>
66/25	<p><b>Audit &amp; Risk Committee Report (Paper H)</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Audit &amp; Risk Committee outlined the main points of business from the meeting held on 9 October 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of internal audit reports were reviewed and it was noted that, in comparison with other colleges, the College's performance consistently ranks higher, which reflects the high quality of work being carried out.</li> <li>• The Donation, Gifts and Hospitality procedure was reviewed, with the Committee approving the rise in reportable items to £30.</li> <li>• It was acknowledged that committee dates are often set without prior knowledge of when SFC requests will be received. Therefore, the Committee had agreed that if future requests do not require urgent attention, they will be addressed at scheduled meetings. However, should any matter require immediate approval, the committee will be contacted via email to ensure timely decision-making.</li> <li>• The FOI Annual Report had been reviewed with requests being managed efficiently.</li> </ul> <p>The Board noted the contents of the paper.</p>
67/25	<p><b>Finance &amp; Resources Committee Report (Paper I)</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Finance &amp; Resources Committee outlined the main points of business from the meeting held on 2 October 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The College's new Digital and Data Strategy and People Strategy were both approved.</li> <li>• Cyber Essentials Plus had been achieved.</li> <li>• Outturn for the end of year 24/25 was slightly lower at £363k than the £365k predicted at the start of the academic year. A note of appreciation was extended to all budget holders.</li> <li>• People Services Report – A compressed working week is being introduced for support staff.</li> </ul>

	<p>A Member sought clarity on item 4.5 regarding the risk score for commercial income targets which has increased from 9 to 16. The Principal advised that there is increased pressure on funding streams with pots becoming smaller and more organisations competing for limited resources. The new delivery model is intended to make the College more responsive to areas of true commercial potential. Work is ongoing to strengthen engagement with employers.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged the extraordinary efforts undertaken to achieve the final financial position for 2024/25. It was also very positive to note the increase in Great Places to Work (GPTW) awards and the creation of a new staff engagement group which the Chair hoped to attend.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the paper.</p>
68/25	<p><b>Curriculum, Quality &amp; Student Experience (CQSE) Report (Paper J)</b></p> <p>The Chair of CQSE outlined the main points of business from the meeting held on 25 September 2025 with a significant amount of time dedicated to reviewing the quality and performance report. The data presented was impressive, with detailed analysis and robust explanations provided. The report was overwhelmingly positive. The meeting also included an update on the Future Skills Strategy.</p> <p>A Member asked whether there was reliance on an external company for data provision. It was clarified that the College moved away from UnitE to the ProSuite as part of the digital transformation programme with most systems built internally and no reliance on external parties for core data.</p> <p>With a view to reducing the burden of reporting, the development of a dashboard for the Board had been suggested, however, it was noted that this would lack the context which is provided in the formal reports and be resource intensive.</p> <p>A Member raised a question regarding the tracking of student destinations, in particular those from SIMD10 postcodes. It was confirmed that a Destination Report is completed and submitted to the Scottish Funding Council. The process is a complex system due to the requirements of No One Left Behind.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the paper.</p> <p>The VP Finance &amp; Corporate Services joined the meeting.</p>

62/25	<p><b>Sustainability Strategy 2025-2030 (Paper D)</b></p> <p>The VP Finance &amp; Corporate Services introduced the paper with a short video from Rory Hill, Sustainability Project Manager. The Sustainability Strategy has been developed to reflect the College’s Statement of Ambition and in line with sector best practice and had been reviewed by the Regional Board’s Sustainability representative, S Phythian.</p> <p>It was noted that efforts had been made to ensure that the targets set were both challenging and achievable. A key target focuses on reducing carbon emissions from staff and student commuting, with a 50% reduction goal. Surveys will be used to monitor developments, with results reported back to the Board annually. It was acknowledged that setting precise targets is particularly difficult due to the transition period. The strategy will be checked for typos prior to finalising.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: VP F&amp;CS</b></p> <p>The Board approved the strategy subject to the correction of typos.</p>
69/25	<p><b>External Activity and Stakeholder Engagement (Paper K)</b></p> <p>The Chair introduced the paper which asked Members to discuss the progression of external activity and stakeholder engagement. This was an opportunity to identify any gaps of information that may be preventing knowledge or understanding.</p> <p>Points from discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which major employers are influencing the curriculum? Members felt that they were not particularly aware of who the main stakeholders are and who were the main employers.</li> <li>• The Principal said that the Region’s biggest employers are public sector with groups actively working strongly together, however it may well be that the community takes it for granted and doesn’t shout about it.</li> <li>• There is good engagement across REP etc.</li> <li>• The College is looking to increase engagement with the largest 30 employers in the Region through a number of engagement dinners.</li> <li>• How are partnerships with employers tracked and evaluated? The Principal said that consideration is being given to a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system however these are notoriously expensive so an affordable solution would need to be found.</li> <li>• Regarding external engagement – social media visibility could be raised.</li> <li>• Could there be a “Friends of the College” network or Alumni Association? Definitely something to consider in the future.</li> <li>• Learning for Leading – Engagement with employers could be a theme for all areas to report on. This will be fed into an action on the Board Secretary from the most recent CQSE meeting to pull together some core questions for each L4L visit.</li> <li>• Marketing monthly mailshot – this will be shared with Board Members.</li> <li>• Any College news on social media – it would be great if Board Members could share and repost across their networks.</li> </ul>

70/25	<p><b>Principal's Report (Paper L)</b></p> <p>The report provided a summary of College activities undertaken by the Principal since June 2025. External engagement continues, with interactions proving beneficial. There has been limited progress regarding national pay bargaining for professional services staff with Scottish Government still to confirm the additional funding needed. Work on the National Recognition and Procedures Agreement (NRPA) is taking longer than expected and is not yet at a stage for Board approval.</p> <p>The Principal has recently joined the Tri-Partite Group which has a remit to explore mitigations and a more sustainable operating model for the sector.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report.</p>
71/25	<p><b>BCSA Report (Paper M)</b></p> <p>In the absence of the Student President, the paper was taken as read.</p>
72/25	<p><b>Board Self-Evaluation and Development Plan (Paper N)</b></p> <p>The Chair outlined the paper which followed the format of the previous year. No additional points for inclusion were raised by Members and so the Chair will expand the plan around the points already noted.</p>

73/25	<p><b>Principal's Review and Development Plan (Paper O)</b></p> <p>The Executive Team and L Sulo left the meeting at this point.</p> <p>The Board Secretary took over the minuting of the meeting. The Chair talked through the review and associated development plan and the process which had been undertaken to reach this point as well as the timeline of the activity. The Board Secretary had collated and anonymised feedback from Members received over August which the Chair used as part of the Principal's review process which was carried out in September. A Chairs' meeting was held on 30 September to discuss the proposed development plan and objectives for the Principal before being brought to Board.</p> <p>The Board were asked to approve the aggregated action plan for the Principal for 2025/26. A Member said that they felt the additional discussion by Chairs had improved the process although an option for future reviews might be a 360 degree review including some staff and stakeholders.</p> <p>Regarding the action relating to employer engagement, a Member suggested identifying who is explicitly meant by this and another Member suggested that employers are asked what they would specifically like to see from the College and from their interaction with the Principal and other senior staff.</p> <p>A Member then said that the Principal had clearly agreed to this plan and so the assumption is that he thinks it is achievable but does he have the full resources to be able to deliver this? The Chair said that the Principal had full authority to leverage capacity and expertise from across the College to deliver on the objectives.</p> <p>Another Member asked about the training and CPD available for the Principal and if any had been discussed. The Chair said it hadn't been to date but he would do so at his next meeting with the Principal.</p> <p>The Board agreed that it is critical that the College is seen to be active in the centre of the community and that full engagement with stakeholders and employers is achieved. Notwithstanding the comments above the Board approved the action and development plan.</p>
74/25	<p><b>Chair's Review and Development Plan (Paper P)</b></p> <p>The Chair left the meeting for this item which the SIM talked to, having carried out the Chair's evaluation in a similar way to the Principals with board evaluation collated and feedback during the course of the review meeting.</p> <p>The Board agreed that the Chair has lots of valuable skills and performs the role of Chair in a collegiate and open way. A Member noted that it is welcome that students and members of staff are not asked to leave meetings for any items they do not have a direct conflict of interest in which they were led to believe is not always the case at other colleges.</p> <p>The needs of the Chair re training and CPD was also raised and the SIM agreed to discuss this with the Chair.</p> <p>The Board approved the Chair's review and development plan.</p>

75/25	<p><b>Board Member Responsibilities (Paper Q)</b></p> <p>Some Members thanked the Board Secretary for the reminder about their role and responsibilities and for the links to additional reading in the paper.</p>
76/25	<p><b>Board Secretary's Update (Paper R)</b></p> <p>The Board Secretary's Update was largely around available training and suitability for particular Committee Members.</p>
77/25	<p><b>Standing Items</b></p> <p><u>Health &amp; Safety</u></p> <p>No items were raised.</p> <p><u>Equality &amp; Diversity</u></p> <p>No items were raised.</p> <p><u>Environmental &amp; Sustainability</u></p> <p>No items were raised.</p>
78/25	<p><b>Board Papers for Publication</b></p> <p>No draft or confidential papers will be published.</p>
79/25	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>There were no items of any other business.</p>
80/25	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Thursday 11 December 2025 at 5.30pm at the Galashiels Campus.</p>