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Borders College

Finance & Resources Committee

Meeting at 16:00, Thursday 27 November 2025

On Teams

Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Action Status
55/25	Financial Strategy 2025-2030 – update to include wording in relation to growth and a commitment to setting figures in the future, once the direction of travel is more understood.	VP F&CS	**COMPLETE**
56/25	Estates Strategy – wording added to reflect that statutory obligations will be met under any scenario, and that resource prioritisation is being addressed.	VP F&CS	**COMPLETE**
61/25	Request marketing put together comms for a 'good news' piece on meeting Sustainability targets.	R Hewitt	**COMPLETE**

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<u>Minutes</u>

ITEM	MINUTE
Present	Ugo Mbaezue (Chair) Vernice Key (Board Member) Heather Boyce (Board Member) Phil Macdonald (Board Member) Pete Smith Ray McCowan
In Attendance	Ingrid Earp (Regional Board Secretary) Kirsty Robb (Vice-Principal Finance & Corporate Services) Debbie Kerr (Director for People Services) Robert Hewitt (Director for Estates & Facilities) Suzie Hartley (Minutes)
49/25	**<u>Chair's Welcome</u>** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that this was P Macdonald's first meeting since moving from the Audit & Risk Committee.
50/25	**<u>Declaration of Conflict of Interest</u>** No areas of conflict were raised.
51/25	**<u>Register of Members' Interest</u>** There were no updates to the register of interests.
52/25	**<u>Apologies for Absence</u>** Apologies were received from Conor Bradley and Garry Dickson.
53/25	**<u>Minutes of Previous Meeting held 2 October 2025 (Paper A)</u>** The previous minutes were approved as an accurate representation of discussions.
54/25	**<u>Matters Arising</u>** All outstanding actions were noted as being complete – an updated version of the Risk Register has been brought to today's meeting and members have been informed of training opportunities.

SECTION A – ITEMS FOR DECISION	
55/25	**<u>Financial Strategy 2025-2030 (K Robb, Paper B)</u>** Vice Principal for Finance and Corporate Services introduced the draft Financial Strategy with the purpose of seeking final input from the committee, prior to finalisation and launch. The strategy sets out the current financial position of the college sector and the wider environment, and outlines plans to diversify income, grow revenue, and reduce costs to achieve long-term sustainability by 2030. Financial stewardship will remain a priority and will be monitored closely through the business plan. Members agreed that the paper was clear and well-written. There was discussion about whether to include specific success measures or percentages. It was noted that while figures exist in annual reports, adding detailed targets to the strategy could be misleading. Instead, the strategy will focus on overall growth and commit to setting figures later, once trends are better understood, and operational plans will hold the detailed metrics. The Board chair suggested including some wording in relation to growth and a commitment to figures in the future once there is more of an understanding on the direction of travel. It was agreed to include this additional information along with an update on commercial income targets and progress. **ACTION: VP F&CS** The Committee approved the strategy for final proofing and publication, pending the addition of references to revenue diversification and growth.
56/25	**<u>Estates Strategy 2025-2030 (R Hewitt, Paper C)</u>** The Committee considered the draft Estates Strategy for 2025–2030. VP for Finance and Corporate services explained that the strategy has been developed through the College Senior Leadership Team and builds on extensive work undertaken in recent years, including master planning and estate changes. It reflects both known and unknown factors, such as funding uncertainties, and sets out the direction of travel for the College estate. Members commented positively on the format, noting that it was clear and easy to engage with. Questions were raised about functional suitability and the cessation of co-location with HWU, specifically whether the building would remain a College asset and how ongoing maintenance responsibilities would be managed. It was confirmed that the main Campus building remains under College ownership, but that the High Mill is solely owned by HWU and will no longer be included from an operational management perspective. Further discussion focused on financial uncertainty and whether the strategy sufficiently prioritises essential works. It was agreed that statutory obligations must be met regardless of funding outcomes, and that prioritisation work is ongoing. This will be presented to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) as part of preferred options, which are not yet reflected in the document but are set to follow in due course. It was agreed to add wording to reflect that statutory obligations will be met under any scenario, and that resource prioritisation is being addressed.

	ACTION: VP F&CS It was noted that significant work is underway at a granular level, including maintenance planning but that specific figures will not be included in the strategy. The Committee welcomed the clarity of the document and the inclusion of a full disability impact assessment and key challenges, such as funding availability and the implications of a "do nothing" approach. In response to another member's query, it was confirmed that the land around the Newtown campus is owned by the College, and that the only lease currently in place is for the site at Tweedbank. The Board Chair asked with regards to the stratification of "must-do" actions and 'Plan B', and whether these would be presented to SFC in priority order. It was confirmed that costs and staged options will be included, alongside factors such as lifecycle, estate reduction, and timelines. Four options are currently under consideration, including two different phases and two potential build options. The Asset Management Strategy was queried and whether any outstanding actions from the previous strategy had been carried forward. It was noted that most items have been addressed, with some digital elements picked up again and others discontinued due to changing circumstances. The Committee agreed that the only amendment required relates to the prioritisation process and the risks associated with funding availability. Pending this addition, the strategy was approved for finalisation.
57/25	**<u>Procurements (K Robb, Paper D)</u>** The Committee considered Paper D, which outlined three procurement items requiring approval. Two systems—ProSuite and Smart Assessor—are due for renewal. It was confirmed that the College has followed all required procedures and believes the proposed contracts represent best value. Both systems remain necessary at present, although this will be reviewed periodically; a flexible option has been chosen to allow for future adjustments. The third item relates to DataVita, which hosts all College systems. The current contract expires in January, and an extension is requested to allow time for a full review before committing to a new five-year agreement. Members asked whether the proposed extension would increase costs. It was confirmed that it would result in a slight saving, as requirements have been reviewed and efficiencies achieved, including reducing servers and moving some services to the cloud. The overall contract value, including the extension, was considered proportionate and continues to offer value for money. It was noted that capacity has grown significantly, and further work is planned to reduce overheads. The Committee approved all three procurement proposals.

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION	
58/25	**<u>Asset Management Strategy Update and Progress (K Robb, ToR 2.8, Paper E)</u>** The Asset Management Strategy was previously combined but is now split into separate strategies for Digital and Estates. The paper summarised progress over the past 12 months, with detailed information provided in section 5. A member asked whether the themes in the update align with those in the new strategies. It was confirmed that the Digital and Data strategies will be updated annually, and future reports will reflect the revised structure. Reporting frequency has shifted from six-monthly to annual for some strategies, as progress can be slower in certain areas. The Principal noted that an annual development and priorities plan is presented regularly to the Board, ensuring continuity throughout the year. The Board Chair queried whether Estates updates might need to be more frequent, and it was confirmed that this may occur, particularly as the Scottish Funding Council is visiting next week and the College may become a pilot site for certain initiatives. The Committee noted the progress outlined in the report.
59/25	**<u>Strategic Risk Register (K Robb, ToR 2.16, Paper F)</u>** A small number of changes to the register were noted. A recent cyber security workshop highlighted the risks, and a separate assessment has been completed, including provisional scoring and risk appetite. Final approval of the risk appetite will take place at the Regional Board meeting on 11 December. Other actions are progressing well. There has been no movement on funding-related risks, and scoring has not been adjusted, although feedback has been considered. While there have been no recent attacks, cyber risk remains a present danger. No additional changes were proposed, and further discussion will take place at the Board. The Committee noted the updates and progress on actions.
60/25	**<u>Business (Finance) Review and Update (K Robb, ToR 2.1 / 2.9, 2.12, 2.10, Paper G)</u>** The VP for finance and Corporate Services summarised the key areas from the report which included; - recent staffing changes within the Finance team - following the retirement of the Director for Finance & Procurement and a transition to the Finance Controller role. - Redesigned coding structures to align with new organisational priorities. - Current projections remain in line with the approved budget, and operational positions have been adjusted accordingly. - A mid-year return to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) will be submitted next year, with all preparatory work completed by that time. - Support staff pay award is close to agreement, although funding confirmation is awaited.

	- Non-core income targets remain a standing item on the Senior Leadership Team agenda; £1.3m has been achieved to date, but continued monitoring is required to ensure targets are met. - The College has successfully secured £53k from SFC for digital signage and RAAC repairs. - Cashflow remains a key risk, with a projected dip in July 2026 identified as a critical point. Members discussed the timing of grant drawdowns and options for managing payments to mitigate risk. The Board Chair raised the approach taken by Dundee College, which has publicly announced significant cuts, and asked whether similar measures might be required. The Principal confirmed that the College intends to take a different approach, focusing on positive communications and stakeholder engagement to advocate for sustainable funding. A press release is planned for next week, and further clarity is expected following the Scottish Budget announcement on 13 January. Members recognised improvements in the operational position and noted the update and requested ongoing monitoring and regular reporting on cashflow and funding risks.
SECTION C – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION	
61/25	**Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report (R Hewitt, Paper H)** The Director for Estates & Facilities summarised the key points from the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties (PBCCD) Report, which reflects the final year of the current strategy. The College has met its target, achieving over 54% of the reduction goal and the report details changes made and the Colleges carbon output calculations. The Board Chair highlighted the positive achievement and suggested sharing this externally as a good news story, given the wider media focus on sustainability. It was noted that the EAUC publish sector progress but tend to caution against league table comparisons due to differing timescales across each organisation. Members were in support of Marketing putting some comms together in conjunction with the publication of the SSN report. **ACTION: R Hewitt** The Colleges carbon intensity figures were queried, and it was explained that these tend to fluctuate regularly as the College generates more green electricity, reducing emissions over time. The Committee noted the progress made.
62/25	**People Services Update (D Kerr, Paper I)** The Director for People Services updated on the development of the new People Strategy. The aim is to move away from a traditional HR focus and adopt a more people-centred approach and seeks to align behaviours and practices with College values and the 2030 vision. An update was provided on the support staff pay award - Unison has voted in favour, and Unite's ballot closes tomorrow, with a positive outcome expected. GMB, the smallest union, has recommended

	rejection, but their ballot does not close until 8 December. If Unite confirms acceptance, payments will be made in the December pay run. The National Recognition and Procedures Agreement (NRPA) is ready for sign-off, with GMB reluctantly agreeing to new terms. The final Central Committee meeting will take place next week, which now includes representation from GMB, it is not anticipated that they will cause disruption however as they continue to have limited influence locally and are unlikely to gain traction. Unite may seek greater representation but have shown little interest to date. A job evaluation proposal is being developed using a two-pronged approach to ensure fair and equal pay for current employees. The Committee noted the update and the progress being made on the People Strategy and pay negotiations.
63/25	**<u>Cyber Security Update (C Bradley, ToR 2.19, Paper J)</u>** This paper was not presented due to C Bradley's absence and was for information only.
64/25	**<u>Papers for Publication (Standing Item)</u>** The Board Secretary will identify which papers are suitable for publication.
65/25	**<u>Any Other Business (Standing Item)</u>** No further matters were raised.
66/24	**Date of Next Meeting** The date of the next meeting is Thursday 12 March 2026 at 4pm on Teams.

Signed…..……………………………… **Signed…..……………………………………**

Chair **Board Secretary**