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FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

27 November 2025

Estates Strategy (2025-30)

1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER

For decision

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with the draft Estates Strategy (2025-30) for final input before the Strategy is finalised and launched.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Estates Strategy has been developed to reflect the Vision 2030 and in line with sector best practice.
- 2.2 The Strategy sets out the aims and vision for the estate services for 2025 to 2030, including measurable outcomes to allow demonstrable progress and success.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION(S) REQUIRED

- 3.1 I recommended that the Committee Name: -
- 3.1.1 Review and agree any amendments of the draft Strategy prior to launch.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Asset Management Strategy approved by the Board in December 2020 included the both the Estate and Digital assets. This strategy set out the aims and ambitions from 2020 to 2025.
- 4.2 The estate is a key element to the delivery of the college ambitions. The estate and its operation have a direct impact on the student experience, the financial sustainability and the environmental impact of the college.
- 4.3 The Vision 2030 approved by the Board on 26 June 2025 sets out a clear vision for the College, including the role of the estate in achieving this vision.

5.0 Estate strategy

- 5.1 The draft Strategy has been developed in conjunction with the aims included in the approved Vision 2030.
- 5.2 The draft Strategy has also been developed with cognisance of work undertaken during 2024 and 2025 by Oberlanders and Mott MacDonald. These included student and staff consultations during the development of the reports.
- 5.3 Staff and student users have been consulted and involved in the development of the strategy.
- 5.4 The Strategy is broken down into 3 main sections. These are:

Condition & Suitability Assessment	Describes the current estate and its condition and suitability of each element of the estate.
Current Performance	Describes the performance across several areas including sustainability
Future	Sets out the ambitions and measures for the estate over the 5-year period

- 5.5 The Strategy includes key KPI's which will be monitored and reported to the Finance and Resources Committee annually.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

The financial implications of the strategy will be incorporated into future revenue and capital budget plans as they are developed.

6.2 Learner Implications

High quality facilities have a significant impact on the student experience. This Strategy will ensure the student requirements are fully recognised in the planning and delivery of future estate.

6.3 Staff Implications

High quality facilities have a significant impact on the staff's ability to delivery and ensures a safe environment for staff.

6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment

The estate is designed to ensure it provides safe and equal access for all students, staff and visitors. The future development plans will incorporate a full Disability Access Impact Assessment into all stages of design.

6.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications

The estate and its efficiency have a direct impact on the colleges ability to reach net zero. All developments and plans will include sustainability

assessment for construction and operation. The future plans of the estate aim to reduce carbon emissions.

7.0 RISK COMMENTARY

- 7.1 The ability of the College to deliver services both to students and staff requires access to high quality estates. The condition of the estate also has direct impact on the ability of the college to meet its Health & Safety and legislative requirements. The strategy will ensure the College has a robust plan to ensure the risks are mitigated where possible.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Estate Strategy 2030 has been developed in line with Vision 2030 aims and in conjunction with the recent reports and masterplan.

Author: Robert Hewitt, Director Estates & Facilities.

Previous Board or College Committee Approvals:

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Estates Strategy 2030

An **Inspiring** Learning **environment**



Your College, Your Future

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Estates Strategy 2030

An **Inspiring** Learning **environment**

Foreword and Introduction

Welcome to Borders College Estates Strategy 2025-2030. This Strategy is intended to support and complement the ambitions set out in **Vision 2030** “Your College, Your Future” and, as such, covers that same time span. Over that period, our College has ambitious estates plans, principally focussed around the redevelopment of our Scottish Borders Campus in Galashiels.

While our primary objective is to maintain and develop an estate that is fit for purpose, sustainable, digitally advanced and cost-effective to operate, over the next five years we also recognise that we must meet three key challenges:

- The financial impact of the cessation in October 2026 of our current co-location operational agreements.
- Consolidation of the estate to ensure efficiency and minimise additional costs.
- Continue our sustainability journey, ensuring the estate reduces its impact on the environment.

In meeting those challenges, we will also recognise that a modern, fit-for-purpose and welcoming estate that improves the teaching environment can have a significant influence on creating a positive impact on learning outcomes.

The College must also be financially and environmentally sustainable, provide a safe and secure environment and comply with changing legislation.

This five-year plan is only the beginning. Longer term, our ambitions are also to replace our Landbased Campus at Newtown St.

Boswells with a state-of-the-art rural learning facility. Our work on this has already begun, with a feasibility study undertaken in 2024, driving our thinking, to complement the Galashiels masterplan on which this current Strategy is based.



Pete Smith, Principal and CEO



Strategic Aims and Objectives

To support our ambitions, we have focussed our Strategic Aims and Objectives into five themes:

- **Support Academic Excellence**

Ensure the estate enables high-quality teaching, learning through modern, flexible, and inclusive spaces.

- **Enhance Student Experience**

Create welcoming, accessible, and safe environments that foster wellbeing, collaboration, and personal development.

- **Promote Sustainability and Net Zero Goals**

Align with Scotland's climate targets by reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency, and embedding sustainable practices across the estate.

- **Strengthen Community and Industry Links**

Provide spaces that encourage partnerships with local businesses, public services, and community organisations.

- **Ensure Financial Sustainability**

Optimise estate use to reduce operating costs, generate income, and ensure long-term value for money.

Your College, Your Future

Our estates planning and investment will deliver facilities that are tailored to our current and planned curriculum delivery. Our investment in technology will deliver an **enhanced learning experience, improved learner outcomes** and **efficient business planning and delivery**.

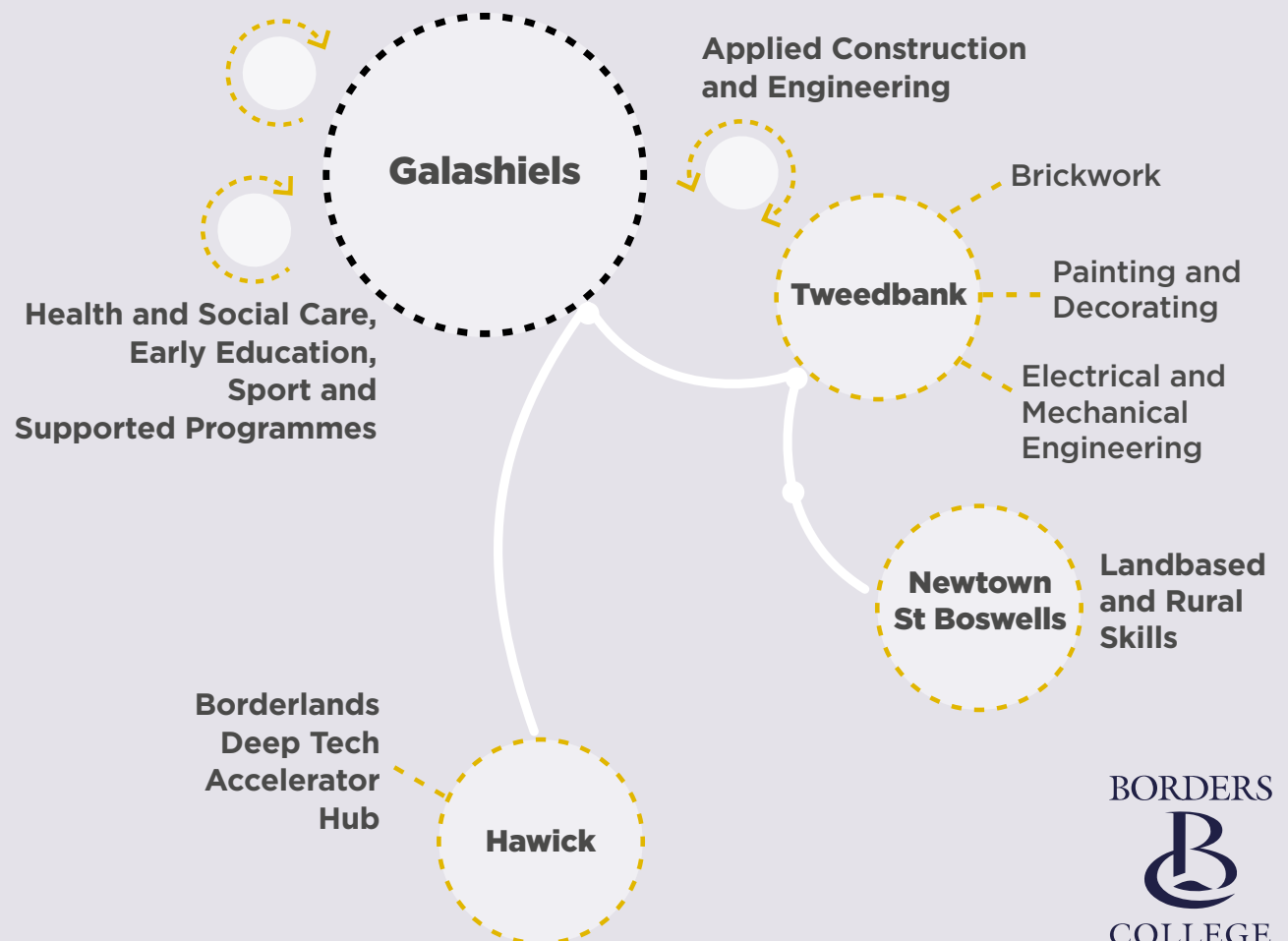
Background

Borders College Campuses

Borders College is the designated regional college for the Scottish Borders. The college provides innovative, life-changing learning opportunities that prepare students for global citizenship. The college aims to provide learning opportunities which will allow students to remain in the Borders, thus retaining local talent. Its facilities are located across the Borders, as follows:

General overview of Current Estate

**Creative, Enterprise,
Technology and
Essential Skills**



Borders College has three main Campuses located around the central Borders. Two Campuses, Galashiels and Newtown St Boswells, are wholly owned by Borders College with one Campus at Tweedbank currently leased ending July 2028. Agreements are in place to utilise other smaller satellite premises and farmland throughout the borders specific to curriculum requirements.

Galashiels Campus

Situated at Netherdale in Galashiels this is the largest of the three Campuses consisting of two buildings, Main Building and Technical Training Centre.

Main Building

Our main building is currently shared through a co-location agreement which ceases in October 2026. The Campus underwent significant refurbishment as part of the

co-location in 2009 and has a footprint of approximately 15,000^m² and capacity for around 300 staff and 3000 students. The main building has 25 general teaching classrooms along with curriculum and support services including, Hair and Beauty, Art and Design, Care, Joinery, Plumbing, Electrical, Sport and Exercise and Training restaurant and Catering. Support services including Student advice, MIS & Finance, Estates, HR, IT services and College Executive are based here. The co-location agreement currently has 45% of the building occupied by Heriot-Watt University.

The Galashiels campus also provides valuable facilities which enhance the student experience such as the student union and canteen, student services, study spaces and library. An important outcome in consolidating the smaller campuses to Gala is to provide better access to these services for all students.



Condition & Suitability Assessment

A condition survey of the main building in April 2024 assessed for condition using RAG status over a 1-10 year period. The survey assessed Fabric and Building Services and provided an indicative budget cost.

Fabric

The campus has generally been well maintained and is in a fair to good condition overall with standard of finish is consistent throughout. RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) works have been completed to ensure long term viability of building.

A mixture of flat and pitched roof coverings on site, Workshops have single ply roof and is consummate with their age with areas of maintenance required.

Building Services

The majority of the Mechanical and Electrical services within the College have been installed in 2007/2008, These elements have been well maintained and are in a reasonable condition. The recommended economic lifecycles is 15-20 years dependant on the system, many of the mechanical and electrical plant items throughout the building

will surpass their recommended economic lifecycle within the next 5-10 years.

Indicative Budget costs of circa £3.5M have been calculated to meet essential maintenance activities within the next 5-10 years.

Suitability Assessment

The main building provides the base for a significant proportion of the Colleges curriculum delivery as well as housing staff and student support services. Whilst room utilisation is low due to the current restrictions within the co-location agreement, the cessation of this in October 2026 will provide opportunities to accommodate disciplines undertaken currently at other sites. The cessation of the co-location will allow us to:

- Improve Student access to services
- Consolidate all construction disciplines to one site
- Generate costs savings due to site reduction
- Carbon reduction due to site consolidation
- Integrate staff support services.

Technical Training Centre

This is situated adjacent to the main building, the building is 1,027^m2 and consists of training provision for motor vehicle, gas training and assessment, renewables and construction staff base.

Condition & Suitability Assessment

The TTC was built in 1980 with a significant extension to house motor vehicle a gas training and assessment added in 2007 and new staff base. The workshops provide an invaluable teaching resource. Existing boiler plant is beyond its operational life expectancy and will require replacing within the next 5 years.

Newtown St Boswells Campus

Newtown St. Boswells campus provides land-based learning opportunities including horticulture, agriculture, agricultural engineering, horse and animal care as well as forestry. The site has no opportunity for expansion, and currently provides a poor student experience, due to lack of space and facilities.

The campus accommodates around 300 students. There is however a growing demand for a wide range of practical, technological and digital land-based industry courses centring on the environment, sustainability, net zero and carbon reduction.

Condition & Suitability Assessment

The buildings are a mixture of temporary buildings, workshop space, animal care, staff base, glasshouse and general teaching block, measuring just over 1,000^m² (GIFA). The site suffers from a lack of land availability requiring short term lease arrangements with local landowners to ensure curriculum delivery requirements are met.

This 5 year strategy will maintain the current position of landbased delivery but the College will aim to develop a new landbased campus within 10 years as identified in the 2024 feasibility study.

Tweedbank

Situated on the outskirts of Galashiels the campus is a leased industrial unit within Tweedbank industrial estate measuring just under 1,000^m², located three miles from the main Borders Campus at Galashiels. The campus provides practical teaching space for painting & decorating, engineering and welding and brickwork. Externally, the campus has dedicated parking and a large external secure storage compound for building materials and cement mixing. Internally the buildings house large workshops, changing facilities, common room, classroom and office.

Condition & Suitability Assessment

The campus does not offer a range of student amenities except for a small common room and food options are limited to a nearby petrol station shop. Access to student services is also limited with feedback from student groups highlighting a poor student experience.

The building is not wholly fit for purpose with proposals to relocate the curriculum to Galashiels post 2026. The current lease has been extended to October 2035, with a break clause at October 2028 to ensure a continuity of students learning spaces whilst the Galashiels campus is refurbished enabling the Tweedbank disciplines to be relocated.

Additional Estates Resources

The College also utilise additional premises to deliver courses in agreement with local business and landowners these include:

- Land rental from local farmers to meets curriculum demands for Rural skills.
- Additional teaching space for Newtown land-based delivery.
- Access to stables to support delivery of horse care curriculum
- Gym used to support sport and exercise curriculum.
- Teaching facilities within the Borderlands Deep Tech Accelerator Hub in Hawick

Current Estates Performance

Property Condition

Property condition across the estate is generally good but varies considerably from campus to campus. Long term investment through Life cycle planning has ensured the Galashiels campus has been maintained in a good to very good condition. Lack of investment in Newtown St Boswells over the past 10-15 years have seen a deterioration in building condition with some capital investment in the last two years being completed to extend current operational viability.

Maintenance of Current Estate

Life cycle planning and investments have ensured Galashiels remains well maintained over past 15 years. Life cycle funding is interlinked to the current co-location arrangements of the campus, which will cease to exist post 2026.

Functional Suitability

Whilst the estate is functionally suitable key risks exist post 2026 with the cessation of the co-location. This will result in significant areas of the Galashiels Campus being vacated. This provides opportunities to consolidate the estate improving functionality, efficiency, sustainability and student satisfaction. The ability to consolidate and improve will be dependant of the availability of capital funding.

Estates Operating Model

The College estate is widely distributed across the Borders Region delivering various elements of the curriculum. The College have embarked on several energy efficiency measures including solar array and purchasing heat from wastewater heat pumps. Future efficiencies are intrinsically linked to further estates consolidation and

will enable the College to complete a new baseline post co-location.

Sustainability

Borders College have been at the forefront of the sustainability drive within the college sector for several years winning many prestigious awards and regularly demonstrating best practice through curriculum delivery. We have implemented several conservation and energy reduction measures reducing our carbon footprint by over 50% since 2015. As we embark on an estate's consolidation process post 2026 a new baseline of the college activities will be critical in ensuring we continue to deliver on the road to Net Zero.

Future Estates

2026 Estates Masterplan project

The College are embarking on an ambitious estates redevelopment plan to ensure the estate is fit for future delivery. The project will be delivered over the next 5 years, subject to funding availability.

- Development of current textile workshops to create new home for Brickwork, Painting and decorating, Mechanical and electrical engineering vacating the rented Tweedbank Premises.
- Development of new students study area within vacated Library space and improved IT helpdesk and student support facilities.
- Development of new staff bases recognising changes to working practices.

Future funding of the estate is critical to ensure the College continues to meet local demand and improve students and staff services.

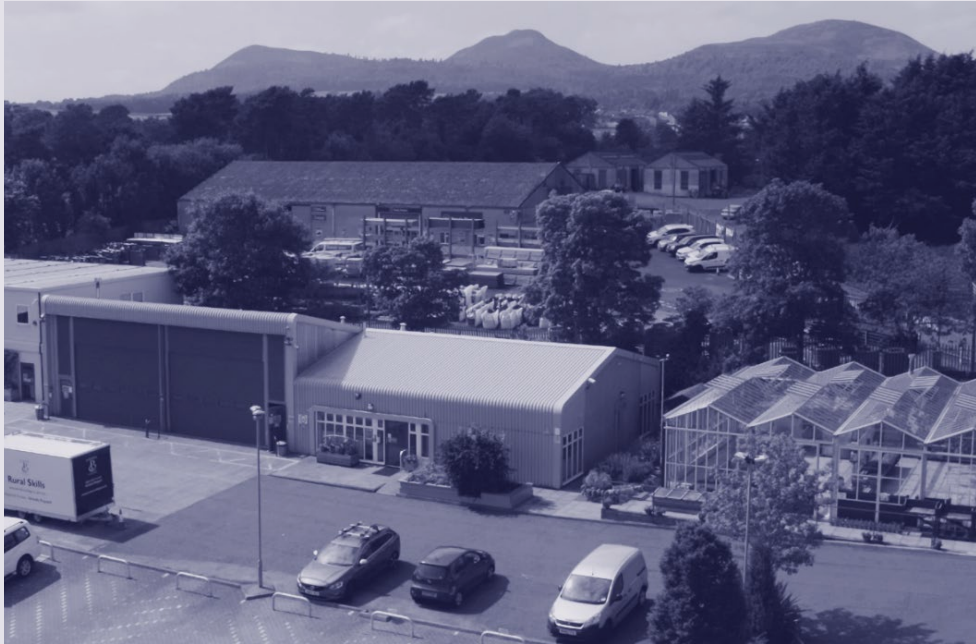
In conjunction with the above priorities the College are progressing with plans to create a new Net Zero Accelerator hub on the Galashiels campus, subject to funding. This will provide improved training facilities for sustainable construction. It will require the demolition of the ground floor of the technical training centre building to create space for construction.

Alongside the Net Zero Accelerator Hub will be the further expansion and development of the Human Health Innovation Lab, this will be formed within the ground floor of the Main building currently occupied by support staff, which will be relocated to new staff bases.

Measuring our Success

The performance measures for this Estate Strategy, which will demonstrate successful implementation of the Strategy are shown below.

- We will look to maintain or improve the staff and student satisfaction levels from the 2024/25 baseline.
- We will increase our income from commercial use of our facilities from the 2024/25 baseline.
- We will seek to maximise the performance of the Estate, across a range of metrics including, consolidation of Campuses where operationally prudent and practical
- We will implement space utilisation monitoring, energy performance evaluation and create a baseline to measure operating costs per Sq Meter.





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Credits

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Borders College and
NC Art and Design students.

Your College, Your Future

Borders College
Scottish Borders Campus
Nether Road
Galashiels
TD1 3HE

t: 01896 66 26 00
borderscollege.ac.uk

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