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REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

Subject: Regional Outcome Agreement	**Purpose:** **For Approval** ☒ **For Discussion** ☐ **For Information** ☐
Prepared by: Angela Cox	**Date: 2nd March**

Purpose: To inform the Board of the content of the final draft of the Regional Outcome Agreement 2018/19 (ROA) based on SFC feedback and seek their views on its appropriateness in light of the draft funding agreement.

Linked to Strategic Goal 1: Respond to the needs of our region.

Executive Summary: The ROA has been drafted in accordance with the guidance issued by the Funding Council and feedback from our ROA manager and his supervisor.

We were informed that our ROA was exemplar in detail and now reflected the ambition expected from Borders College.

In our feedback meeting it was reiterated that this ambition could only be realised with an increase in credits and funding. Our initial credit allocation from the SFC does not indicate any additional credits.

The vast majority of the changes requested were stylistic with more significant amendments highlighted below:

- Page 4 - Inserted a summary paragraph outlining our response to Intensification.
- Page 8, 1.3 Rurality – Statement added emphasising that we recognise the importance of achieving the target of 10% enrolments coming from areas classified as SIMD 10 by 2021 and increased our original target of 4% to 4.5%.
- Pg14 – Added a link to and updated our Access and Inclusion Strategy.

Recommendation: Board are asked to approve the final Outcome Agreement for 2018/19

Previous Committee Approvals: No

For publication ☒	**For publication with redactions** ☐	**Not for publication** ☐

BORDERS COLLEGE

Working Together

Scottish Borders

Regional Outcome Agreement

Second Draft

2018/2019

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

LGBT CHARTER

Contents

Scottish Funding Council Outcome Agreement 2018/19 4

Funding 5

Borders College Region contribution to SFC's National Priorities for AY 2018/19 5

1. National Priority One: Access – A more equal society because learning is accessible and diverse, attracting and providing more equal opportunities for people of all ages, and from all communities and backgrounds. 5

1.1 Meeting Regional Demand 5

1.2 Social Inclusion 7

1.3 Rurality 8

1.4 SHEP School Activity 9

1.5 Equality and Diversity 9

1.6 Gender and Sexuality 10

1.7 Age 11

1.8 Disability and Learning Difficulties 11

1.9 Ethnicity and Faith 13

1.10 Gaelic Language 13

1.11 Care experienced young people 13

1.12 Carers 14

1.13 Ex-offenders 14

1.14 Armed Forces Covenant 14

1.15 Access and Inclusion Strategy 14

1.16 Equality Impact 15

2. National Priority Two: Progress and Achievement – An outstanding system of learning where all students are progressing successfully and benefiting from a world-class learning experience, in the hands of expert lecturers delivering in modern facilities. 15

2.1 Student Retention and Learner Success 15

2.2 Articulation to University 16

2.3 Student Flows between the Borders and Edinburgh 17

2.4 Multiple Deprivation and Learner Success 18

2.5 Senior Phase Aged Pupils Learner Success and Retention 19

2.6 Age and Learner Success 19

2.7 Care Experienced and Learner Success 20

2.8 Apprenticeships 20
2.9 Curriculum Planning 21
2.10 SCQF 23
2.11 ESOL 23
3. National Priority Three: Economy and Society – A more successful economy and society with well prepared and skilled students progressing into jobs with ability, ideas, and ambition to make a difference. 24
3.1. Developing the Young Workforce 24
3.2. Work experience 26
3.3. Foundation Apprenticeships 28
3.4. Employer Engagement 28
3.5. Learner destinations 30
3.6. Student Satisfaction 30
4. National Priority Four: High-performing institutions – A coherent system of high performing, sustainable institutions with modern, transparent and accountable governance arrangements. 31
4.1 Well-Governed 31
4.2 High-performing 32
4.3 Student Representation 32
4.4 Financial Sustainability 32
4.5 Environmental Sustainability 33
4.6 Sustainability through collaborations and shared services 34
5. National Priority Five: Greater innovation in the economy – a national culture of enterprise and innovation leading to a more productive and sustainable economy. 35
5.1 Developing and Sustaining a Culture of Innovation and Enterprise 35
5.2 Student Enterprise Mind-sets 35
5.3 Working with Scotland's Innovation Centres 35
5.4 College Innovation Fund 36

Scottish Funding Council Outcome Agreement 2018/19

College region: **Scottish Borders**

Borders College has an accomplished track record in delivering innovative skills development opportunities and intends to build on this by providing inclusive learning opportunities across our region including the most isolated communities. In a region where economic growth is falling well short of Scotland and UK comparators we have a significant role to play in shaping and contributing to our region's future economic strategy. We are ambitious to be a leader of the FE sector in the future educational landscape whether that is embracing the technological advances available to us, making HE more accessible within the Borders, expanding our employer offer through supporting innovative solutions, increasing our apprenticeship offer and more flexible delivery approaches.

We are actively engaged in the Edinburgh and South East City Region Deal (ESECRD), South of Scotland Enterprise Agency (SOSEA) and more recently, Borderlands. As priority areas are established within these initiatives the College will respond within the resource available but it is anticipated that additional resource will be required in order to deliver to the immediate needs of the region alongside the longer term skill priorities.

Intensification

Borders College continues to respond proactively to the priorities identified for intensification. The detail is included within the agreement but a high level summary is below:

Widening Access - The College is actively engaging with its current and new Higher Education partners to ensure that learner pathways are stream-lined. The College will also focus on providing bespoke delivery to its more rural communities, engaging more proactively to understand the barriers.

Retention & Attainment – The College is ambitious to improve its student outcomes. We have introduced a new Learner Success Strategy setting out a wide range of approaches to improving learner outcome.

Skills Alignment – The College is developing a 5-year curriculum strategy which will respond to regional skill needs and SOSEA, ESECRD and Borderlands. It is expected that this will require additional capacity in order to deliver on expectations.

STEM – The College continues to grow its STEM provision especially in Construction, Engineering and IT. We are also proactive in promoting STEM as a career through Community, Secondary and Primary School events such as Bang goes the Borders and the Rocket challenge.

Innovation – We are actively engaging with Interface, the Construction Innovation Centre and running a number of staff and student creative thinking workshops. We will also be participating in the FuturEquipped project.

Gender Balance – The College recognises the importance of gender role models and through its Gender Action Plan has set challenging targets to address this, including Board representation.

Employability, FWDF and Apprenticeships – Employers see the College as a valued partner and we continue to be successful in delivering and growing our offer in these areas.

DYW – The College works in partnership with the DYW Industry board and 9 High Schools to provide Senior Phase skills training to over 500 pupils each year. We are increasingly innovative in our approach with a blend of in school delivery and a hub approach.

Funding

College region **Scottish Borders** will receive <<amount>> core teaching funding and <<amount>> capital and maintenance funding from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for academic year 2018/19, to plan and deliver 26,000 credits worth of further and higher education in the Region (inclusive of the <<amount>> additional credits for childcare activity announced by SFC in their final allocations for 2018/19). Core student support funding for 2018/19 is <<amount>>.

In addition, the college region will receive <<amount>> in European Social Fund (ESF) grant through the SFC to deliver 574 further credits to eligible learners (inclusive of <<amount>> student support funding)

The total credit target for 2018/19 is therefore 26,574.

The College has requested an additional 800 credits to respond to immediate need in 2017/18.

The Regional Board signs and commits to deliver the outcomes detailed below on the understanding that SFC and SDS provide the necessary credits and funding for Borders College to achieve its ambitions.

Borders College Region contribution to SFC's National Priorities for AY 2018/19

1. National Priority One: Access – A more equal society because learning is accessible and diverse, attracting and providing more equal opportunities for people of all ages, and from all communities and backgrounds.

1.1 Meeting Regional Demand

Borders College prioritises its provision for learners in line with Scottish Government and local priorities. Through ESECRD the College plans to grow in the priority sectors of Digital

and Construction. This includes digital upskilling programme for college staff, students and the wider community along with introducing higher level digital programmes. Construction continues to grow with a focus now on Renewables, Retrofit and Off-site Construction. The College has plans for a Borders Sustainability Construction Innovation Hub which would make new technologies available to local, usually SME, construction businesses. We are also a named partner in a Construction Innovation bid alongside Oregon, a local off site construction business, to develop capacity locally.

Locally Health & Social Care is a priority sector and the College is working in partnership with Borders Council and Borders Hospital to create the opportunity for carers to progress through flexible, modular learning into nursing. This will be mainly work based, online delivery with the focus on flexibility.

Work has commenced in 2017/18 to raise the profile of Tourism and Hospitality as a viable career option by providing the appropriate skills development opportunities. We launched our Activity Tourism course through Eyemouth High School which will be expanded in 2018/19 and introduced Hospitality and Catering Apprenticeships. The importance of place, a key priority for SOSEA, will continue to be re-enforced through building awareness of food provenance including our participation in the National Field to Fork competition, which we have won for the last two years. There is a regional need to offer higher level supervisory qualifications in this sector, which is currently being delivered through work based learning but an offer for full time students is being developed.

There are further opportunities for the College through the Borderlands initiative. Strategic Theme 5 is ‘Skills to improve, productivity, innovation & internationalisation. The Principal recently met with Northumberland College Principal to explore joint online learning opportunities in Rural Tourism and Land-based studies. It will be important to explore the potential for the funding of cross border students with the SFC prior to progressing this initiative.

In all these initiatives there is significant focus on higher level skill, with the College actively engaging with its current and new Higher Education partners to ensure that learner pathways are stream-lined. We are in discussion with Heriot-Watt to be a partner in the delivery of Engineering and Leadership and Management Graduate Apprenticeship Programme in response to identified local need. We are also exploring how the College could enable online learning opportunities with localised support through the Open University or HIE.

The College will also focus on providing bespoke delivery to its more rural communities, engaging more proactively to understand the barriers. Additional credits would enable us to have a more significant impact in the east of the region where post compulsory education learning opportunities are lacking. For young people, there is currently a 7% difference in success rates for those needing to travel to Galashiels to access vocational programmes compared to those undertaking local delivery. The College already delivers Construction and Engineering and Active Tourism locally. We are planning to launch a digital pilot in September 2018 where Higher Psychology will be delivered in the school through video conferencing linked to college lectures. It is our expectation that over time this will be rolled out to other schools and made available to adult learners as well.

We will also be delivering technical qualifications within schools across our region in 2018 with a similar plan to extend this to adults in communities which currently do not have easy access to the learning opportunities available in the larger towns.

We are developing our Senior Phase programme for schools to provide a larger number of Foundation Apprenticeships and more programmes above SCQF Level 5. This involves schools encouraging pupils of a suitable level to apply so that they are successful.

Information from school rolls and changing patterns of study by senior phase pupils suggest that the number of full time learners is at a peak, which we expect to maintain over the period of the ROA through a growing demand for higher level skills and an expanded school/college programme.

There is increasing demand for part-time provision for adults both for reskilling and upskilling. A refocus on providing inclusive learning opportunities across our more remote communities means that this demand will only grow. In 2017/18 we are seeing an increase in employability skills need and employer demand for customer service, digital and leadership skills.

It is strategically important to the College to also use its fundable activity to support skills development across all sectors of the Borders population in conjunction with local employers and in line with the Regional Skills Assessment. In this way it supports the local economy, while raising the educational attainment levels of the region's population. The College is part of the ESECRD and Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and through these contributes to the Single Outcome Agreement for the Region.

These developments are vital to improving the economic prosperity of the region. To play its part the College requires additional credit funding over the period of this outcome agreement through to 2021. It looks to the SFC to acknowledge its unique position, its past low levels of HE provision and to support its ambitions to grow further to enable it to play its part in generating the region's future improved prosperity.

Outputs for 2018/19

1. **To deliver a total of 26,574 Credits in 2018/19 across all provision** (SFC Measure 1(a))

1.2 Social Inclusion

The College is committed to widening access to further and higher education, particularly for those who face additional barriers to achieving success in education and training. We are the largest contributor to providing meaningful positive destinations for school leavers from SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) Deciles 1 to 4 (MD10 – MD40) in the Borders.

To progress our commitment to social inclusion we have a wide range of employability and access programmes and have introduced an approach to admissions that seeks to offer appropriate places at college to all who wish to study.

We work closely with all the Borders Secondary Schools to ensure that there is a coherent and progressive programme of vocational education in the Senior Phase that helps to keep all young people engaged with their education and opening up their aspirations for future careers.

With those Senior Phase pupils most at risk of disengaging, including those from our most deprived areas and those who are looked after young people, we work with the support of the Robertson Educational Trust to provide mentoring in their final year of school, assisting them to make a successful transition to College (*The Borders Young Talent Programme*).

We are committed to providing opportunities for school leavers and other residents from the more deprived postcode areas. In 2015/16, 3.3% of school leavers enrolling at the College came from the 10% most deprived postcode areas in Scotland (MD10). In 2016/17 the percentage of College activity marginally increased at 3.5% of all College activity delivered to people from MD10 areas. With the publication of SIMD2016 the number of MD10 classified postcode areas within the Borders Region diminished. However, it should also be noted that the SIMD is limited as a measure of disadvantage. For example, the Scottish Borders has the lowest level of weekly wage of the 32 local authority areas and recent research undertaken nationally on child poverty indicated that the Borders was now 8th out of 32 areas, i.e. one out of four children in the area were living in poverty.

Despite us providing transport from isolated areas, the distances and infrequency of this often presents an additional challenge for our most vulnerable to access learning. When motivation and confidence is low, the fact that one has to rise early to attend college, or that if the bus is missed there is no other accessible way to college presents an additional barrier.

One of the most significant challenges we have is the lack of articulation opportunities for Borders students. It is difficult to reach articulation agreements with universities because of the low numbers involved in each curriculum area. It is also challenging for the College to sustain HE provision to HND level given the small numbers involved in some curriculum areas.

The need for upskilling and provision of higher level education in the region is essential to build ambition within current communities and deliver on the national and local priority of inclusive economic growth.

Outputs for 2018/19

2. **To deliver 4.5% of total credits to learners from MD10 in 2018/19.** (SFC Measure 1(c))

1.3 Rurality

The College recognises the importance of achieving the target of 10% by 2021 and is working to identify additional bespoke activities that would contribute to reaching this target within the SIMD10 communities. We urge the Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Government to recognise the impact that the true cost of delivering an inclusive offer across the Borders Region is having on the College's ability to provide for our more isolated and rural communities. The rurality element of funding for Scottish Borders is significantly lower than that provided to other rural areas such as Dumfries & Galloway and the Highlands & Islands, limiting the resources coming to the Borders College Region. It should also be noted that growth in credits for the region has always been lower than that requested through the outcome agreement process. These are significantly limiting factors on the Borders College Region in trying to meet its social inclusion agenda for its more rural communities.

Funding has been prioritised to meet our obligation to young, full time learners. The College has always met its credit target and has improved efficiency during a prolonged period of real term reductions in funding. The impact of this has been to reduce the College's capacity to meet demand for adult, part time and outreach activity across the whole of the region. The drive to improve efficiency over the last decade has meant learning opportunities are now delivered primarily from our main campuses or at employers' places of work. We are increasingly aware that the smaller Borders communities do not have access to the training and education opportunities that are readily available to those that live nearer our main campuses in Galashiels, Newtown St. Boswells and Hawick. We wish to address this issue through collaboration with our Community Planning Partners, particularly in the eastern area of the region centred around Eyemouth and Kelso High Schools and with the development of the Intergenerational Learning Campus in Jedburgh by the local authority. We will look to develop bespoke approaches to delivering this activity to maximise both the efficiency and effectiveness of programmes delivered to these small community groups.

1.4 SHEP School Activity

Within the Borders Region there are two secondary schools with consistently low rates of progression to Higher Education (SHEP Schools). These are Hawick High School and Eyemouth High School. We will work with both schools to ensure that there are good vocational pathways that lead to higher levels of study to help meet their ambition that more of their pupils go on into Higher Education. In 2016/17, 17.5% of HE credits were delivered to students from SHEP schools. The College will increase the proportion of students from SHEP schools studying at HE level in each year of this agreement. In this way the College will make an important contribution to widening access to Higher Education within the Borders.

Outputs for 2018/19

3. **To increase the volume and proportion of Credits delivered at HE level to learners from SHEP schools to 935 Credits (17.8% of HE activity)** (SFC Measure 2(d))

1.5 Equality and Diversity

The Equality and Diversity Outcomes and Action Plan 2017/21 were approved by the Board of Management in spring 2017, committing the College to ensuring equality of opportunity, equality of access to service and equality of outcome to people with protected characteristics. The College has also extended this commitment to people who are young carers, care experienced and who come from our most deprived postcode areas. This has led to us:

- Improving our work with all 9 secondary schools so that there are clear progression pathways from our senior phase vocational programmes to guaranteed places on college further and higher education programmes.
- Revising our admissions process so that the focus is on transition from school to the most appropriate programme rather than on selection.
- Reorganising our Student Advice and Learning Support departments and working in partnership with a new pastoral role, Achievement Coaches, based within our curriculum areas with a focus on retention and achievement. This is led by our VP

Curriculum. In order to inform and enable early support intervention we have also created an 'at risk' indicator report.

- Introducing equality strategic indicators into our Strategic Plan *Our Strategy – Towards 2020* to provide a particular focus on these disadvantaged groups by our managers and teams and ensure our learners have an equitable experience.

We also note that the areas we identified through our own Equality Impact Assessment, reviewed annually, correspond well with the national priorities set out in the Outcome Agreement Guidance 2018/19.

1.6 Gender and Sexuality

The College is committed to eradicating negative discrimination, harassment and bullying on the grounds of a person's sexuality or gender. It became the first college in Scotland to achieve the Silver LGBT+ Charter of Rights which was awarded by LGBT Youth in September 2017. It has had a particular focus on providing training to its entire staff in transgender issues, raising awareness and understanding.

The College recognises that it has a significant part to play in shaping people's aspirations and in challenging gender stereotypes in relation to career choices. It published its Gender Action Plan in summer 2017 to ensure, among other things, that gender equality issues are addressed in its Developing the Young Workforce plans. The Plan also aims to ensure that marketing avoids gender bias, challenges gender stereotypes and that the College's services are cognisant of both transgender and non-binary gender issues. We will look to gradually increase the proportion of males involved in education and training at the College to parity with females by 2020/21. The target for 2018/19 is to reduce to 70% the number of full time programmes with one gender making up more than 75% of enrolments. This target reduces to 65% by 2020/21. The Gender Action Plan will be updated annually at the end of the academic year.

The College will monitor all programmes by learner success and gender from 2018/19 onwards and will look to take necessary action from 2019/20 onwards where specific issues have been identified with particular programmes.

Outputs for 2018/19

4. **To increase the proportion of credits delivered to males to 48.9%** (National Measure 1(d))
5. **To reduce the proportion of full time programmes where one gender makes up more than 75% of enrolments to 70% in 2018/19**(local measure)

1.6.1 Gender Equality – Staff

The Executive Team (66%)*, College Management Team (78%) and Board (60%) have more female members than males. Despite this, there remains a gender pay gap of 13% which is 1.9% lower than the national average. Two thirds of the College workforce is female with women making up 58% of the teaching staff, many in part time employment. A much higher proportion of male employees are in higher paid occupations such as teaching and management. The gender pay gap is therefore due to the higher proportion of women in the lower paid jobs in the administrative (89%) and cleaning services (68%). The College has committed to the living wage for its employees which will help to reduce the gender pay

gap. Therefore the College will look to promote gender role models in underrepresented curriculum areas and review our recruitment processes including advertising to help address the disparity.

*Female percentages shown in brackets.

1.7 Age

We have been successful in our commitment to *Opportunities for All,* ensuring that every young person has an opportunity to enrol at college where there is an appropriate programme for their needs. This commitment has led to significant growth over time in full time enrolments and contributes well to positive destinations for school leavers in the region, which are above the national average.

We will maintain the proportion of credits delivered to young learners between the ages of 16 - 24 at around 74%. This includes 15,050 credits delivered to young people less than 20 years of age, reinforcing our commitment to ensuring all young people leave school to a positive destination. However, we recognise that we have not been fully meeting the demand for adult vocational training and development, nor have we been meeting the latent demand amongst the adult population in our more rural communities. We will look to focus any growth in our credits in this area of work.

The College will continue to work closely as part of the Community Planning Partnership to ensure that provision is planned coherently with other providers and partners and that it is matched against the employability pipeline. We will maintain our commitment to delivering high quality outcomes with access to nationally recognised qualifications for all full-time learners and will continue to build work placement opportunities into all relevant full-time provision with the support and collaboration of local employers.

Outputs for 2018/19

6. **To deliver 56.6% (15,050 Credits)) of all Credits to learners aged 16-19 years old** (SFC Measure 1(b))
7. **To deliver 17.3% (4,600 Credits) of all Credits to learners aged 20-24 years old** (SFC Measure 1(b))
8. **To deliver 67.1% (13,345 Credits) of all full time Credits to learners aged 16-19 years old** (SFC Measure 1(b))
9. **To deliver 16.0% (3,180 Credits) of all full time Credits to learners aged 20-24 years old** (SFC Measure 1(b))

1.8 Disability and Learning Difficulties

There are high disclosure rates for disability and learning difficulties within the College's student population, with 33.7% of credits delivered for students who had disclosed a learning difficulty or disability in 2016/17. The College adjusts its service to these learners accordingly, with learning support staff working closely with their curricular colleagues and the student support team to help ensure that these additional barriers to learning and achievement are minimised. This has led to students with declared disabilities achieving at a rate similar to the general student population.

1.8.1 Mental Health

Students who disclose mental health issues are less likely to achieve well. This led to the College reviewing its approach to mental health with it now beginning to develop a whole college approach. The College has developed relationships with external partners and staff have and will continue to undergo Mental Health First Aid. Our Student Association has led for the last two years and will continue to develop 'Smash the Stigma' campaign and events to encourage students to talk about their illness. We are also planning to train our student representatives in Mental Health First Aid. Our Students' Association is developing a Student Mental Health Agreement in partnership with our student support services. .

1.8.2 Sensory Impairment and British Sign Language

The College also monitors the success of students with sensory impairments and, although numbers of students with these disabilities are low, it notes that there is a long-term trend of these students not succeeding as well as their peers.

In conjunction with the sector and supported by specialist organisations e.g. Deaf Action, we will publish our College British Sign Language Plan as outlined in the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015.

1.8.3 Students with Additional Needs

There are well-planned and coordinated arrangements between the College and the Local Authority for learners with additional needs leaving school and transitioning to college. In addition, there is an extensive programme for adults, helping to maintain or improve their independence and, crucially, improve their employment prospects provided by the College's Business Development Unit. Full time programmes have been improved with the expansion of formal, recognised qualifications and improved progression arrangements for access to SCQF 1/2/3/4 level programmes. The adult provision includes Ready for Retail and Tenancy Awards which have been delivered in the South East of Scotland for several years and are certificated through the NCFE Investors in Quality Licence. These are credit rated and levelled through the SCQF. There are many retail partners involved in the Ready for Retail programme including IKEA, with several people with profound and complex needs being supported into employment with the company.

The College will maintain the wide range of full and part time programmes it offers at SCQF Levels 1 to 4 and will continue to work closely with education, social work and social care providers to ensure that it contributes well to the education and support service to people with learning disabilities in the region and in supporting leavers into positive destinations. The credit allocation within the curriculum plan for this work is above the sector average, but the College believes it has an educational and social responsibility to maintain this at its current levels.

We expect the overall impact of our approach to working with people with learning difficulties and disabilities will lead to the disclosure rates remaining high, at around a third of all credit-funded activity through until 2020.

Outputs for 2018/19

10. **To deliver 33.0% of all credits to people with a declared disability or learning difficulty.** (SFC Measure 1(d))

1.9 Ethnicity and Faith

The Borders Region is one of the least diverse regions in the country with a very low percentage of people from black, Asian and mixed ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. Monitoring of achievement over a significant number of years suggests that the achievement rates for BME groups are at, or above the College average.

Around 3% of enrolments in 2016/17 were from students of Polish descent; this is higher than the percentage within the general population and reflects the popularity of the ESOL provision which the College will continue to offer in conjunction with Community Learning and Development. The College has also been involved in supporting the resettlement of refugees within the Borders community.

Outputs for 2018/19

11. **To deliver 1.3% of all credits to BAME learners.** (SFC Measure 1(d))

1.10 Gaelic Language

The 2011 Census data indicates that 0.3% of the Scottish Borders population is able to speak Gaelic. This compares with a national average of 1.1% and a rate of 5.4% for the Scottish Highlands. At present, Borders College has six students who indicated they can speak Gaelic and no staff who describe themselves as such. The College will continue to ensure that there is no barrier to employing or enrolling a native Gaelic speaker.

Outputs for 2018/19

12. **To monitor the number of native Gaelic speakers enrolled at the College each year and take any necessary action to address specific needs.**

1.11 Care experienced young people

The College has contributed to the Borders-wide strategy and action plan for care experienced young people and produced and implemented its own Corporate Parenting Plan in June 2016 (Updated March 2017) which is now being monitored twice-yearly by the Regional Board. It created a dedicated Care Aware Advisor post in September 2015 with the post holder working with the care experienced young people and young carers, providing the expertise needed to assist where necessary.

A baseline for care leaver enrolment is set within the ROA with targets for the next three years. The rate for self-disclosure is high at 7.4% of credits delivered in 2016/17 to students who identify as care experienced. The College has implemented a national EMA/bursary policy to ensure those students, who are entitled, receive the maximum funding from available sources to ensure that financial difficulty is not an impediment to their studies.

The College works closely with a range of external organisations including Who Cares? Scotland to improve its capacity to support care experienced young people.

In partnership with the Robertson Trust we provide mentors in schools for care experienced young people to build their confidence and aspiration to progress onto college or university.

Outputs for 2018/19

13. **To deliver 7.6% of credits to Care Experienced young people.** (National Measure 1(d))

1.12 Carers

The College's Care Aware Advisor provides specialist support to students who are also young carers. A key function is to offer an advocacy service for the carer within the College, helping to ensure that it is possible to minimise any disadvantage caused by the caring responsibility. The College will establish a baseline for the level of activity it undertakes with carers enrolled as students in 2017/18. It will refine this based on the Carers Trust definition of a carer and will track activity over the period of this Outcome Agreement. During 2018/19 the student support service will liaise closely with the Carers Trust to develop a College Student Carers Support Policy, with a view to its incorporation into the Access and Inclusion Strategy.

We hold the Carers and Employment Charter and have achieved the Care Positive Engaged Employer Award, the first College in Scotland to achieve this recognition.

1.13 Ex-offenders

The College welcomes applications from potential students with criminal convictions and has in place a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders. Through the local Community Planning Partnerships, the College holds a place on the Reducing Inequalities Delivery Team looking at local initiatives to support ex-offenders into employment or study.

1.14 Armed Forces Covenant

The College has previously been pledged to the Armed Forces Covenant and in 2018 we will recommit our support to the pledge. In addition, we wish to enhance our support for students estranged from their families and the Stand Alone Pledge will assist us in recognising their needs and supporting them to overcome the disadvantage this poses.

1.15 Access and Inclusion Strategy

The College introduced its Access & Inclusion Strategy in summer 2017 as one of the strategies it has in place to support its strategic goals set out in its Strategic Plan: *Our Strategy – Towards 2020.* *http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/downloads/access_and_inclusion_strategymarch2017.pdf*

It sets out the range of services that are provided to support all students and how these help to adjust the experience of students with disadvantages so that equity of opportunity is maintained. The annex also contains a breakdown of how access and inclusion funding from SFC is used to support this activity.

The Access & Inclusion Strategy covers all protected characteristics, those from areas of multiple deprivation, care experienced and carers. The College's priorities over the period of the plan are focussed on age, gender, deprivation, care experienced, sensory disability, mental health and young carers.

We have made progress against the Strategy which is monitored on an ongoing basis and updated annually.

1.16 Equality Impact

This section of the ROA sets out the whole-college approach to equality of access, equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. It monitors its work and services as a mainstreaming approach to Equality Impact Assessment across all protected characteristics with regards to both employees and students. Where it identifies possible barriers to equality created by its practices, it makes amendments. In this way it lives and demonstrates its commitment to equality and diversity. The equality outcomes for the College, regardless of any protected characteristic, also support fostering good relations between different groups.

2. National Priority Two: Progress and Achievement – An outstanding system of learning where all students are progressing successfully and benefiting from a world-class learning experience, in the hands of expert lecturers delivering in modern facilities.

2.1 Student Retention and Learner Success

Borders College has a history of delivering student retention and learner success at rates above the national average and often at some of the best rates within the sector. In recent years, our approach to recruitment has become more inclusive for FE full time programmes and for young people in particular, our withdrawal rates have increased and FEFT learner success has declined. To address this we introduced a new Learner Success Strategy setting out a wide range of approaches to improving learner outcome. We have focused on monitoring student attendance, with an immediate intervention when a student doesn't attend to ensure any barriers that can be supported are dealt with, allowing the student to continue with their studies.

In 2017/18 we have introduced the new post of Achievement Coach which operates in all faculties and is there to quickly address any issues that may impact on success. The students most at risk are monitored against risk factors to gauge their performance and where the risk profile increases, the Achievement Coaches are there to intervene. Early indications are that this enhanced approach is having success in addressing this trend, with the decline in FEFT success being arrested in 2016/17 and early withdrawal rates in 2017/18 being lower than the previous year.

We set a range of indicators (*Meet or Beat targets*) for the whole college. The faculties use these to set targets for each course offered.

We have identified our 10 least successful programmes in terms of success rates and through our special measure programme the Head of Faculty and VP Curriculum are reviewing the progress of the agreed action plan on a 6 weekly basis, which was drawn up in a meeting with the Principal in September.

We have also introduced termly Performance Reviews for all our senior managers with a responsibility for delivery. This focusses on progress against the targets set and identification of additional support when required.

We have shared good practice through capturing what our 10 best performing programmes are doing and sharing this with their peers.

We have invested in Advantage software which will provide us with access to live data that will offer front line staff and managers information on individual student and group progress so that interventions to support underperformance can be made quickly.

Our staff development and small capital investment resource has focussed on digitally enhancing the learner experience. We are starting to see greater use of mobile devices and online technologies to engage students. Significant investment is required if we are to realise our ambition to providing flexible and inclusive learning opportunities.

We have begun a more formalised approach to observations of learning and teaching to ensure the quality of the learner experience is equitable across the College and identify and support staff with development opportunities and share good practice.

Outputs for 2018/19

14. **FE full time learner success – 71%**
15. **HE full time learner success – 77.5%**
16. **FE part time learner success – 84.5%**
17. **HE part time learner success – 83.5%**
    (SFC Measure 4(a))

2.2 Articulation to University

The College offers nine HN programmes where articulation with advanced standing is available to students achieving the grades required by the universities. Most of these arrangements are with Edinburgh-based universities.

Four further HN programmes offered by the College are designed for progression into employment.

The College has achieved significant growth in HN provision in recent years with 243 full time enrolments on HE programmes in AY 2017/18. Growth during the previous three-year plan was primarily due to demand for places on new engineering, sport and beauty therapy programmes. These programmes can offer articulation with advanced standing, progression to higher levels of HE provision, or as a route to employment. HN Engineering provides places for apprentices and SAAS funded students, with most progressing to employment rather than choosing entry to university with advanced standing. The College is also offering more HND provision so students can advance further in their studies while remaining in the Borders.

The College expects numbers of enrolments on FT HE programmes to increase to 263 by 2020/21, with the number leaving to enrol at university with advanced standing increasing significantly between 2018/19 and 2020/21 (from 15 to 25 enrolments) in anticipation of increasing acceptance of this approach by Scotland's universities. The College has in place advanced standing articulation arrangements with a much larger capacity than the current uptake and will look to our partner universities to help promote these vocational pathway opportunities to our students. The College will continue to work to achieve growth in leavers entering university and look to maintain the articulation arrangements we have in place currently.

In all our skills priorities there is significant focus on higher level skill and we are striving to deliver our region need. Our focus up to now has been on school leavers and full time learners. In order to address the upskilling need of our workforce we need to be able to increase our HE offer and through part time, flexible, blended and work based models. In order to address this we are in discussion with Heriot-Watt to be a partner in the delivery of Engineering and Leadership and Management Graduate Apprenticeship Programme in response to identified local need. We are also exploring how the College could enable online learning opportunities with localised support through Open University or HIE.

In our discussions with Dumfries & Galloway College around potential solutions to delivering the SOSEA ambition for a South of Scotland 'University' we believe that the most effective solution would be to allocate the articulation funding to the colleges on a ring fenced basis. This would support widening access in a number of ways. Firstly, it would greatly enhance the ability of the colleges to negotiate articulation arrangements with universities. However, it would also enable the colleges to establish innovative solutions to building local capacity.

One such solution could be the creation of local HE academies established in partnership with universities, focussing on key sectors for the regional economy. Delivery would be in college using a combination of college and university resources. Both colleges have identified STEM as key sectors for development in the region, and for the nation. The awarding of articulation funding to the South would enable the colleges to negotiate with appropriate partners, e.g. the Open University to establish locally delivered articulation routes.

Outputs for 2018/19

18. **The total number of students who have achieved HNC or HND qualifications progressing to degree level courses - 45**
19. **The number of successful students who have achieved HNC or HND qualifications articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing - 15**
20. **The proportion of successful students who have achieved HNC or HND qualifications articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing – 33.3%** (SFC Measure 7)

2.3 Student Flows between the Borders and Edinburgh

There are significant student flows from the Borders to Edinburgh with 104 entrants from the region to Edinburgh College for AY2015/16, of which 53 were entrants on to HE programmes.

Of those leaving school in 2015 to study HE programmes at college, a third remained within the Borders with the other 67% leaving the region to attend other colleges; Edinburgh and City of Glasgow College being the main recipients. This is expected, given the relatively limited range of HN programmes that it is viable for Borders College to offer and is in keeping with the regional flows anticipated. Most entrants to our HE programmes are following our internal progression pathways.

Students leaving Scottish Borders schools to study a further education course mainly chose Borders College at 81% of summer 2015 school leavers, with another 14% choosing Edinburgh College, indicating that our curriculum at a further education level is broad enough to meet the needs of most school leavers. The increasing collaboration between the

schools and the College is also a factor as far more senior phase pupils are experiencing college programmes while still at school, helping them to make the transition to their local college.

The total outward migration for study at other colleges equates to 2,256 credits; equivalent to 9.0% of Borders College's SFC funded activity for 2016/17. Of this, the equivalent of 1,713 credits of activity was delivered at Edinburgh College; 6.8% of Borders College's SFC funded activity.

We will continue to work closely with Edinburgh College to understand student flows and to ensure sufficiency and efficiency of provision within and between the regions. Both institutions are working on formal articulation arrangements for the two programme areas of computing and art & design.

There are areas of curricular activity which are not viable to offer within the Scottish Borders because demand for places is low in any one year. However, the College will continue to monitor demand through its collaborative work with schools and employers, and if there is sufficient market intelligence to indicate that new provision will be financially viable, we will adjust our curriculum plan accordingly.

The Borders Railway was opened in September 2015, with over 1 million journeys since opening. This popular improvement to the transport infrastructure is having an impact on student , with both Borders College and Edinburgh College having campuses close to the line. There is increased interest in our provision from the southern Lothian area because of the resulting improved access to Galashiels.

2.4 Multiple Deprivation and Learner Success

Although students from the MD10 areas of the Borders Region are more likely to come to the College than any other destination on leaving school, they are less likely to maintain their place at College, with FEFT learner success for 2016/17 six percentage points below the College rate for all FEFT learners. Secondly, there were only 4 learners from MD10 areas studying on full time HE programmes at the College in 2016/17. The College will focus on improving learner success for these students and improve progression to higher levels of study over the coming three years.

We recognise that we face a challenge in addressing the underlying issues but will work to engage better with these students and will make adjustments to our services, teaching and curriculum to address this issue. We will focus our existing resource on supporting students from these areas by monitoring their attendance and achievements carefully and taking action where necessary.

Outputs for 2018/19

21. **For more learners from MD10 data zones to achieve their qualifications** (SFC Measure 4(b))
    a. **FE full time learner success – 62.2%**
    b. **HE full time learner success – 80%**
    c. **FE part time learner success – 87.7%**
    d. **HE part time learner success – 78.6%**

2.5 Senior Phase Aged Pupils Learner Success and Retention

The College works with all nine secondary schools within the Borders Region to plan and deliver a curriculum that meets the national aspirations of *Developing the Young Workforce*. Our programme includes vocational programmes at SCQF Levels 4, 5 & 6. We have made considerable progress in improving the range of programmes on offer and offer guaranteed progression for those pupils who are successful. However, we recognise and have prioritised improving the retention and success rates for the senior phase pupils and extending the number of higher level programmes on offer. We will continue to engage with schools to ensure that those choosing the vocational options understand fully the programme they are undertaking and are doing so for positive reasons.

There are a number of factors that have led to these lower rates of success. Full time FE Senior Phase aged students are young people who have left school at 15 to take up places at college. They are at greater risk of withdrawal once they reach the statutory minimum leaving age. We recognise this within our risk profile and will focus on continual monitoring of their attendance and progress, taking action where necessary. Part time Senior Phase students are still at school while studying a vocational qualification at the College as part of their school Senior Phase programme. The low achievement rate is partly explained by a drop in attendance as the school exam periods approach. It would seem that pupils, parents and the schools prioritise the academic exams over the vocational qualification. The College has worked with the schools to try and mitigate this effect by making significant adjustments to timetabling from 2017/18 onwards. This, combined with the closer monitoring introduced and described above, should work to improve the success rates and retention.

Outputs for 2018/19

22. **To increase the proportion of senior phase age pupils successfully completing a vocational qualification delivered by the College.** (SFC Measure 4(c))
    a. **FE full time senior phase learner success – 61.5%**
    b. **HE full time senior phase learner success – n/a**
    c. **FE part time senior phase learner success – 60.1%**
    d. **HE part time senior phase learner success – 75%**

2.6 Age and Learner Success

Learner success varies with age. The College's younger students do less well than those over the age of 20. There are two main factors influencing this. Senior Phase school students are more likely to disengage from their college studies when it comes to examination time in February and May, and full time students under the age of 18 are more likely to withdraw from their college course early. The College has redesigned its Senior Phase school curriculum so that more of its courses finish prior to the exams commencing in May 2018, and the College has introduced Achievement Coaches with the specific remit of keeping learners engaged with their learning.

Young learners will remain the College's priority group and will continue to account for over 75% of its overall activity. However, it will also prioritise older learners, specifically in its more rural areas with ambition to receive additional funding from SFC to allow it to increase its activity in this area.

The College will address the lower achievement rates of younger students and welcomes the inclusion of national measures for DYW and young FT FE learner achievement. It will work to close the gap in achievement rates between these groups and the overall success rate of FE FT students and achieve parity by 2020/21.

Outputs for 2018/19

23. **To increase the proportion of FT FE students aged 16-19 achieving a recognised qualification to 69%.** (SFC Measure 4(e))

2.7 Care Experienced and Learner Success

The College recognises that learner success for this group is considerably lower than the general population with only 54% of care experienced students achieving their success in 2016/17. It commits to finding an appropriate place at college for all those wishing to study, wherever this is possible, and accepts a young person may have a number of failed attempts at college before finding the skills to persevere and make the most of their abilities and achieve success. In this way, it will work to ensure that is contributing to *National Ambition for Care Experienced Students* with these students achieving at the same rate as the College's overall population.

The College is making progress in working with the local authorities to create data sharing protocols so that it can more accurately identify and support care experienced young people, while increasing these young peoples' awareness of why it is important to agree to the sharing of relevant data. It will be one of the first colleges in Scotland to have such an agreement in place with a local authority. This is highly relevant in addressing the low learner success rate for care experienced students studying at college. The College has set stretching and ambitious targets to improve this success rate in the coming years. It believes these targets are possible to achieve, given the resource it is now applying to support this group of learners and the progress it has made in working with the Community Planning Partners on this issue. Improving outcomes for care experienced young people is now a major theme for the CPP Reducing Inequality strand of the CPP's work.

Outputs for 2018/19

24. **For more full time Care Experienced learners to achieve their qualifications**
    a. **FE full time learner success – 64%**
    b. **HE full time learner success – 75%**

    (National Measure 4(d))

2.8 Apprenticeships

With over 180 apprentices starting training with the College in any one year it is the major provider of modern apprenticeship (MA) programmes in the Scottish Borders. It also acts as a managing agent, supporting apprentices working for many of the major Borders employers, with over 100 of these annual starts managed directly by the College. The range of MAs covers the administration, management, hospitality, childcare, health care, construction, engineering, agriculture, and other land-based employment sectors. It has long-established relationships with many of the construction managing agents including CITB, SNIPEF and SECTT.

The College works closely with its partners and employers to provide opportunities within the region to extend the range of MAs available. We are committed to extending our apprenticeship offer in 2018/19 and beyond with an increase from 66 starts to an anticipated 100 starts in 2017/18 already. The challenge in responding to employer demand within a region of 97% SMES is the current planned approach to contracting, especially identifying specific sectors, rather than a demand led system which responds to the business needs of rural SMES. The vast majority of employers will only identify a need for an apprentice if someone leaves the business, so are unable to predict this up to 18 months ahead of time as is currently required.

Outputs for 2018/19

25. **To start 200 apprenticeship trainees in 2018/19 (Inclusive of apprentices from other managing agents.)**
    (SFC Measures 5)

2.9 Curriculum Planning

In creating the curriculum plan for 2018/19 Borders College has considered the following information:

- Sustainable demand for existing historic provision assessed by analysis of application trends and take up of places;
- Levels of retention and attainment on programmes (learner success by course);
- New information from the Scottish Borders Regional Skills Assessment;
- National priority for promoting and delivering vocational training opportunities in STEM subjects;
- Inward investment in new digital technology;
- Representation from local employers through regular employer engagement;
- Scottish Government and SFC priorities;
- The nature of the local economy;
- Continuing liaison with the schools and the employers group to inform the expansion of *Developing the Young Workforce* provision;
- *Opportunities for All;*
- The needs of rural communities.

As Borders College is the only college in this rural region it is required to develop a broad curriculum which meets the needs of the large numbers of SME's in the area, operating across a broad range of industries. In the Scottish Borders, public administration, education and health account for a significant proportion of jobs. Other key sectors for our region are land-based industries (food & drink), manufacturing (engineering), construction, care and tourism. These fit well with the Scottish Government's priority growth sectors.

Inward investment in the region by an international company which supports the local authority aspiration around digital technologies, along with the range of smaller technology-based companies operating in the region, has led the College to re-examine its digital media and computing curriculum for both mainstream and school/college programmes. Employer demand for welding and fabrication qualifications and for qualifications in the off-site manufacturing of timber frame housing have led to proposals to further expand our STEM curriculum were funding available. This follows on from the recent expansion of the engineering curriculum, and along with our continuing commitment to the construction

sector, these initiatives make up the College's current strategy for developing and expanding its STEM curriculum. Science and Mathematics related vocations do not feature significantly within the College's approach to STEM compared to its curriculum developments in technology and engineering. This approach is a result of analysis of the local economic, business and jobs market and of the College's close working relationship with CPP members focused on the economic development of the region. The College believes that its current offer is a good match to the Skills Assessment for the Region.

The College is also developing a 5 year curriculum and delivery strategy with a number of workshops planned for front line , designed for staff to look at the skills need in their specialist sectors over the next 10-15 years so that our delivery and content more accurately reflects the wider skills required in the future.

Outputs for 2018/19

26. **To increase the delivery to students on STEM courses to 17.7% of all college credits.** (SFC Measure 3)

2.9.1 Location of Provision

The vast majority of our full-time provision is delivered at the Scottish Borders Campus in Galashiels. The centralisation of our key facility to the most accessible part of the Borders in 2009 improved access for our full time students. This, along with the high quality of the campus is a factor in the growth in full-time numbers. To meet demand, the College has also secured a lease on an industrial unit at Tweedbank to ensure that we have sufficient space for the expanded engineering and construction provision.

The Hawick Campus hosts the Business Development Centre, offering a variety of programmes to businesses, delivering modern apprenticeships and employability programmes for young people, short courses for business and community groups, and community evening class provision. This Campus also operates in partnership with Hawick High School to deliver learning specific to the needs of Hawick.

The Newtown St.Boswells Campus is a specialised campus responding to high and increasing demand from learners and employers for land-based provision. It was upgraded in AY 2016/17. It makes use of partnerships with several local businesses to access facilities to provide realistic work and learning environments including farms, estates and stables.

2.9.2 Community and Outreach Provision

This provision is delivered across the major towns in the Scottish Borders to enable us to bring demand led provision as close to the communities as possible. Much of the community provision is demand led, full cost recovery work which is delivered on a commercial basis in response to requests from local communities.

We intend to increase the number of adult learners through providing more provision within the community addressing, in particular, the very limited provision in the east of our region. Following the opening of the new Kelso High School, the College will be providing community based evening classes on a range of subject areas not currently available to that community. Early discussions have also taken place for community provision for adults

within the planned intergenerational learning campus in Jedburgh, due to open in March 2020.

We will also introduce the Adult Achievement Awards developed by Newbattle Abbey College to provide qualifications to adults in the community.

2.10 SCQF

The College is committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, it will deliver programmes of study that lead to qualifications recognised on the SCQF (or equivalent for Rest of UK qualification). It has used its approved status for credit rating and levelling to place several programmes on the SCQF where no equivalent programme exists. It also operates as a credit rating body for third parties. Many of the College's own credit rated and levelled provision has been developed in partnership with other partners. Ensuring that any new programmes offered are within the SCQF is an integral part of our validation and approvals procedures. Through this approach we ensure that we minimise the number of non-recognised programmes within our curriculum offer. The outcome of this approach is a higher proportion of learners receiving nationally recognised qualifications.

All full time programmes include a recognised qualification on the SCQF or rest-of-UK equivalent. General information about SCQF is promoted on our website: http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/future-students/general-information/scottish-credit-and-qualifications-framework-scqf/

2.11 ESOL

It has been agreed by the ESOL/CLD partnership group, that the College should continue to administer the single point of contact system which enables learners to be assessed and directed to the most appropriate training for their level of need. With the withdrawal of funding available through the local authority and ESOL provision solely dependent on college credit funding, the local ESOL partnership is planning to allocate their resources to the areas of most need. This means that provision will only be available on the basis of what the College can afford to fund, although additional sources of funding are being sought. The reduced funding package will result in no accredited learning in the Eyemouth area, where unmet demand is estimated to be 14 learners and accredited provision in Duns may also cease in February 2018, meaning that there will only be non accredited learning in the Berwickshire area.

3. National Priority Three: Economy and Society – A more successful economy and society with well prepared and skilled students progressing into jobs with ability, ideas, and ambition to make a difference.

3.1. Developing the Young Workforce

The College has a well-established partnership agreement with Scottish Borders Council's Education Department for the delivery of course provision for the 9 Secondary schools and Wilton Centre. The College has provided a range of both vocational and academic subjects which enables pupils to develop their employability skills and gain qualifications. The subject areas range from Higher Psychology, construction, motor vehicle, childcare, sport, personal presentation, horticulture and rural skills. There were 574 Senior Phase enrolments in 2016/17. In total, the College had 1889 CREDITs of activity in 2016/17 inclusive of provision for winter and summer leavers.

The College is a partner of the South East Scotland Academies Programme (SESAP) with Queen Margaret University and Edinburgh College and offers the Health and Social Care and Creative Industries academies. The academies enable pupils to attend college for part of a qualification with some attendance at the University and also a short work placement. The main purpose of the academies is to shorten the learner journey to college or university. There are 31 pupils enrolled across the 2 academies this year. This is a significant reduction on the previous years as a consequence of the reduction in funding available to the local authority, particularly for transport for the pupils to the University.

The School/College partnership was reviewed and rebranded Borders College Schools Academy in 2015/16 and the offer of vocational programmes will continue to expand through to 2018, with several new courses delivered to school pupils. The school timetables are aligned to an asymmetric week, with college courses included within the column structure. This enables pupils to select the courses as part of their timetable, particularly a Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. Details of the range of programmes offered and the schools involved are detailed in the table below.

Schools Academy Programme 2018/19	Enrols Target	SCQF Level
Health and Social Care QMU Academy - 1 - Schools Link	14	6
Health and Social Care - Nat 5 - Schools Link	18	5
Foundation Apprenticeship - NPA Social Services and Healthcare - Schools Link	12	6
Foundation Apprenticeship - NPA SS Children & Young People YR1 - Schools Link	12	6
Foundation Apprenticeship - NPA SS Children & Young People YR2 - Schools Link	8	6
NPA : Journalism - Schools Link	12	6
NPA Laboratory Science	12	6
NPA Software Development Schools Academy - Schools Link	12	6
NQ Computing Science Schools Academy Gp2 Nat 5 - Schools Link	20	5
NPA Activity Tourism - Schools Academy - Schools Link	12	5
Foundation Apprenticeship - Business Skills	12	6
Creative Industries QMU Academy- Schools Link	12	6
Higher Sociology - Schools Link - Gala - (4 Credits)	12	6
NQ Psychology (Higher) Schools Link - Gala - (4 Credits) (Thurs)	20	6
NQ Psychology (Higher) Schools Link - Gala - (4 Credits)	25	6
NQ Psychology (Higher) Schools Link - Earlston - (4 Credits) (Fri)	28	6
Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare Nat 4 - Schools Link1	18	4
Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare Nat 4 - Schools Link2	18	4
Skills for Work: Early Education and Childcare Nat 4 - Schools Link2 - Hawick	18	4
Skills for Learning and Work Link - Schools Link - 1 Day	12	3
Skills for Learning and Work - Schools Link - 5 day	14	3
Skills for Independence - Schools Link - PT	5	2
VRQ 1 Hairdressing and Beauty - Schools Link - Gp 1	20	4
VRQ 1 Hairdressing and Beauty - Schools Link - Gp 2	15	4
VRQ 1 Hairdressing and Beauty - Schools Link - Gp 3 - Peebles	12	4
VRQ 1 Hairdressing and Beauty - Schools Link - Gp 4 - Eyemouth	12	4
Level 1 - Introduction to Hospitality - Schools	12	4
Animal Care (An Introduction) - Schools Link1	14	4
Animal Care (An Introduction) - Schools Link2	14	4
Skills for Work: Automative Skills Nat4 - Schools Link1	14	4
Skills for Work: Automative Skills Nat4 - Schools Link2	14	4
Skills for Work: Automative Skills Nat4 - Schools Link3	12	4
Engineering Schools Academy Eyemouth - Schools Link	10	4
Engineering Schools Academy Gp2 - Gala - Schools Link	12	4
Rural Skills for Work Schools Link - Berwick	12	4
Agriculture - Schools - Kelso	12	4
Rural Skills for Work Schools Link - Hawick and Jedburgh	12	4
Construction Crafts Academy - Skills for Work - Schools Link - Group A - Mixed	12	4
Construction Academy - Schools Link - Group B - Mixed	12	4
Construction Crafts - Academy - Skills for Work - Schools Link - Hawick - Yr 1	12	4
NQ Skills for Work Construction - Schools Link - Eyemouth - Yr 1	12	4
	571	

3.1.1 Planning for 2018/19

Senior Phase Vocational Pathways

The College is currently meeting with school staff to agree the portfolio for 2018/19 and these discussions include some new vocational pathways such as Health Care at National 5 and a Foundation Apprenticeship for Health Care and Business Skills at SCQF Level 6.

School Involvement

The Principal has visited the majority of Head teachers within their schools to discuss feedback on current provision and future opportunities. There is also ongoing liaison between the Vice Principal; Curriculum and all Secondary School Deputy Heads in planning the curriculum. Three Foundation Apprenticeships were offered to the schools for an intake in 2017/18; however there was very little demand for places which resulted in only one starting in August 2017. The Foundation Apprenticeship: Social Services, Children and Young People enrolled 8 pupils in August. The College has been awarded an SDS contract for 3 Foundation Apprenticeships starting in August 2018.

Business Involvement

The College proactively supports the operation of the DYW employers' forum which was established in October 2016 and is employer-led. Recent appointments have been made with the College acting as the employer. The small team of 3 operate from an office based in a business centre in Selkirk.

27. **To increase substantially the number of senior phase pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered to 150.** (SFC Measure 2(a))
28. **To increase the volume and proportion of Credits delivered to senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications to 842 Credits (3.2% of Credit activity)** (SFC Measure 2(b))
29. **To increase the volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners at S3 and above as part of 'school-college' provision to 2100 Credits (7.9% of Credit activity)** (SFC Measure 2(c))

3.2. Work experience

The College has a strong focus on developing the students' employability skills. Full-time courses where learners are close to being prepared to join the workforce have work placement experience with an external employer. In most subject areas, students commence work experience early on in their programme of study. This accounts for around 70% of the full time provision.

Realistic working environments are also used alongside work experience or as preparation for work experience in a future higher level programme as part of the course delivery hours.

Since the introduction of the new Work Placement Standard for colleges most courses now include an assessed unit for either work experience or building own employability skills.

Where learners are not ready to go out on placement due to lack of confidence or the required skills, course tutors spend time with those learners preparing them for work experience. Preparation activities include supported work placements, employer talks in the classroom, visits to employer sites and employer workshops.

The College makes greater use of realistic work environments for students on introductory programmes, access programmes and students studying at SCQF 4 levels. The redevelopment of the Scottish Borders campus several years ago afforded the College the opportunity to create high-quality, realistic work environments within the campus. These include college kitchens, restaurant, and hair and beauty salons.

The Access programmes run a café within the College and also a community café within one of the Border towns. This work includes an innovative Dementia Café run in conjunction with the NHS.

The land-based programmes make extensive use of local farms and estates for the delivery of the curriculum, where the lecturers work alongside local landowners so that students are learning within a work environment. Much use is made of employer/charity/community initiated assignments in horticulture, landscaping and digital technology related areas of the curriculum. Through this approach all full time students have exposure to relevant work-based learning.

The total number of full-time students in work placements in 2016/17 was 752. This includes those students undertaking substantial realistic work environment experience, supported work placements, employment experience and coaching.

The College employs a number of work placement officers and a work placement co-ordinator to ensure a coherent approach to work placement which is focused and which meets the needs of employers. Work placements are a minimum of 12 days, with the average being between 30 and 50 days.

Regular evaluation of work experience shows that the most likely areas for gaining employment following work placement are catering and hospitality, hairdressing, rural industries, construction and health and social care.

Work placement opportunities are of a high quality and are designed and planned to be appropriate to the qualification being studied and to the industry sector in which they take place.

We recognise the need to continue to provide students with the necessary skills to gain employment and will continue to develop innovative approaches to supporting young people and employers at the different stages of their pre-employment training.

Borders College is now in the second year of Project SEARCH which we deliver in partnership with NHS Borders and Scottish Borders Council. Project SEARCH is a one-year internship programme, based on an international model which originated in the Cincinnati Children's Hospital in the USA, supporting young people with additional needs to gain skills and experience to go on to employment In the first year 100% of the interns who completed have moved into paid employment.

3.2.1 Employer Engagement/Schools Partnership

Borders College has strong links with both industry and schools. These links have been further strengthened by the key role the College has in the DYW Borders Partnership. The College has two members of staff who are full members of the DYW Borders Industry Group Board and work closely with the Board to ensure the College is fully involved in the

delivery of DYW in the region. In addition to this, the College run a number of advisory boards across the curriculum to ensure we are developing a curriculum offer in line with local industry needs.

The College's School Academy offer now includes the new Foundation Apprenticeships. These are mostly delivered over 2 years with pupils starting in S5. During the course, pupils will undertake a substantial work placement with a local employer. The College will be offering 3 Foundation Apprenticeships to all 9 secondary schools in 2018-19.

The College has a programme of events to help address the issues around gender bias. These events including Girls into Construction, STEM days and Men into Care have been targeted at both primary and secondary schools in the Borders.

3.2.2 International work placements

Students benefit each year through work experience placements funded through the European Union funded Erasmus project. This allows students to have work experience in other European countries including Sweden, Portugal, Spain Germany, Netherlands and Ireland. The students benefit greatly from these experiences, expanding their vocational knowledge and growing in confidence. Opportunities for employment have also arisen for several students over the years following their European placement, providing them with the experience of working in another country. College staff have also benefited as they have now established relationships with other European colleges where they have undertaken guest lectures and have learned about their curriculum. Student exchanges have been in place over several years with our Swedish and Dutch partners. Digital technology is used to connect classes, forging relationships and supporting the partner college's students in their English language skills. The College is concerned that these opportunities won't continue following the referendum vote to leave the European Union.

Outputs for 2018/19

30. **The number of full time learners with substantial work experience placements - 800 (62.8% of all FT students)**
    (SFC Measure 6)

3.3 Foundation Apprenticeships

We will also introduce foundation apprenticeships in Business Skills, Childcare and Healthcare in 2018/19, with an initial intake target of 36 senior phase pupils. We started one foundation apprenticeships in 2017/18 with 8 Senior Phase pupils commencing the Foundation Apprenticeship in Social Services, Children and Young People.

3.4 Employer Engagement

The College has had a developed approach to employer engagement for a number of years which has supported the design of programmes for learners. These may be programmes specifically designed for an employer's needs or may influence full time mainstream provision. Examples include:

- Employer devised design briefs for digital media courses;
- Catering and hospitality briefs and competitions initiated by employers;
- Choices of units within programme design e.g. HNC Electrical Engineering;
- Involvement in interview and membership of programme boards;
- Assessment of work practice skills.

All faculties operate an Industry Forum to support the liaison with sector specific and key industries.

3.4.1 Land-based Industries

The National Land-based Strategy Group does not appear to be functioning at present. Meetings have not been held, or colleges have not been invited for a considerable period now (this was also reported in ROA 2017/18). However, we are members of the Skills for Farming steering group which meets on a monthly basis and is tasked with ensuring agricultural education in Scotland is fit for the future. General discussion has been around guidance for farmers on employing an apprentice and sharing good practice across the sector.

There is interest in supporting microbusinesses through shared apprenticeships, with a possibility of moving this forward with co-ordination / employment hubs.

Pre-apprenticeship / internships are also being considered as potential models for school leavers – The Borders College NPTC Level 1 model is recognised as a successful model for preparing young people for entry into the sector.

The College has also met with SRUC to discuss potential future partnership.

3.4.2 Early Learning and Childcare

The College enrolled 31 full time students and 14 part-time students to the HNC in Childhood Practice in 2017/18. This is likely to be the only SSSC Accredited programme that will attract sufficient numbers to be viable in the Borders Region in the near future. The Business Development Unit of the College provide a wide range of SVQs relevant to the Early Learning and Childhood sector. During the period of this outcome agreement it will develop its plans for growth, with the aim of creating sufficient interest and an appropriately qualified workforce to undertake the higher level SSSC accredited programmes. Our plans for growth include:

Marketing & Recruitment

1. We are producing targeted marketing material for the local market based on developments by Scottish Government.
2. Participating in DYW Early Years roadshow and inviting Childcare Connect to an event in May 2018.
3. Liaising with Scottish Borders Council to promote and recruit young learners into childcare employment.

Learner Journey

1. Producing a booklet detailing learner journey for childcare.
2. Increasing progression routes including Foundation Apprenticeships started in 2017-18 to HNC Childhood Practice in 2019-20
3. Increasing progression routes from HNC Childhood Practice/SVQ 3 onto PDA/HND at SCQF Level 8.
4. Expansion of MA's following liaison with local employers and requests for places from SDS.

3.5 Learner destinations

The College has a very high response rate to its annual survey of learner destinations. This is aided by the data provided by SFC and a multi-facetted approach to collecting the data for those unknown to SFC. In total, data was collected for 96% of qualifying learners. We will look to improve on this return rate in each year of this Outcome Agreement. Through our continuing work with employers and universities and through ensuring that we have good progression routes and articulation routes we will contribute to our qualifying learners achieving positive destinations.

Outputs for 2018/19

31. **Positive Destinations of AY 2017/18 full-time further education college qualifying learners 3-6 months after completing their programme – 93.2%**
    (SFC Measure 8)
32. **Positive Destinations of AY 2017/18 full-time higher education college qualifying learners 3-6 months after completing their programme – 97.3%**
    (SFC Measure 8)

3.6 Student Satisfaction

The College uses a range of methods to understand the level of student satisfaction with the delivery of the curriculum and the other services it offers. These are conducted face-to-face, through representatives or by survey. It also operates a complaints handling process for when students and others are not happy with the service they receive. The College conducts an annual survey of its students which incorporates the questions from the national student satisfaction survey. It uses this survey to inform areas where satisfaction is low i.e. where the satisfaction level is below 87%. In these cases, the faculty or department involved is required to identify and implement actions to improve the service.

The College also operates a programme of detailed internal reviews agreed on an annual basis with the Regional Board. These lead to action plans, the progress of which is monitored by the Regional Board's Curriculum & Quality Committee.

Outputs for 2018/19

33. **The percentage of full-time FE students overall, satisfied with their college experience – 96%**
34. **The percentage of full-time HE students overall, satisfied with their college experience – 95%**
35. **The percentage of part-time FE students overall, satisfied with their college experience – 96.5%**
36. **The percentage of part-time HE students overall, satisfied with their college experience – 90%**
37. **The percentage of distance learning FE students overall, satisfied with their college experience – 94%**
38. **The percentage of distance HE students overall, satisfied with their college experience – 100%**
    (SFC Measure 10)

4 National Priority Four: High-performing institutions – A coherent system of high performing, sustainable institutions with modern, transparent and accountable governance arrangements.

4.1 Well-Governed

The Regional Board sets the strategic direction for the College. It has a clear understanding of its information needs to make informed decisions and manage risks which are provided for by a well-structured executive team, led by a highly-motivated new Principal.

The full Board has a wide range of expertise drawn from the local community and meets regularly, with good attendance by members. The full executive team is in attendance at all Board meetings.

The Board also organises it business through a range of relevant Committees:

- Audit Committee
- Finance and General Purposes Committee
- Remuneration Committee
- Curriculum and Quality Committee
- HR Committee
- Nominations Committee

The Regional Board will continue to comply with the Code of Good Governance and has used this code to create its own self-evaluation toolkit. The externally led self-evaluation exercise in 2017 confirmed that there was a high standard of governance and provided information from which the Board was able to set its own improvement targets and begin its own evaluative processes. During 2018/19 the Regional Board will complete a full self-evaluation, building on the outcomes of its own development plan and the self-evaluation activity of 2017/18.

The Regional Board participated in the new Quality Assurance arrangements introduced nationally in 2017, contributing in particular to Section 1.1 – Governance and leadership for change. The output from the pilot year of these new arrangements has been approved by the Board and awaits endorsement by Educational Scotland and SFC.

The Regional Board is committed to improving diversity in governance, recognising that there are considerable advantages from having the combination of the right mix of talent and skills and diversity amongst its membership. Its Nominations Committee is tasked by the Board with ensuring that it takes positive action through its recruitment process to attract applicants to the Board from a wide range of people. Through recent recruitment practice it has increased the representation of women on the Board, now making up more than 60% of membership. It has also actively sought to attract younger board members with some success. The Board is committed to the Code of Good Governance and follows the Scottish Government's guidance on succession planning. It has signed up to the 50:50 by 2020 Pledge on gender equality in the Boardroom which, while focusing on gender equality in the first instance, demonstrates a much wider commitment to equality and diversity in its work.

Outputs for 2018/19

39. **To complete self-evaluation using the standards set out in the Code of Good Governance**.

4.2 High-performing

The College judges its performance against the targets set out in the Regional Outcome Agreement and its Strategic Plan.

It has a well-established and comprehensive self-evaluation and development planning process which involves all business units, faculties and departments. This informs the College development plan and priorities each year. It also has a system involving internal audit and review. The audit system involves those areas commissioned by the Board with our internal auditors and those undertaken internally by managers, reviewed in February 2018.

It reviews the quality of its service to learners and employers using the new national quality system for colleges: *How good is our college?* Within the Education Scotland endorsed self-evaluation and enhancement plan it also sets targets for improving the quality of its service. Through this process we will remain a high-performing organisation.

Outputs for 2018/19

40. **To publish an Education Scotland endorsed Self-evaluation and enhance plan in December 2017**

4.3 Student Representation

The Borders College Students' Association benefited greatly from the additional strategic support grant from SFC, with a sabbatical president and development officer appointed for AY2014/15 onwards. This funding was for two years and helped the Association become an embedded part of the College's culture. From April 2016 onwards the College has funded the Association in line with the conditions set out for the strategic grant. The Association manages the training of class representatives and has a major role in the Faculty Councils, where student representatives are able to have input into the quality of the curriculum and influence learning and teaching. The Association has places on most of the Regional Board and College committees which are filled by members of its executive and through this it is able to bring a student perspective on the delivery of services by the College. It has in place a partnership agreement with the College and its own strategic plan and undertakes self-evaluation of its own performance against the *Student Engagement Framework for Scotland.* The Association works very closely with the College's student services team, linking with one another to ensure there is a wide range of services available to students through different access points (either through the Advice Centre or the Association Office).

We will work with the Students' Association to ensure that there has been meaningful consultation on this draft Regional Outcome Agreement. The development officer meets with the Principal monthly and is a member of the Board.

4.4 Financial Sustainability

In common with other incorporated Scottish further education colleges, Borders College was re-classified as a public body with effect from 01 April 2014. This had a major impact on financial and business planning and reporting, along with changes to accounting treatments to fit with Scottish and UK government requirements.

The move to the government accounting framework impacted significantly on the College's cash flows, with grant receipts now being profiled to match budgeted expenditure profiles, rather than in a fixed annual profile. This has significantly reduced the opportunities to the College in terms of investment of any funds received in advance; however, the College remains committed to achieving the maximum return on its funds, within agreed risk profiles.

The College is expected to retain a much lower level of cash balances than previously expected under the SFC's guidance on financial sustainability and significantly below that for a commercial organisation. This increases liquidity risk to the College. The Board has considered the lowest balances it feels are appropriate in ensuring that commitments are met as they fall due.

Perhaps the most significant constraint is the inability of the College to generate and retain its own reserves against future capital investment. At 31 March 2014, the College donated cash-backed surpluses to the Scottish Colleges Foundation and, subsequently, to Borders Further Education Trust. It has since applied for and received commitment to almost all cash previously donated to be utilised against College projects.

The College is not permitted to enter into a loan agreement on commercial terms. Combined with the inability to retain cash surpluses, this means that the College cannot support any substantial capital investment programme. Alongside other public bodies it must bid, via the SFC, to the Scottish Government for access to capital funding which is essential to bring our estate up to a good standard and invest in new technologies.

The constraints on cash and reserves mean that, when compared to typical commercial organisations, the College's balance sheet and accounting ratios may be judged as weak. However, because of the funding regime, they now actually have little relevance and the College has therefore ceased using them as a performance measure.

Staff costs account for some 68% of College expenditure. With the introduction of national pay bargaining, the College recognises that it has significantly less control over what is, by far, its largest item of expenditure than it did under local bargaining arrangements. That notwithstanding, the College will seek to deploy its staff resources in an efficient and effective manner to mitigate the exposure to this sensitivity risk.

These restrictions notwithstanding, the College will continue to manage its finances to ensure sustainability and support growth, innovation and flexibility and to allow resources to be deployed in as efficient and effective a manner as possible. It will, through the Outcome Agreement negotiation process, ensure that Regional need is identified and recognised and it will continue to press for funding levels appropriate to meet demand and sustain growth.

4.5 Environmental Sustainability

Our second Carbon Management Plan (CMP2) was approved by our Sustainability Committee in February 2016, and covers the period 2016 - 2020. It differs from our 2010-15 plan in that it encompasses the whole College estate and excludes Heriot-Watt University occupied areas within the shared Scottish Borders Campus. Between 2010 and 2015 we implemented 14 defined projects, including the innovative SHARC project, successfully meeting our 25% CO_2 reduction target.

The Green Gown award winning SHARC project is the first of its kind in the UK with heat extracted from waste water in the local public sewer. Project partners included Scottish Water and the Green Investment Bank with the system providing a low carbon alternative, providing most of the Campus' heat requirements. The system was commissioned fully in March 2016.

In 2016, mandatory reporting under the Public Sector Climate Change Duties came into force, coinciding with our new CMP2. The new reporting requires organisations to report specifically on their own undertakings and, as such, the College and Heriot-Watt University have agreed a mechanism for reporting against shared activities such as Utilities and Waste as well as solar PV production at the Scottish Borders Campus.

CMP2 aims to reduce the College CO_2 emissions by a further 10% by 2020 through a series of different projects. These projects include:

- Energy management programme
- Insulation of pipework and fittings in plant rooms
- Programmed replacement with LED lighting
- Voltage optimisation
- Metering, Monitoring & Targeting programme, incorporating sub-metering of electricity and gas & MMT software.
- Food waste recycling
- Smart systems to reduce energy consumption in unoccupied areas
- Greater use of the Borders Railway for business travel

The College benefitted from the College Energy Efficiency Pathfinder (CEEP) project where additional investment was provided through government funding to improve the energy efficiency of our campuses. Work was undertaken in summer 2017 and included installation of LED lighting, building management control, voltage optimisation and timers for electrical equipment.

Outputs for 2018/19

41. **To achieve a carbon footprint for 2018/19 of 546 tonnes of CO_2**
    (SFC Measure 10)

4.6 Sustainability through collaborations and shared services

Since 2009, Borders College has shared its main campus with Heriot-Watt University (HWU) in Galashiels. This was the result of a £32m co-location project providing modern facilities and a financially sustainable Borders estate for both organisations. It allows for a greater efficiency in support services of high quality, supporting both populations of students and opportunities to create coherence in shared areas of the curriculum between the institutions. The campus is a symbol of the commitment of both institutions to the local community in the Scottish Borders.

The College provides ICT and FM services to the University and the University provides library services to the College. These services are planned, delivered and paid for through a series of service level agreements. Ongoing financial and quality management is delivered through a joint Campus Management Committee which has the responsibility of ensuring that the shared estate remains financially viable and fit for purpose. Funding of this work is

achieved through a legally binding sinking fund agreed at the time of co-location. Significant annual cost savings are realised as a result of all these arrangements.

The broad spectrum of collaboration undertaken is unique within the university and college sectors in Scotland, but still guarantees the independence and identity of Borders College and Heriot-Watt University in the Scottish Borders.

4.7 Cyber resilience

The College is implementing the Scottish Government's Cyber Resilience Action Plan, insofar as it applies to the College. In addition, the Board has reviewed the actions in place or planned to be put in place to support our cyber resilience against the Scottish Governments public sector action plan. We have undertaken staff awareness sessions to ensure they are aware that often it is human action or inaction that may inadvertently provide the initial security breach. Through our core skills work with students we develop their skills to be safe online. All students are made aware of the college Firewall and in some computing courses students study cyber resilience.

5. National Priority Five: Greater innovation in the economy – a national culture of enterprise and innovation leading to a more productive and sustainable economy.

5.1 Developing and Sustaining a Culture of Innovation and Enterprise

The College has a good track record of thinking innovatively in responding to local priorities through curriculum design and delivery, working in partnership with employers and through our innovative and awarding winning work on sustainability.

However staff do not always recognise this as innovation. The College has met with Interface on a number of occasions to understand how we can work collaboratively with local employers and our Business Development Unit have received training on Interface regarding Innovation vouchers. To support our staff to think creatively about longer term curriculum need, SIE are delivering a 'thinking creatively about the future job landscape' session in the new year.

5.2 Student Enterprise Mind-sets

Entrepreneurship is integrated into teaching across almost all courses, either through live projects in conjunction with employers or some Higher National Courses have specific units in the framework that relate to Business set-up.

We will continue to run a series of Enterprise Mindset workshops to identify enterprising behaviours and complete a team challenge to present an idea/product.

In partnership with Scottish Institute for Enterprise we will continue to run inspirational workshops to allow students to explore new ideas, seek opportunities, problem solving and idea generation.

In partnership with Bridge to Business to run three 'Inspire' Enterprise Masterclasses to promote enterprise-focused activities and to develop links with industry experts.

5.3 Working with Scotland's Innovation Centres

The College has engaged with the Construction Innovation Centre in discussions around how we can make available this technology and current innovations to businesses in the

Borders. A Construction and Sustainability Innovation Hub proposal for the Borders has been shared with SFC, CIC and Borders Council. The College also took a group of staff and employers to the launch.

The College is part of an Off-site Construction bid, through the CIC and our local employer Oregon. In order for this proposal to become a reality, capital investment will be necessary.

Despite several attempts at contacting the Digital Innovation Centre, the College has been unable to progress this relationship directly, to date.

As part of the SE City Region Deal the College has been involved in the Innovation and Skills bid, especially the Digital and Construction skills propositions.

The College is keen to progress discussions with the other Innovation Centres, especially around Heath & Care which is a priority sector for the region.

5.4 College Innovation Fund

The College will take advantage of the College Innovation Fund when more details of how this fund can be accessed are known.

Our Business Development Unit are talking to our employers about accessing Innovation Vouchers to improve their business outcomes or try other innovative approaches.

Outputs for 2018/19

Appropriate measures to be agreed by SFC following consultation with the college sector over the course of 2018/19

Signed by College Region/Date	Signed by SFC/Date
Tony Jakimciw, Regional Chair Date	