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REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

Subject: Principal Report	**Purpose:** **For Approval** ☐ **For Discussion** ☐ **For Information** ☒
Prepared by: Angela Cox	**Date: 25/11/19**

Purpose: To update Board on key areas of activity and performance.

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

Executive Summary: This report provides an update on:

Performance
External Engagement & Recognition
Staffing (including National Bargaining)
SOSEP Project
Mental Health funding
Borders Further Education Trust applications

Recommendation:
Board are asked to note the paper and ask any questions they might have.

Previous Committee Approvals: No

For publication ☒	**For publication with redactions** ☐	**Not for publication** ☐

Principals Report – November 2019

Performance

The data presented below is subject to change and still includes students who have enrolled but not attended. Cleansing of the data is currently being carried out by MIS and curriculum managers and will be completed in the next few weeks.

Recruitment has been very successful with our annual Credit allocation oversubscribed. Even with any changes to the data we are confident that we have enrolled more students than in previous years. Discussions are ongoing with the SFC regarding additional in year Credits. We estimate, based on previous year trends, we will require up to 1000 additional Credits. We will not be able to recruit any more students in year including apprentices without an in year allocation.

The growth is in Apprenticeship numbers, school programmes and part time students. We believe that our full time student numbers are declining.

Early Withdrawal

We are concerned about the increased levels of early withdrawals, despite an improved induction period and increased levels of pastoral support. Anecdotally we are hearing that many more students require pastoral and learning support. Student Association work to help mitigate food poverty is also highlighting increased need in this area as well.

We continue to be proactive in our support of individuals considered to be 'at risk'.

Academic Year 2018-19		Sector Average **17/18**	SFC published 17/18	SFC published 18/19	College Target 19/20	Actual 19/20	Previous Year
Activity Levels							
KPI 1	SFC Credit Target				25646	25705	23457
Learner Success						25/11/2019	4/12/2018
KPI 3	Early Withdrawal %					8.9	8.4
	FEFT					4.1	3.2
	HEFT						
	FEPT					2.8	4.2
	HEPT					0	3.2

	Further Withdrawal % FEFT HEFT FEPT HEPT					1.4 0.8 2.5 3.1	1.8 0 3.8 3.2
	Total Withdrawal % FEFT HEFT FEPT HEPT	25.1 18.4 10.2 8.4	22.9 20.2 13.6 14.1	23.4 19.0 12.1 11.3	22.5 16.5 8.0 13.0	10.7 4.9 3.3 3.1	10.2 3.2 8.0 6.4
	Partial Success% FEFT HEFT FEPT HEPT	8.8 10.3 11.6 11.2	8.7 7.3 7.7 4.7	8.3 8.9 10.6 3.2	8 7 8 4.5		
	Learner Success % FEFT HEFT FEPT HEPT	66.1 71.3 78.2 80.4	68.7 72.5 78.6 81.3	68.2 72.1 77.3 85.5	71.0 75.0 84.0 80.5		
Learner Success			**Loss of one FEFT is 0.1% and one HEFT is 0.4%**				
KPI 3	Learner Success % FEFT HEFT	66.1 71.3	68.7 72.5	68.2 72.1	71.0 75.0		

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship numbers continue to grow with a target to have 268 on the system by the end of March. This will be a 50% growth over 3 years. Healthcare and Childhood practice numbers have tripled with the team now recruiting additional staff to support the numbers. This is in addition to the Managing Agent apprentices that attend Borders College from SNIPEF and CITB (Plumbing and Construction Apprenticeships).

We also expect to enrol 5 Textile Apprentices in the New Year, which is a first for over 10 years.

CITB

We remain concerned about the lack of direct Apprenticeship enrolments for Construction with only 2 currently on the system against a target of 12 in 2019/20. An action plan is in place with visits ongoing with employers and publicity materials prepared.

External Engagement & Recognition

Downhill Mountain Biking Award

On 21st November, Borders College & Dirt School won the Academic to Business Project of the Year award. The BASE (Borders Academy Sporting Excellence) Mountain Biking course is a performance based, three-year full-time academic programme run in partnership with DIRT school. It allows the students to ride their bikes and work on their technique two days a week while attaining a recognised HN level qualification. A link with more information is here: Unique BASE Mountain Biking recognised at Scottish Awards

Digital Learning Award

Also on the same evening, Borders College won the CDN Digital Learning Award. Dale Clancy, an Electrical Installation lecturer, was recognised for his innovative work on using OneNote to create a paperless course for his students. A link with more detail in here: Digital changes are to be recognised at national awards

Sharing our Apprenticeship Good Practice

On 28th November, Borders College has been invited to present to Skills Development Scotland and Education Scotland our good practice evidenced through our recent Health, Care and Childhood Development Education Scotland Quality Review. We will be giving a short presentation on our learning approach which has resulted in us achieving an Excellent and 4 Very Good Grades.

Scottish Racing

Subject to SQA validation in January, we will be launching our Scottish Racing Academy. This has been developed in partnership with Scottish Racing. We will be the only College in Scotland offering this programme in 2020. It has been designed to address the gap in horseracing education and training provision available in Scotland and the north of England.

Staffing

National Bargaining

The Chair and myself recently attended a two day Employers Association (EA) conference in Dundee. The salient points emerging from the event were as follows:

The Fair Work Agenda was discussed with some sectoral good practice being shared. EIS and Unison Trade Union (TU) representatives also spoke to the sector about their interpretation. This particularly focussed around adequate Trade Union facilities time and job security.

Support Staff job harmonisation is behind schedule with not all colleges having yet submitted their role evaluations. Borders College completed this in June. Modelling of what a national spine might look like is unable to progress until the project leads have a full picture of the current roles and salaries across the sector. The EA intends to create a spine which fits with the funding available but it

is evident that, in discussion with the TUs, support staff are expecting upward harmonisation in line with what EIS achieved for lecturing staff.

This was underpinned by a presentation that summarised the potential job losses across the sector if the efficiencies colleges have been asked to model in their Financial Forecast Return cannot be realised in any other way.

Staff Disability Project

We are working on a project with Advance HE to investigate why the disclosure rate of having a disability is lower in staff across the FE sector than in the average workplace in Scotland. It is currently 6% for Borders College. This will involve a number of focus groups and piloting some different approaches as a result of the research.

Changes in SLT staff and responsibilities

Joanne George will be starting in her new post as Head of MIS in January. Joanne started her career with Borders College in MIS as an apprentice and most recently has been the Curriculum Learning Manager (CLM) for Business, Events and Heritage Tourism. Nancy Whitely is retiring as Head of MIS after 22 years' service at the end of this term.

We are taking this opportunity to move MIS under Hazel Robertson so that a closer working relationship between ISLT and MIS can be developed. The recent appointment of a project manager will provide us with greater capacity to progress the systems alignment and process streamlining work that needs to now happen with some urgency to realise the potential efficiencies in our back office services.

Increasingly our activity is driven by external partnerships, especially employers. Therefore we have made the decision to move Business Development under myself and I will line manage Deirdre McKendry. This complements the external stakeholder activity I currently undertake and allows us to take a more focussed approach in future.

As a result of the Skills Alignment project which will run until June 2020, we have made the decision not to backfill the CLM post vacated by Joanne until we have a better idea of what our priority areas are in our curriculum offer. We are currently looking at moving around our other CLM portfolio areas to ensure adequate cover and potentially a fixed term post if other vacancies arise in the short term.

Borders Further Educational Trust (BFET) applications

The College has made two successful applications to BFET to support our digital strategy.

The first is to invest in SMART Assessor which is an e-portfolio package. This will be used by the Business Development team. SMART Assessor will provide a paperless approach to learning and recording evidence but most importantly it also has the capacity to link to Unit-e. This will enable us to streamline the current bureaucratic and paper heavy enrolment procedure. It will be developed and implemented over the next two terms.

Based on the success of the Laptop Lockers implemented in the Galashiels Campus, we have secured funding to create the same facility at Newtown St Boswells and extend the offer in Galashiels. This facility provides all students access to a digital devise when they are in college for planned learning and independent study.

Mental Health funding

The long awaited funding to support students manage their mental health has been released to colleges. Borders College has been allocated funding to support approximately 1.8 posts. A paper is being presented to our SLT meeting on 26th November with a recommendation on how best to use this funding within our current support structures.

South of Scotland Enterprise Partnership Project

I attended the recent SOSEP Board meeting and presented, along with the Principal of D&G College, the progress of the project and our future ambitions.

The following link takes you to our latest newsletter which provides an update and pictures.
https://issuu.com/borderscollege/docs/sosep-november-update2019

The planned formal opening on 18th December has been postponed until the New Year.