

REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

Subject: Strategic Priorities update 2020 - 2021	Purpose: For Approval <input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Prepared by: Angela Cox	Date: 12/04/21
Purpose: To update Board on the progress of the key priorities agreed by Board in June 2020.	
Linked to Strategic Ambition: Take a leading role in enabling an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland	
Executive Summary: We launched our new Strategic Ambition in the Autumn of 2020. Our Ambition is to provide innovative, life changing learning opportunities that prepare our students for global citizenship. To achieve this we have three underpinning objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will create high quality learning and training opportunities which are relevant, enabling and flexible. 2. We will proactively engage with our community and stakeholders to ensure our practice reflects their needs. 3. We will take a leading role in enabling and inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland. <p>Each year our Strategic Leadership Team consider the priority actions that we need to take to realise our Strategic Ambition. These were agreed with Board in June 2020, before the new Strategic Ambition was ratified by Board but still align with our objectives.</p> <p>In some areas the impact of our actions will take longer than this academic year to realise and due to the disruption of COVID some of the priority areas identified at the start of this academic year have not been progressed as quickly or actions have changed as a result.</p> <p>On the whole good progress has been made in each priority action outlined below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a workforce that meets the needs of delivery. <p>Our focus has been on developing the digital skills for staff, reviewing our development opportunities for staff to learn from other organisations and improving our understanding and actions around equalities. Due to COVID the most progress has been made in developing the digital capacity of our staff although the other actions are being progressed and will continue into next academic year.</p>	

- **Develop a learning and training offer that reflects the outcomes of the Skills Alignment report and respond to regional and national economic recovery.**

We have worked with a range of partners and have or are developing a range of programmes that reflect the medium to longer term economic priorities of the Borders and beyond. In the short term we launched over 80 online programmes in partnership with Dumfries & Galloway College and Rural Tourism programmes with SRUC. Through the SoS Education and Skills group we will be revisiting the outcomes of the Skills Alignment report in a post COVID Economy.

- **Work with established partnerships and create new opportunities for collaborative growth.**

Revised Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is in place and through the Digital Transformation Programme we are considering options for a more dynamic CRM and reporting system. We have engaged with 71 new employers over the last 7 months and as part of our ambition to bring a more international dimension to our curriculum, we have reached out to some global learning and in work training organisations for knowledge exchange opportunities and hopefully student and staff exchange visits in the future. We have also established relationships with national innovation and research partners to support our development of STEM including Digital growth ambitions and set up our Digital Skills Hub with D&G College.

- **Through digital transformation create a more agile service delivery and improve our end user experience.**

Our new MIS solution is currently being implemented and outsourced data centre has been selected. Our new Cloud based VLE has been procured and will be implemented over the summer term. Enhanced email security and strengthening of firewall rules implemented. Firewall consolidation and penetration testing will be completed this month. We are now exploring, funding permitting, phase 2 which would include Finance, CRM and HR.

- **Improve the quality of our delivery and enabling services that results in improved student success and stakeholder satisfaction.**

Due to COVID, the focus has been to provide 1-1 support for staff working remotely and ensuring our students are having a good learning experience. We have also had to respond to changing Education Scotland priority areas for evaluation. Despite the ongoing response to remove delivery we continue to develop a revised quality evaluation and improvement cycle which will be implemented more fully in 2021/22.

- **Embark on a culture change project that contributes towards our Sustainability and operational efficiency goals.**

Sustainability strategy has been launched and programme board created with a number of working groups. Working with external organisations to support the delivery of our ambition and measure of impact.

Impact

The outcome of these actions are difficult to measure on their own but collectively there has been a positive impact. These reflect our Strategic Ambition impact measures.

- Great Places to Work survey indicates we have a 75% staff satisfaction rate compared to 84% for the leading large employers.
- Student Association survey indicated we scored 4.5/5 Stars for student satisfaction.
- Borders College was the largest college provider of Apprenticeship programmes in Scotland during 2020/21 with 310 starts against a target of 231. This amounts to £410,706 income compared to £220,652k budgeted
- We have exceeded our increased income target of £270k for 2020/21.
- Full time total withdrawal remains lower than the same time last year (3.62% down), with full time FE being 2.88% lower, and full time HE 6.13% lower than last year.

Recommendation: Request Board to note the content and raise any questions as required.

Previous Committee Approvals: No

For publication ☒

For publication with redactions ☐

Not for publication ☐

Strategic Priorities 2020/21 update

22nd April 2021

We launched our new Strategic Ambition in the Autumn of 2020. Our Ambition is to provide innovative, life changing learning opportunities that prepare our students for global citizenship. To achieve this we have three underpinning objectives:

1. We will create high quality learning and training opportunities which are relevant, enabling and flexible.
2. We will proactively engage with our community and stakeholders to ensure our practice reflects their needs.
3. We will take a leading role in enabling and inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland.

Each year our Senior Leadership Team consider the priority actions that we need to take to realise our Strategic Ambition. These were agreed with Board in June 2020. Outlined below is the progress made against these priority areas and how these relate to us delivering on the agreed performance measures contained within our Strategic Ambition.

We agreed that the success of our Strategic Ambition will be measured by the following outcomes:

- A. We will be recognised as national leaders in sustainable practice
- B. We will have an agile and creative staff body that can respond to the needs of our business and national priorities
- C. Our Alumni are skilled, resilient, enterprising and prepared for global citizenship
- D. We will continue to be influential and collaborative partners, both regionally and nationally
- E. We will have an engaged and empowered staff and student body who influence our decision making and lead improvement
- F. Student outcomes are in the top quartile of colleges nationally
- G. Student, staff and employer satisfaction are in the top quartile nationally
- H. We will continue to be recognised nationally as a progressive organisation
- I. Our delivery models are personalised, focusing on individual and business need

In some areas the impact of our actions will take longer than this academic year to realise and due to the disruption of COVID some of the priority areas identified at the start of this academic year have not been progressed as quickly.

Strategic Ambition Objective and related impact measure	Priority action in 2020/21	Update	Impact to date
1.2.B.E.G.I.	<p>Develop a workforce that meets the needs of delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support all staff to have the digital skills they need in O365, Teams, digital pedagogy. Develop a process which enables staff to take part in opportunities to learn and upskill through exchange/placements ensuring that there is a method of harnessing and sharing learning from these opportunities. Investigate and implement alternative delivery of equalities training that allows staff to experience equalities in action and leads to a change in culture 	<p>To ensure that digital training is targeted and appropriate, all staff have completed a skills assessment for O365. A combination of on demand, planned and individual training is now being offered to staff. A similar approach will follow for ProSolution, our new MIS system, and CANVAS, our new VLE.</p> <p>Agenor are currently offering on demand support for staff struggling with any aspect of O365.</p> <p>All Academic staff have engaged in OU led staff development on Digital Pedagogy.</p> <p>Protocols for best practice regarding storage, look and feel of digital resources and methods of delivery have been created for staff to use as a reference tool.</p> <p>A process has been agreed and launched for staff to take part in secondment/knowledge exchange and upskilling placements. Due to COVID restrictions we have not been able to progress this yet.</p> <p>Gender Based Violence training took place in February. Feedback is being reviewed before agreeing next steps.</p>	<p>Great Places to Work survey indicates we have a 75% staff satisfaction rate compared to 84% for the leading large employers.</p> <p>Student Association survey indicated we scored 4.5/5 Stars for student satisfaction.</p>

1.2.C.E.F.G.I.	<p>Develop a learning and training offer that reflects the outcomes of the Skills Alignment report and respond to regional and national economic recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to re skilling and upskilling need in South Of Scotland through the development of economic recovery courses • Develop sustainable construction and green energy transition programmes in line with SDS Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan and SOSE Energy Transition Group outcomes • Progress ESECRD Health skills project • Continue to expand Rural Skills and Visitor Economy provision 	<p>Over 80 online programmes developed in partnership with D&G College through our DigiSkillsScotland platform.</p> <p>Through ESP funding for equipment and training we are one of 9 colleges working in collaboration to offer a range of green energy training programmes including Air and Ground Source Heat Pump installation training.</p> <p>Through the ESECRD Health project, we are leading the development of a PDA in Technology Enabled Care. This is a joint qualification sitting between Health and Computing.</p> <p>Progress has been made in establishing the infrastructure requirement for Cyber Security programmes which will build on our successful ESECRD funding Data Skills programmes.</p> <p>Developed and launched Tourism, Hospitality and Enterprise (THE) short course programme in partnership with SRUC to target Rural economy.</p>	<p>Borders College was the largest college provider of Apprenticeship programmes in Scotland during 2020/21 with 310 starts against a target of 231. This amounts to £410,706 income compared to £220,652k budgeted.</p> <p>We are now over our Credit allocation by 115 (25795) and over our ESF Credits by 34 (488).</p> <p>We have fully utilised the other funding avenues available to us including FWDF achieving our target of £140 in 2019/20 and working to an increased target of £289,266 for 2020/21</p> <p>We have exceeded our increased income target of £270k for 2020/21.</p>
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2.3.D.F.G.H.I.	<p>Work with established partnerships and create new opportunities for collaborative growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with 5 new potential customers each month and identify training needs and opportunities • Identify and make contact with one international partner from whom we can learn and share good practice. • Refresh Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and prioritise those around online, digital providers • Collaborate with partners to promote STEM courses (SBC, DWP and SDS). 	<p>We have engaged with 71 new employers over the last 7 months with resulted in 39 new Apprenticeships plus 3 bespoke training agreements.</p> <p>Relationship building with an organisation called LemonTrees Hotel in India who provide inclusive job opportunities and Wayne Community College in USA around Land based skills.</p> <p>We are in process of writing bid for Turing funding (in addition to current Erasmus contract) to expand our foreign exchange opportunities for staff and students.</p> <p>Stakeholder Engagement Strategy has been developed and is now more dynamic with broader staff engagement and expectations set. Currently exploring the most suitable CRM platform and implementation plan in keeping with current Digital Transformation programme.</p> <p>Recently appointed STEM Business Development post to progress engagement with employers and co-ordinate full cost income activity within the Hawick Sustainable Construction STEM Hub. Established a relationship with National Institute Manufacturing Skills, Digi-health innovation centre, CENSUS and Scotland IS. This provides knowledge exchange, opportunities to capitalise on funding opportunities and raise the profile of Borders College.</p> <p>In addition we have, in partnership with D&G College, launched a Digital Skills Hub and are collaborating on Advanced Manufacturing funded project.</p>	<p>Borders College was the largest college provider of Apprenticeship programmes in Scotland during 2020/21 with 310 starts against a target of 231. This amounts to £410,706 income compared to £220,652k budgeted.</p> <p>We are now over our Credit allocation by 115 (25795) and over our ESF Credits by 34 (488).</p> <p>We have fully utilised the other funding avenues available to us including FWDF achieving our target of £140 in 2019/20 and working to an increased target of £289,266 for 2020/21</p> <p>We have exceeded our increase income target of £250k for 2020/21.</p>
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1.2.3.A.C.F.G.H.I.	<p>Through digital transformation create a more agile service delivery and improve our end user experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement new MIS and VLE Software solution. • Implement Digital Transformation recommendations to improve our servers, storage and campus connectivity • Implement technical recommendations from Cyber Security Review 	<p>Digital Transformation project being led by Agenor.</p> <p>New MIS software purchased (ProSolution) and currently being implemented. Training schedule has been agreed and will be rolled out over summer term ready for August enrolment.</p> <p>Data Vita chosen as vendor to provide Data Centre provision to host our servers, storage and provide backup and DR service.</p> <p>New cloud based VLE procured (CANVAS) which will be launched at the end of the summer term but will run in tandem with current VLE as the transfer of learning content is reviewed to ensure it meets our quality standards and new content is developed. This approach also allows students to finish their programme on current VLE and for staff to have time to develop more interactive content that the new VLE supports.</p> <p>Enhanced email security and strengthening of firewall rules implemented. Firewall consolidation and penetration testing to be completed in April.</p>	<p>MIS Solution will provide meaningful data that will provide an enhanced user experience.</p> <p>Data Centre Solution will provide a secure, flexible, cost effective infrastructure platform enhancing the digital experience of all college stakeholders.</p> <p>VLE Solution will provide an integrated all in one cloud solution designed to enable, up skill and transform online learning. Students will benefit from easier to access courses and more accessible course content. Lecturers will benefit from better integration and more intuitive courses creation.</p> <p>Cyber Security enhancement will ensure we provide ongoing protection to</p>

			college systems and data in the ever changing face of Cyber threats.
1.2.3.C.E.F.G.I.	<p>Improve the quality of our delivery and enabling services that results in improved student success and stakeholder satisfaction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create guides and templates for developing learner content on the VLE. This will include tools, examples of good practice and case studies that can be used to support learning. • Create a Quality Cycle that includes minimum standards and evaluation of each stage of a learners journey. • Develop a suite of tools to evaluate user feedback and engagement including surveys, focus groups, google analytics. • Progress Education Scotland priority themes for quality improvement with staff teams. 	<p>Autumn 2020 guide has been distributed to CLMs for lecturing staff for developing learner content on VLE. Work on Global Citizenship to start soon.</p> <p>Quality Cycle minimum standards in progress of being developed. Some new evaluation tools have been implemented including student surveys for induction, themed Student Experience Committees, focus groups. This will continue to be developed in 2021/22.</p> <p>A revised lesson observation model is being consulted on with volunteers being requested to test this term. This builds on the previous process but takes into account the different types of activity that facilitates learning.</p> <p>Due to COVID, focus has been to provide 1-1 support for staff working remotely and ensuring our students are having a good learning experience. We have also had to respond to changing Education Scotland priority areas for evaluation.</p>	<p>Student Association survey indicated we scored 4.5/5 Stars for student satisfaction.</p> <p>Full time total student withdrawal remains lower than the same time last year (3.62% down), with full time FE being 2.88% lower, and full time HE 6.13% lower than last year.</p>
2.3.A.C.H.	<p>Embark on a culture change project that contributes towards our Sustainability and operational efficiency goals.</p>	<p>Sustainability launched through separate staff and stakeholder events. The strategy was well received and a good level of interest and ideas generated.</p>	<p>Too early to demonstrate impact.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Sustainability Strategy with staff and stakeholders • Agree methodology of how to progress and monitor impact of actions taken to deliver on our key performance measures • Work with Student Association to engage with students on sustainability matters. • Continue to engage with EAUC to influence decision making and identify sectoral issues to communicate with SFC and Scottish Government. 	<p>Programme Board is being created with a number of working groups covering waste, travel, curriculum and community. The board will feed into the sustainability committee progress against key performance measures.</p> <p>Working with Zero Waste Scotland and Edinburgh University to support us in measuring behavioural change. Working with Energy Skills Partnership to support the development of staff and curriculum offer.</p> <p>Student Association is a member of the sustainability committee. Some engagement has taken place but limited due to remotely operating. Students will be invited to join the working groups where appropriate.</p> <p>Continuing to work with EAUC on providing sectoral support to colleges to deliver on the Net Zero ambition.</p>	
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