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REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

Subject: Sustainability Strategy Update	**Purpose:** **For Approval** ☐ **For Discussion** ☒ **For Information** ☐
Prepared by: Kirsty Robb, Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Services	**Date: 1 December 2022**

Purpose:
To provide members with an update of key activity in relation to implementation of the Sustainability strategy

Executive Summary:

Key Items:
The Sustainability Strategy sets out how the climate emergency has redefined sustainability, taking it from a component of corporate social responsibility, escalating it to become a leadership essential, to be placed at the heart of all of our plans. This strategy is an opportunity to continue the journey from good to great. The College demonstrates the importance of moving towards a more sustainable society through the work as an instigator of behavioural change, ensure relevance and impact on a global scale by committing to the circular economy and developing it's staff and students to become global citizens.

Borders College is committed to working towards a more sustainable world, and over the last eleven years has implemented big projects and little actions, which together have resulted in a significant reduction in our carbon emissions. Borders College continues on this sustainability journey, with net-zero by 2045 as the ultimate destination. The strategic objectives are:

- Influence positive, sustainable behaviours across the wider community
- Develop awareness of, and implement, good sustainable practice in all of our learning programmes
- Promote sustainable innovation and the adoption of technological breakthroughs with our employers and students
- Adopt best ethical, sustainable and social practice in our operations and supply chain.

The College has organised the sustainability work across eight workstreams:

1. Carbon management
2. Waste management
3. Travel and transport
4. Procurement
5. Curriculum
6. Community
7. Biodiversity
8. Behavioural.

The attached report provided the Board with and update on the progress of these workstreams over the last year. A broad range of activity has been undertaken to date across all areas of the college, with many courses being delivered to ensure the wider community is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure a more sustainable society.

The hard work was acknowledged by becoming winners of the Green Gowns – 2030 Climate Action. The category recognised institutions with clear plans on how they will reach net zero emissions and looked for innovative ideas and approaches being taken in its implementation. **Questions that Members should ask themselves when reading the paper:** Do the actions completed and actions planned allow the College to meet the objectives set out in the Sustainability Strategy? Is there more we could be doing?
Linked to Strategic Ambition: Take a leading role in enabling an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland **Performance Measures: Recognised as national leaders in sustainable practice**
Linked to Strategic Risk Register: New Risk (outwith themes) **New Risk Commentary**
Recommendation: Members to note significant progress against the workstreams including our facilities and support functions, curricular, biodiversity and community-oriented skills delivery.
Previous Committee Approvals: None

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

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY IMPMENTATION
REPORT TO REGIONAL BOARD: 1 DECEMBER 2022

Introduction

This report provides the board with an update on each of the workstreams which were established in 2020 to action the implementation of the Sustainability Strategy. These workstreams are listed below:

1. Carbon management
2. Waste management
3. Travel and transport
4. Procurement
5. Curriculum
6. Community
7. Biodiversity
8. Behavioural

The Public Sector Report on Compliance with Climate Change Duties 2021 is an annual report, it has been reviewed in draft by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. It has been subject to peer review by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC) and some minor changes made. The Borders College has been submitted by 30 November. This annual report is a measure of the CO2 emission of the college and demonstrates the progress of the College towards achieving its net zero target by 2045.

To aid the College on its journey to net zero the Central & South of Scotland College Partnership successfully appointed a cross College sector role hosted by EAUC in January 2022. This is a 2-year fixed term post to support Borders College, West Lothian College & Forth Valley Colleges on the road to Net Zero. A key objective of this role is the focus of completing the Further Education road map for all 3 colleges and working to secure grant funding through the Non-Domestic Energy Efficiency Fund (NDEEF) in decarbonising the College estate. The post has been very effective at securing over £100k worth of funding, developing our Road map, setting targets and working across the sector to identify opportunities for the College to help meet our targets set within the sustainability strategy.

CARBON MANAGEMENT

1. SHARC Heating system

The system continues to perform well with a similar performance last year, just short of 1m KWHrs meeting 60% of the overall Campus heating needs.

2. *Hawick* Campus Improvements

The Hawick project was incorporated into the feasibility study completed by Mott Macdonald as detailed below. An additional £10k was secured through GPSEDs funding to complete the control works at Hawick which are currently underway. The lighting is fully complete and the remain parts will be completed when further is sourced. A funding application is currently being prepared for submission to Scottish Government Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund (GPSEDs)

3 Galashiels Campus Improvements

The College were successful is applying for 2 elements of funding through the Scottish Government Decarbonisation funding for public buildings.

Funding of £50k has been secured initially to work with Mott MacDonald to Complete feasibility studies on available technologies to decarbonise our heating plant at all campuses. This effectively rolled up all of the previous Hawick projects. The report highlighted some significant areas of opportunities to remove Gas as the primary/secondary heating source which primarily focused on Galashiels and Hawick Campuses. In order to develop the case for a funding application to GPSEDs more detailed work around Hydraulic Modelling was recommended.

An additional £48k was secured for hydraulic modelling through pre capital GPSEDs funding. This entails completing a digital twin of the Galashiels heating network currently supplied by both Gas and SHARC heating system. Hyspot are currently developing the model which will form a fundamental part of the funding bid to GPSEDs early next in the new year.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The College are retendering our waste contract which ends in April 2023. This will alter our current collection model with a central waste collection being developed on Campus. This will fulfil our ambitions of zero to landfill and provide detailed data around waste stream collections to enable us to calculate our carbon footprint more accurately as required by the Public Bodies Climate Change Declaration which is required to be completed annually.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

A Sustainable Travel plan has been created to support a drive towards Net Zero by 2040. Six key actions are outlined in the Travel Plan.

1. Replace College car fleet with EV/Hybrid alternatives

The current fleet contract ends in October 2022. Three EVs were ordered in May 2022 and expected delivery is March 2023. This will ensure the car fleet is 100% electric.

2. Increase EV charging posts across the estate

The funding bid through the Energy Savings Trust to add an additional five double charge posts was unsuccessful. Options are currently being explored with Scottish Borders Council increase the number of charging points.

3. Free bus travel for Under 22s

Free bus travel has been fully implemented and usage has been good.

4. Promote walking and cycling to work

The College are currently working with EAUC to apply for funding to a cycling officer for 2023/24 term, which will promote and improve cycling opportunities to all college campuses.

5. Improve e-cycling charging infrastructure across the Borders.

Borders College is in discussion with Scottish Borders Council to improve e-cycling charging infrastructure. SBC is exploring funding opportunities to support this. Discussions ongoing.

6. Replace Minibus fleet with sustainable alternatives

The replacement of the Minibus fleet with EV/Hybrid alternatives are a key priority for the College. A target has been set of not procuring any new large petrol or diesel vehicles from 2030.

PROCUREMENT

The Procurement workstream aims to develop and provide an environmentally and financially sustainable procurement system for Borders College, in collaboration with the strategic working groups and leveraging support across our stakeholder partnerships. Our vision is to lead sustainable excellence in our supply chain, within the College functions and beyond, influencing our external environment and encouraging the circular economy.

The Procurement Policy embeds sustainable practices within its procurement exercises, utilising national frameworks wherever possible, and developing sustainable influences using the FNT2030 net zero template and related sustainability agencies. Where locally-managed contracts are used, climate change impacts will be considered as part of the criteria for award.

The workstream group is established, with internal representation from Procurement, Finance, Facilities and also APUC (Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges). Key activities during the period are:

- Procurement training for all

  Key staff have completed all training available on the Sustainable Procurement Tools Scottish Government Website, and supplemented the understanding of sustainable in procurement by attending related Community Renewal Fund training. The opportunity to develop easy to understand training for requisitioners and approvers has been identified and modules for all staff to complete will be rolled through Canvas

- Supplier assessment programme

  The current purchasing framework embeds sustainability within it and is being further developed to use business sustainability rating information provided by Ecovadis. Development work is also being undertaken to provide the ability to build a survey to influence our supply base in our Sustainable Ambition. Scope 3 emissions from purchasing are reported on an annual basis using Defra factors for spend, allowing us to rank and focus on areas for improvement. The procurement team is working with APUC to deliver a toolkit using the FNT2030 templates with IT spend being a area of focus. Work has also started to consolidate PPE purchasing, looking for reduce deliveries and spend efficiencies.

CURRICULUM

Climate Change and “Sustainability and Me” were both included on Canvas this session as part of the Induction module which was not achieved last session, work is underway with the E-Learning team to obtain better analytics regarding student engagement with these modules.

These two e-learning modules are now also included in the Essential Information section of Canvas for staff, to be completed within 6 months of joining the College.

We continue to deliver Sustainable Awareness short courses across the Curriculum to both full-time students and apprentices however, we need to widen this offer across the whole college. The school’s construction FA groups are working with local employers and looking at fabric first approaches to sustainable construction as a project.

We are an approved BPEC Air Source and Ground Source training provider and this is an option in the plumbing framework aiming to train and upskill plumbing students. We are also delivering this training to Plumbing students whose companies are still choosing to go down the traditional Gas route as an additional free bolt-on (we are getting external funding to cover costs).

Electrical Engineering students are introduced to our Smart Tech technologies and battery storage to raise awareness of the technology and future opportunities available to them. Engineering Systems with Renewables students are involved with researching and interacting with the air source and ground source heating technologies as part of their studies with the renewables part of their course.

Recently developed is an template containing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which will be rolled out across the curriculum plan. This template once completed across the curriculum will identify which of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are being delivered by each course. This will identify a baseline to take forward and highlight where are gaps and identify areas of good practice.

COMMUNITY

1. Flexible workforce - sustainability and green energy courses

A number of sustainability and green energy courses have been delivered. The following courses were developed and made available based on employer need:

- Energy Battery Storage Awareness
- Intro to Digital Smart Homes
- Intro to Sustainable Construction
- Intro to Thermal Imaging
- Intro to Air Tightness and Air Tight Testing
- Intro to MHVR
- EV Charging installation
- Carbon warrior
- Renewables awareness.

2. Community Renewal Fund

Additional funding obtained from the Community Renewal Fund has allowed 346 students enrolled on the following courses:

- Carbon Management Training levels1,2 and 3
- Sustainable value workshops
- Sustainable Social Value through procurement
- Designing for circular economy zero waste

Further free learning opportunities are also currently being advertised for the following areas:

- Carbon literacy for Community
- Carbon literacy leadership and management
- Carbon Management Training levels1,2 and 3
- Electric vehicle charging equipment installation
- How to develop and implement a net zero plan for your business
- Introduction to thermal imaging
- Relationship management Eco Shoe game
- Design to save the planet
- Renewables launch gamified simulation
- Nature skills & ecology
- Introduction to chicken keeping

BIODIVERSITY

1. Bees and biodiversity

Bee-keeping is undertaken on site with bee hives being located on campus. Plans are underway with the horticultural team to incorporate bee keeping into the programme for the next session.

2. Rural short courses expansion

Three new courses have been developed with funding from the Community Renewal Fund. These are nature skills, chicken keeping and local food production. The uptake has been good with three groups completing the nature skills and chicken keeping courses. Local food production is about to commence its first group.

The chicken keeping has produced nation-wide interest featuring on both radio and television. Work is underway to allow future delivery partially online. Other courses which have been delivered include ATV courses to agriculture, engineering and gamekeeping students.

Work is underway to develop sheep husbandry short courses after feedback from the local Rare Breeds Survival Trust, which would be beneficial to local smallholders concentrating on organic food production.

3. Facilities

Students are currently developing a wildflower meadow (this has been sown) which is adjacent to the beehives. Agricultural students have created a wildflower area at Hopton farm Ancrum as part of the farms overall biodiversity scheme. Horticultural students are growing food for the animals on campus in the recently purchased light boxes (small version of vertical farming)

There are plans to harvest rainwater from the roof at Newtown to be used for watering plants and watering animals. Discussions are underway with the International Tree Foundation to look at planting trees and hedges on college campuses.

4. Outreach work

A number of primary school groups where hosted in the summer and made bee houses. A Rural taster day took place in June and was well attended. The schools and agricultural students have been busy planting trees and hedging on local estates to enhance the environment.

There is a linkup between forestry students and Tillhill forestry to gain practical work experience on local estates. Riddell Estate hosted an event in May attended by the Cabinet Secretary Mairi Gougeon to highlight the working partnerships that the college has with local businesses. This included forestry and conservation.

5. Curricular development across Rural Skills (RSK) courses

Curricular development across RSK courses is underway to refresh and add conservation and biodiversity activities. Future plans include the development of new units and adaptation of some existing units to focus on conservation. Course structures will be adapted, for example to focus on ecology and ecosystems. The Nature Skills and Ecology course will be delivered in May 2023.

Work placements will have a focus on biodiversity and conservation where possible e.g. group conservation work carried out by students. There will be a focus on biodiversity and sustainability across wider activities, for example wildflower and tree planting.

Pesticides use unit has been removed from full time level 5 agriculture framework. Responsible use of pesticides continues to be taught as a short course (statutory training)

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

Behavioural Change workstream is currently supporting the work of other workstreams and projects. Several projects underway or delivered will begin to influence positive, sustainable behaviours across the wider community. We will engage with the new appointee to the Central & South of Scotland College Partnership role to better understand way to measure the behavioural changes across students, staff and the wider community.

1. Hybrid Working

Behavioural changes have been influenced by alternative working practices as a result of the return to Campus and the "living with Covid" phase of the pandemic. Improved IT connectivity and remote working capabilities has created a better experience for those working or studying from home. The rollout of Office 365 and the increased use of Teams and SharePoint has also influenced our behaviours. The majority of meetings are continuing to be hosted online rather than face to face significantly reducing travel.

2. Printing and Copying

As a result of behavioural changes made during the pandemic most systems and processes which were moved to on line have remained on line leading to a substantial reduction in printing and copying.

3. Student Loan Laptops

Borders College loans laptops to students at the start of each academic year. Laptops are returned at the end of session to enable re-provisioning, making the process more sustainable and reducing any unnecessary purchasing of additional laptops.

4. Influencing behaviours

A Sustainability Calendar was introduced in August 2022 running through to May 2023, highlighting and encouraging changes to behaviours in different areas each month throughout the period. Marketing is carried out to highlight the particular area on a monthly basis e.g. November is European Week for Waste Reduction. Each initiative is linked to the Sustainability Development Goals.

A new Sustainability module which has been developed by College Development Network has been made available for all staff on Canvas. This is in addition to the Climate Change and Environmental Awareness which are already available.

5. External recognition of Progress

As part of the audit and award submission from both Vibes and the Green Gown Awards, feedback from the process has identified good progress with behavioural change and a recognition from the Assessors that behavioural change is apparent in the organisation.