



**REGIONAL BOARD**

---

**Meeting of 24 June 2020**



## REGIONAL BOARD

### NOTICE

There will be a meeting of the Regional Board of North East Scotland College on Wednesday 24 June 2020 at 1000 hours through the use of Microsoft Teams.

### AGENDA

Agenda Item		Paper
14-20	Apologies for Absence	
15-20	Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any Agenda Items	
16-20	Minutes of Previous Meeting – 08 April 2020	X
17-20	Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting	X
	<b>Reports to the Board</b>	
18-20	Report by the Regional Chair	X
19-20	Report by the Principal	X
20-20	Report by Committee Chairs	X
	<b>Matters for Decision</b>	
21-20	Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – Annual Report	X
22-20	Programme of Meetings AY2020-21	X
23-20	Trade Union Nominees – Observers at Board Meetings	X
24-20	Board Membership & Recruitment	X
25-20	Board Policies	X
	<b>Matters for Discussion</b>	
26-20	Annual Priorities AY2019-20 Progress Update	X
27-20	Innovative Practice at NESCol	X
28-20	Strategic Risk Register	X
29-20	NESCol's Future Strategy	X
	<b>Matter for Information</b>	
30-20	Presentation - Scenario Planning Update	
31-20	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
32-20	<b>Summation of Business and Date of next meeting</b>	
	<b>Reserved Items of Business</b>	
	<b>Matter for Discussion</b>	
33-20	Presentation - AY2020-21 Applications & Credits	

	<b>Matters for Decision</b>	
34-20	Budget 2020-21 & Financial Plan 2021-22 to 2022-23	
35-20	Financial Forecast Return 2019-20 to 2022-23	
36-20	Current & Future Staffing Options (incl. Presentation)	
37-20	<b>Summation of Reserved Items of Business</b>	
38-20	<b>In Camera Discussion – Regional Chair &amp; Board Members</b>	



**REGIONAL BOARD**

Draft Minutes of the meeting of the Regional Board held on Wednesday 08 April 2020 at 1530 hours through the use of Microsoft Teams.

Agenda Item	
	<p><b>Present:</b>            David Anderson            Ann Bell – Vice Chair            Angela Calderon            Neil Cowie            Martin Dear            Abdul Elghedafi            Susan Elston            John Henderson – Vice Chair            Neil McLennan            Ken Milroy - Regional Chair            Sheena Ross            Andrew Russell            Anne Simpson            Gwen Watt</p> <p><b>In attendance:</b>            Graham Mutch, Co-opted Member Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee            Robin McGregor, Vice Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality            Peter Smith, Vice Principal Finance &amp; Resources            Pauline May, Secretary to the Board            Susan Lawrance, Minute Secretary</p>
01-20	<p><b>Apologies:</b>            Abha Maheshwari and Ellis Watt</p>
02-20	<p><b>Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any Agenda Items</b>            N McLennan declared his declaration of potential conflicts in relation to his role at the University of Aberdeen.</p>
03-20	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Meeting – 11 December 2019</b>            The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.</p>
04-20	<p><b>Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting</b>            It was noted that, due to the cancellation of the Board Meeting scheduled for 25 March 2020, the Education Scotland Progress Visit Report and a related Action Plan, developed by the College in response to Visit findings, had been made available in the March Updates Channel of the new Regional Board Team Space.</p> <p>K Milroy confirmed that his appraisal by Scottish Ministers was rescheduled and held on 12 February 2020. It was noted that a summary of the appraisal would be shared with Members once received from Scottish Ministers.</p> <p>It was reported that the outstanding action in relation innovative practice at NESCol was work in progress and would be shared with the Board in due</p>

	<p>course, incorporating new practices implemented for remote learning and teaching in response to the COVID-19 lockdown.</p> <p>No further matters were raised.</p>
	<p><b>Matters for Decision</b></p>
05-20	<p><b>Regional Board Chairs Committee</b> The Board considered a paper proposing the establishment of a Chairs Committee.</p> <p>K Milroy summarised the rationale for the new Committee, and noted that this mechanism was common practice for governance arrangements at colleges and universities.</p> <p>Members questioning the reference to considering the Board's performance on an annual basis, after some discussion it was agreed that this could potentially cause confusion with this aspect of the Audit &amp; Risk Committee's remit and the Board's overall evaluation process and should therefore be removed. It was also agreed that the reference to providing support and guidance to the College's Executive Team should be expanded to also include providing advice to the Regional Board.</p> <p>K Milroy commented that the establishment of the Committee provided 'back-up' arrangements for responding to any urgent matters in the unprecedented circumstances, noting that the convening of this Committee was in reality unlikely. It was agreed that if the Committee was to be convened the agenda would be made available to all Members.</p> <p>Members agreed that the Committee would be established in the short-term for the current COVID-19 situation. It was agreed that the Terms of Reference would be reviewed if the Committee was to be retained and become part of the Board's governance arrangements once normal operation of the Board and Committees resumes.</p>
06-20	<p><b>Regional Board Committee Vice Chairs</b> Members considered a paper detailing a proposal to appoint new Vice Chairs to two of the Board's Standing Committees.</p> <p>K Milroy summarised the rationale for the proposed appointments, highlighting that the matter had been considered by the Board's Governance Steering Group prior to being presented to the Board.</p> <p>Members approved the appointment of S Ross as Vice Chair of the Finance &amp; Resources Committee, and S Elston as Vice Chair of the Human Resources Committee.</p>
	<p><i>A Simpson left the meeting at this time.</i></p>
07-20	<p><b>ASET – Governance &amp; Reporting Arrangements</b> The Board consider a paper detailing proposed changes relating to governance and reporting arrangements for the College's wholly owned subsidiary company, Aberdeen Skills and Enterprise Training Limited (ASET).</p> <p>K Milroy advised Members of discussions held in advance of the proposals being prepared for consideration by the ASET Board of Directors and then presented for approval by the Regional Board.</p>

	<p>P Smith presented three amended documents – Memorandum of Understanding, Policy of the Appointment of Directors and ASET's Articles of Association. It was noted that the College's solicitors, Bunness Paull, had amended the Articles to reflect the proposed changes to the governance arrangements.</p> <p>In relation to a query, P Smith advised that the College was referred to as the Board of Management rather than the Regional Board as this is the College's registered name on the Scottish Charity Register.</p> <p>The proposal for P Smith to cease undertaking the role of Company Secretary was noted, with P Smith advising that S Scott, ASET Management &amp; Financial Accountant, would replace him and that an appropriate handover would take place.</p> <p>A short discussion was held on the statement included in the Memorandum – "This will normally be the College's Vice Principal – Finance and Resources". It was agreed that this should be removed as the Policy clearly states that the Board will determine the appointment of the College nominated Director and references to 'normally' and a specific job role are unnecessary.</p> <p>Members approved the Memorandum of Understanding, the Policy on the Appointment of Directors, and the Articles of Association of ASET, incorporating the presented proposed changes and subject to the one further agreed amendment to the Memorandum.</p> <p>It was agreed that the approved changes should be implemented as of 08 April 2020.</p> <p>Members approved the Regional Chair to sign the Written Resolution on behalf of the Regional Board, after which it would then be submitted to Bunness Paull.</p> <p>In relation to the appointment process for the new ASET Chair, the Board delegated its authority for approval of this appointment to the Principal &amp; Chief Executive and Regional Chair.</p>
08-20	<p><b>Summation of Business and Date of Next Meeting</b> The Secretary gave a summation of the business conducted.</p>
	<p><b>Reserved Items of Business – Matters for Decision</b></p>
09-20	<p><b>Disposal of Balgownie Site</b></p>

10-20	<b>Extension of Contract for Security Services</b>
	<i>N McLennan left the meeting at this time.</i>
11-20	<b>Update from Executive Team</b>

12-20	<b>Any Other Business</b>
13-20	<b>Summation of Reserved Items of Business</b> A summation of the reserved business conducted was not requested.
	Meeting ended 1650 hours

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Actions from Regional Board Meeting 08/04/20</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
04-20	Summary of Regional Chair's Appraisal by Scottish Ministers to be circulated to members	K Milroy	Once received from Scottish Ministers

05-20	Terms of Reference for Chairs Committee to be finalised as agreed	P May	As soon as possible
07-20	ASET documents to be finalised	P Smith	As soon as possible
07-20	Written Resolution to be signed by Regional Chair and submitted to College solicitors	P Smith with P May	As soon as possible
09-20			
09-20			
10-20			As soon as possible
11-20			

**Signed:**.....

**Date:** .....



**Agenda Item 17-20**

**REGIONAL BOARD**

An update on matters arising from the meeting of the Regional Board of North East Scotland College held on Wednesday 08 April 2020.

<b>Agenda Item</b>	
04-20	<b>Action:</b> Summary of Regional Chair's Appraisal by Scottish Ministers to be circulated to members.
	<b>Update:</b> The summary has not yet been received.
05-20	<b>Action:</b> Terms of Reference for Chairs Committee to be finalised as agreed.
	<b>Status:</b> Complete – Terms available in the Chairs Committee Channel of the Regional Board Team Space. To date, only one meeting of the Committee has been convened where the College's use of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was discussed – minutes of this meeting can also be accessed in the Chairs Committee Channel.
07-20	<b>Action:</b> ASET documents to be finalised.
	<b>Status:</b> Complete.
07-20	<b>Action:</b> Written Resolution to be signed by Regional Chair and submitted to College solicitors.
	<b>Status:</b> Complete – Signed Written Resolution submitted to the College's solicitors, Burness Paull, on 24 April 2020.
09-20	
09-20	
10-20	
11-20	

**REGIONAL BOARD**

**Meeting of 24 June 2020**

**REPORT BY THE REGIONAL CHAIR**

The purpose of this report is to update the Regional Board on recent developments in the FE sector and at the College.

<b>1</b>	<p><b>The Cumberford-Little Report – One Tertiary System: Agile, Collaborative, Inclusive</b></p> <p>Published in February 2020, the <a href="#">Report</a> by two of Scotland's most experienced Principals, provides a useful reference document for the future strategy for the college sector. The Report, commissioned by the Scottish Government to consider what more Scottish colleges can do to help improve businesses' performance and productivity, highlights the strengths and potential of the sector and discusses the economic impact of colleges in Scotland.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Regional Chair Vacancies</b></p> <p>The previously reported vacancies for Regional Chairs for Borders College and Dumfries &amp; Galloway have not been filled and will be re-advertised. Edinburgh College has advertised to fill its Regional Chair position. The recruitment for these positions has now been put on hold as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Committee Membership</b></p> <p>The following changes to Committee membership will be made from the beginning of AY2020-21:</p> <p>David Anderson will cease membership of the Finance &amp; Resources Committee and will join the Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee. This change is in line with good practice where the Chair of the Audit &amp; Risk Committee does not serve on the Finance &amp; Resources Committee. David's career background and knowledge will be a great asset to the work of the Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee.</p> <p>Susan Elston will cease membership of the Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee and will join the Finance &amp; Resources Committee. This change will enable the Finance &amp; Resources Committee to benefit from Susan's significant financial knowledge gained throughout her career.</p> <p>Both David and Susan have confirmed that they are happy with the changes noted above.</p> <p>Members will be provided with an opportunity to discuss their Committee Membership going forward with me as part of their upcoming Annual Development Meetings. This may result in further changes to Committee membership.</p>

<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Principal's Performance Management Objectives</b></p> <p>I have delayed the setting and reporting of the Principal's Performance Objectives. Prior to the pandemic I had regular face-to-face meetings with the Principal. Since the implementation of the lockdown arrangements, I have maintained very regular contact with the Principal via Teams and we have kept each other fully apprised on our respective involvement at local and national levels. Until such time as we have a clearer understanding about the immediate impact of the pandemic and begin to look to the next academic year and beyond, I see there being no real merit in setting performance objectives in such a fluid environment. I will however provide opportunities for Board Members to provide feedback or raise any questions with me.</p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>NESCol Student Engagement Workshop – 06 March 2020</b></p> <p>Along with other Board members I attended a useful workshop on student engagement with helpful input from external speakers. The event will, I anticipate, generate new ideas for further development in terms of our student engagement including aspects for consideration by the Regional Board.</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Attendance at Meetings – Regional Chair</b></p> <p>I have attended various meetings since the last Board Meeting, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aberdeenshire Community Planning Board and Workshops</li> <li>• ASET CEO and Board on various occasions</li> <li>• Strategic Liaison Meetings with Scottish Government &amp; SFC and with Universities Scotland</li> <li>• SFC re: NESCol funding</li> <li>• Colleges Scotland Board Meetings</li> <li>• Telecom with Deputy First Minister re: college sector budget</li> <li>• Civic Reception for CEFINE at Aberdeen City Council</li> <li>• Education &amp; Skills Roundtable on BREXIT with Deputy First Minister and Ministers</li> <li>• SFC re: college sector budget</li> <li>• Aberdeenshire Council Director of Business Services</li> <li>• Colleges Scotland Committee Chairs Meeting</li> <li>• Telecom re: Sector's Good Governance Steering Group</li> <li>• College Chairs Meetings</li> <li>• Chairs Meeting with Minister</li> <li>• Meeting with Chair and Deputy CEO of SFC</li> <li>• Principals and Chairs Meeting NESCol and RGU.</li> </ul> <p>Since the lockdown in my capacity as Chair of Colleges Scotland I have had very regular meetings (at times daily) with the CEO to provide support and advice to the sector's response to the pandemic. Attached as Appendix 1 is the summary note which the sector is putting forward to the Scottish Government and SFC.</p>



## Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Meeting, 20 May 2020

### Key Messages

- Previous recessions have made clear that colleges, through their connections with employers (especially SMEs) and their agility and speed of response will deliver the upskilling and retraining pivotal to the recovery.
- Colleges recognise the strength of collaboration. They want to work with partners across the tertiary system, in schools, in local government and in national agencies to support hard hit communities and lead employers in a post-COVID revival.
- But colleges themselves need support as they face financial uncertainty.

### Context

- Unemployment will rise sharply. The prospect is a disproportionate impact on 19-25-year-olds with the risk of long-term 'scarring' and a lost generation. These young people need support to acquire employability skills.
- Moreover, after lockdown, significant numbers of young people will be 'catching-up' with learning next year.
- There are already signs of students disengaging from learning so as to secure support through the benefits system. The threats extend to homelessness for some, and poor mental health for many others.
- Colleges are planning scenarios for 2020-21, predicated on a flexible approach, staging students' return to safe college environments meeting public health and SG guidance.

### Critical and Immediate Pressures

- Before Covid-19, colleges faced substantial financial pressures. Those are now more acute: projected lost income of £25m this year, and, cumulatively, £100m next year.
- Additionally, the likely additional demand, and the need to reconfigure estates and learning models will mean very significant capacity pressures.
- As a result, colleges must explore including alternative funding models and greater commercial flexibility. They will want to be at the heart of the inevitable systemic change.

### What we need

Working in partnership with SFC over three phases comprising the immediate; the next academic year, and a period of wider recovery, colleges need:

#### *Immediate*

- Action to address the £100m loss of income shortfall to allow financial sustainability, and provide essential flexibility and funding rules, particularly on credits. Inaction will result in college redundancies and reduce colleges ability to drive the recovery.
- New student support packages around student support, especially – but not exclusively - for the most vulnerable. Poverty is a reality for many students right now and keeping students in education is critical.

#### *Next Academic Year*

- A reformed funding model incentivising flexibility, responsiveness, innovation, and strengthen industry links - and so maximises impact.
- Help to protect colleges' student cohort for next year, as universities invariably will compete for the same home students for whom college is the right learner journey.

#### *Recovery*

Continued close and collaborative working, sharing intelligence and ensuring colleges' intelligence and experience help shape decision making and policy.

Colleges Scotland, 20 May 2020



**REGIONAL BOARD**

**Meeting of 24 June 2020**

**REPORT BY THE PRINCIPAL**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Regional Board with relevant information relating to the period immediately prior to the Board Meeting, to provide updates and to identify key priorities and challenges for the next period.

**1 AY2019-20 Credits**

Target

Members will recall that following the Board's Strategy Event in November 2019, the Board approved the Principal to formally submit a request to the SFC to reduce its core credits target by 2,000 for AY2019-20. This request was subsequently discussed with the SFC but the College had not received formal confirmation that the reduction had been applied. On 02 June 2020 a letter was received from their Finance Director confirming that the College's core target for this academic year has been reduced from 133,070 to 131,070 credits. The SFC has also confirmed that the College is to retain 25% of the funding for the relinquished credits.

End of Year Forecast

A letter received from the SFC Chief Executive on 01 June 2020 advised that the 2.5% limit for one plus activity, where students undertake more than one full-time course/programme over the academic year, has been removed for AY2019-20. A revised end of year forecast was prepared in line with a request for the College to provide the SFC with an estimated final credits claim – NESCol is forecasting that it will achieve its total (core + ESF) credits target for AY2019-20. The removal of the 2.5% limit has enabled the College to reinstate a reduction of approximately 900 credits that had previously been applied due to the exceeding of the 2.5% limit. The College is also, in line with SFC guidance, increasing its claim for student support provided to full-time FE students in AY2019-20. These two developments are also enabling the College to span some BCD activity into AY2020-21 to provide a head start of approximately 1,000 credits for the new academic year.

Funding AY2019-20

The letter received from the SFC on 01 June 2020 also confirmed that funding will not be recovered from the College if it falls below its core credits target as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**2 SFC Short-Life Advisory Group**

I have been invited to join this Group, comprised of representation from College Principals' Group and Colleges Scotland. The Group has been instigated by Karen Watt, Chief Executive of the SFC and its aims to explore and establish some potential foundations for tertiary sector, and Outcome Agreement and funding reform. Further information on this will be provided to Members at the meeting on 24 June 2020.

<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>SFC Review of Coherent Provision &amp; Sustainability</b></p> <p>At the beginning of June 202, Richard Lochhead, Minister for FE, HE &amp; Science, invited the SFC to review how best it can fulfil its mission of securing coherent provision by post-16 education bodies, and the undertaking of research in these changing times.</p> <p>The purpose of the review is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider how best to achieve coherence in the further and higher education sectors;</li> <li>• ensure the sector is fit for purpose to address the outcomes;</li> <li>• identify changes needed to existing funding, operations, and accountability frameworks in order to respond effectively to these new challenges and opportunities; and</li> <li>• provide advice, where appropriate, to Scottish Ministers on relevant changes to policy, funding and accountability frameworks for tertiary education and research in Scotland.</li> </ul> <p>The requested review is also expected to cover future provision, delivery, outcomes and targets, funding models and support for research activity across the college and university sector in Scotland.</p> <p>The SFC has been asked to share early considerations with Ministers by the end of August 2020.</p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Outcome Agreement Cycle for AY2020-21</b></p> <p>At the end of May 2020, the SFC published guidance on steps to complete the Outcome Agreement (OA) cycle for AY2020-21. The guidance confirmed the following:</p> <p>The SFC will <b>not</b> ask governing bodies to sign off the AY2020-21 OAs in the usual way, and will <b>not</b> publish AY2020-21 OAs on their website. This recognises that colleges produced their near final AY2020-21 OAs prior to the COVID-19 crisis. Therefore colleges will not be in a position to sign off commitments and targets that they already know they can no longer deliver. To do so would lead to a reputational risk for the sector and for the SFC.</p> <p>The SFC <b>will</b> attach the allocation of core funding in AY2020-21 to refocused sector commitments and activity which will provide reassurance on use of designated funding.</p> <p>These commitments are still to be agreed, with the SFC working closely with the sector to establish a more high level set of outcomes for AY2020-21 that realign priorities with what will be needed to support economic recovery, to support those already in the education system (schools, colleges and universities) during the crisis period, and those who may be looking to re-enter employment. Further communication regarding the commitments is expected in July 2020.</p> <p>The SFC has however at this time confirmed immediate policy priorities for institutions are going to be in the areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitions and pathways for students, (from school to college or university; college to university; and into work) are supported and clearly signposted.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A high quality learning experience for all students, no longer predicated on always being physically in a classroom/lecture space (online learning and repurposed blended delivery).</li> <li>• Delivering for economic recovery including building on the work already underway on upskilling.</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>National Collective Bargaining Update</b></p> <p><u>Future Direction</u> The Employers' Association has discussed the need for the future direction of National Bargaining to support the pedagogical changes required to meet local, regional and national teaching, learning and economic demands, and to highlight the skills and staffing mix to deliver on these requirements will be fundamentally different in a number of ways from current approaches.</p> <p>To move this forward, the Employers' Association has agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that clear definition is required on what constitutes core terms and conditions;</li> <li>• to implement an annual meeting schedule of each bargaining group;</li> <li>• to further develop the working relationships with the sector groups to develop good practice guides outside the National Bargaining machinery.</li> </ul> <p><u>Pay Negotiations</u> No agreements have been reached and the Employers' Association Executive Group will continue discussing on pay claims for 2020-21 once claims from both staff sides have been received. Public Sector Pay Policy will continue to be used as the base for the employers' side position.</p> <p><u>Draft Pathways to Registration Model</u> Five colleges have been approached to take part in a pilot scheme for lecturers that meet the current requirement to register with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). NESCol is not part of the pilot has already been validated by GTCS for professional registration and updates. The pilot scheme is due to commence in August 2020.</p> <p>In addition to this an employers only working group has been convened and will continue to feed into the work being carried out by GTCS.</p>
6	<p><b>Use of Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)</b></p> <p>The College has furloughed over a hundred staff during the previous three and a half months as detailed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 50</li> <li>• April 50</li> <li>• May 122</li> <li>• June 111</li> <li>• July 33</li> </ul> <p>To prepare for the next academic year most staff will return from furlough by the end of June 2020. A few staff, such as cleaners and receptionists, will however remain on furlough until College campuses reopen.</p>

<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Staff Wellbeing</b></p> <p>At the Board Update on 07 May 2020, member were provided with key findings from an online Staff Wellbeing &amp; Support Survey. A detailed report of the findings can now be accessed on <a href="#">COLIN</a>.</p> <p>A number of actions contained in the report have now been taken forward, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a Wellbeing Information section in NESColAtHome</li> <li>• Launching of a Peer Support Programme</li> <li>• Establishment of a Social Distancing Social Calendar.</li> </ul> <p>The College's new Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) was launched at the end of May, providing a variety of confidential support services to all staff - <a href="http://www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk">www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk</a></p> <p>The EAP includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24/7 telephone counselling, advice and information service</li> <li>• Face-to-face counselling following initial telephone contact and clinical assessment</li> <li>• Online cognitive behavioural therapy programme, led by therapists</li> <li>• Online wellbeing information, assistance and website</li> </ul> <p>The EAP has been introduced as part of the College's wider commitment to health and wellbeing and was a planned development prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Support and guidance will continue to be provided to all staff as the College moves forward into the 'new normal'. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of training to enhance online teaching</li> <li>• Issuing of guidance for staff returning to the workplace</li> <li>• Introduction of further health and wellbeing initiatives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Student Wellbeing Survey</b></p> <p>These are challenging times and NESCol understands that working remotely will be affecting everyone in different way. In order to establish whether communication and support provided by the College is meeting the needs of the students and to better understand students' experience of working remotely, the NESCol at Home Student Survey was created.</p> <p>The Survey was open to all full-time and part-time students from 27 May 2020 for 2 weeks, closing on 10 June 2020. There were a total of 478 responses, a 4.8% response rate.</p> <p>Survey responses demonstrated that for some students there was an understanding that the College has tried to deal with the current unprecedented circumstances as promptly and effectively as possible. The majority of students have an appropriate place to work from home and feel communication from the college has been clear. Access to and confidence in the use of IT and digital tools had the highest rates of positive responses. This is very encouraging when scenario planning for a blended delivery model for the start of AY2020-21.</p> <p>Following analysis of the responses received and conclusions reached, the following recommendations have been identified:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue with the regular signposting support services available;</li> <li>2. Current and prospective students must be surveyed to establish access to IT, confidence in digital skills and suitability of their home environment for study;</li> <li>3. It is imperative that a consistent approach is taken by all teams to provide regular communication to students and the lecturer email response time, as stated in Programme Delivery Guidelines, must be adhered to;</li> <li>4. As the main point of contact for a student, Academic Tutors must plan regular one-to-one meetings or drop-in sessions to allow students to get feedback on their progress;</li> <li>5. Teaching teams must create a weekly work plan to share with students, providing a mix of timetabled live online classes and self-directed study.</li> </ol> <p>The above recommendations will form part of the scenario planning for AY2020-21, with the curriculum related recommendations also being addressed in the mandatory Framework for Curriculum Planning &amp; Delivery in AY2020-21 and related guidance which will be shared with staff w/c 22 June 2020.</p> <p>At the time of writing, a report detailing the responses for individual Survey questions and conclusions reached was being prepared. This report will be shortly be made available on COLIN and Members will be advised when this is published.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Relationship with ASET</b></p> <p>Since coming into post I have been keen to develop and progress the relationship that the College has with its wholly-owned subsidiary, ASET. Since January 2020 a series of meetings have taken place on a variety of themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future governance arrangements for ASET;</li> <li>• The many issues and challenges arising from COVID-19;</li> <li>• The strategic direction and intentions of both the College and ASET;</li> <li>• The potential for improved alignment of commercially-related activities.</li> </ul> <p>Whilst the work on these areas is still developing, progress is being made. Further, it is planned that ASET's Chief Executive, Atholl Menzies, will present to Members at the Board's Autumn Strategy Event. Whilst this presentation will focus primarily on ASET's strategic direction and plans for the future it will be complimented by one from the College's Director of Business Development, Duncan Abernethy, who will explain the College's own position and plans post-COVID 19 and post the oil price crash.</p>
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>External Engagements</b></p> <p>During the reporting period the Principal has attended the following external meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College Principals' Group (CPG) meetings (weekly);</li> <li>• Several CPG discussions (x3) with Richard Lochhead, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science;</li> <li>• CPG discussions (x2) with Jamie Hepburn, Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills;</li> </ul>

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee Focus Group;</li><li>• Meetings with the Chief of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and her Senior Management Team (x3);</li><li>• Regional Economic Strategy Restart meeting;</li><li>• ONE Energy Board induction;</li><li>• ONE Energy Board meetings (x2);</li><li>• DYW NE Board meetings (x2);</li><li>• Meetings (x2) with the Chief Executives of both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils;</li><li>• Meetings (x2) with Aberdeenshire Council's Director of Education and Children Services.</li></ul> |
|--|--|

This is shared with the Board to provide examples of the range of external engagements undertaken in support of the College's work.



**REGIONAL BOARD**  
**Meeting of 24 June 2020**

**REPORT BY COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Regional Board with information relating to business conducted at the most recent meetings of its Committees.

At the meeting of 24 June 2020, Committee Chairs will be provided with an opportunity to bring matters considered at these meetings to the attention of Members. Members will also be provided with an opportunity to seek further information on business that has been transacted.

<b>1</b>	<p>The following meetings have been held since the last meeting of the Regional Board</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #d3d3d3;"> <th style="padding: 5px;">Committee</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">Meeting Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Audit &amp; Risk</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">20 May 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Finance &amp; Resources</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">20 May 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Human Resources</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">26 May 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Curriculum &amp; Quality</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">03 June 2020</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Copies of the draft minutes from the above meetings are available in the <a href="#">Regional Board's Team Space</a>.</p>	Committee	Meeting Date	Audit & Risk	20 May 2020	Finance & Resources	20 May 2020	Human Resources	26 May 2020	Curriculum & Quality	03 June 2020
Committee	Meeting Date										
Audit & Risk	20 May 2020										
Finance & Resources	20 May 2020										
Human Resources	26 May 2020										
Curriculum & Quality	03 June 2020										

<b>2</b>	<p><b>Audit &amp; Risk Committee – 20 May 2020</b></p> <p>Summary of key business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports on Internal Audit Reviews               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Business Development</li> <li>○ Financial Planning</li> <li>○ IT Operations</li> <li>○ BYOD Value for Money</li> <li>○ Follow up</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Draft External Audit Annual Plan Year Ending 31 July 2020</li> <li>• Draft Internal Audit Annual Plan 2020-21</li> <li>• Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges – Review of Compliance</li> <li>• Scenario Planning &amp; Identification of Risks.</li> </ul> <p>Agreed actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In due course, arrange for Henderson Loggie to provide Board Member training on risk management</li> <li>• Reconfirm management responses and associated deadlines from the five Internal Audit Reviews due to the potential for changed priorities and capacities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic</li> <li>• Request College's Leadership Team to review draft Internal Audit Annual Plan in light of COVID-19 to advise if areas of focus remain appropriate</li> </ul>
----------	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider rescheduled of cancelled Regional Board Strategy Event which was scheduled to be held in April 2020</li> <li>• Consider succession arrangements for the appointment of the Board's next Equality &amp; Diversity Champion.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Finance &amp; Resources Committee – 20 May 2020</b></p> <p>Summary of key business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of Final SFC Funding Allocation 2020-21</li> <li>• Summer Works Programme</li> <li>• Budget Review</li> <li>• 2020-21 Draft Budget &amp; Capital Plan</li> </ul> <p>Agreed actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with the SFC to seek further necessary clarifications regarding AY2020-21 funding and credits and to request feedback on the College's submitted financial position to seek any recommendations or suggested actions.</li> <li>• Recommend to the Regional Board the proposed revenue budget for the academic year to 31 July 2021, as presented, as a base on which to build additional costs and reductions in income due to COVID-19.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Human Resources Committee – 26 May 2020</b></p> <p>Summary of key business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation from Director of People Services on "Supporting &amp; Guiding our Staff during COVID-19"</li> <li>• People Services Enhancement Plan – Progress Update</li> <li>• People Services Management Information Report</li> <li>• National Collective Bargaining Update</li> <li>• Staff Wellbeing &amp; Support Survey</li> <li>• Peer Support Programme.</li> </ul> <p>Agreed actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish arrangements to enable local trade union nominees to attend Regional Board Meetings as observers</li> <li>• Consider refreshed People Services Enhancement Plan at first AY2020-21 meeting of the Committee</li> <li>• Consider Equalities reporting annually at Committee's Autumn meeting</li> <li>• Consider new detailed People Services Annual Report annually at Committee's Spring meeting</li> <li>• Consider progress report on College's new Peer Support Programme at first AY2020-21 meeting of the Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee – 03 June 2020</b></p> <p>Summary of key business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation from Vice Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality on "COVID-19 Curriculum Planning &amp; Management"</li> <li>• Draft Teaching Online &amp; Remote Education Strategies</li> <li>• Presentation from Vice Principal Curriculum &amp; Quality, Directors of Learning, Director of Business Development, and Director of</li> </ul>

	<p>Marketing &amp; Communications on "Student Applications AY2020-21"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students' Association – Activity Report</li> <li>• Student Engagement Through Representation &amp; Partnership</li> <li>• Students' Association Budget Proposal AY2020-21.</li> </ul> <p>Agreed actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share, in due course, final versions of the new Teaching Online &amp; Remote Education Strategies with the Committee</li> <li>• Share, in due course, progress report on delivery of actions identified through 'Student Engagement Through Representation &amp; Partnership' seminar</li> <li>• Recommend to the Regional Board for inclusion in the College's overall budget for AY2020-21 an operational budget of £20,000 for the Students' Association</li> <li>• Further consider the Students' Association's request to increase its staffing budget, including the potential for additional support to be provided from the College's Marketing &amp; Communications Team.</li> <li>• Consider Students' Association's budget proposal annually at Committee's February meeting.</li> </ul>
6	<p>AY2020-21 Committee Meeting dates will be set as part of the Regional Board's Programme of Meetings – see Agenda Item 22-20.</p>



REGIONAL BOARD	
Meeting of 24 June 2020	
<b>Title: Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 – Annual Report</b>	
<b>Author:</b> Peter D Smith, Vice Principal – Finance & Resources	<b>Contributor(s):</b>
<b>Type of Agenda Item:</b>	
<b>For Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>For Discussion</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>For Information</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Reserved Item of Business</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Purpose:</b> To enable the Regional Board to approve the College's Annual Report under Parts 3 and 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.	
<b>Linked to Strategic Goal:</b>	
<b>5. Optimise the use of our available resources to deliver financial and environmental sustainability.</b>	
<b>Linked to Annual Priority:</b>	
<b>Executive Summary:</b> The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places obligations on public service authorities to publish, by 30 June each year, an annual report on work undertaken on Parts 3 and 5 of the Act for the preceding 12 months ended 31 March. A draft report for North East Scotland College for the period 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 is attached as Appendix 1.	
<b>Recommendation:</b> It is recommended that the Board approve the publication of the Annual Report on the College's obligations under Parts 3 and 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.	
<b>Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):</b> None	
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	
<b>Positive Impact</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Negative Impact</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>No Impact</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Evidence:</b>	

## NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE

### COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2015

#### Participation Requests and Asset Transfer Requests – Annual Report 2019-20

##### 1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report summarises the work undertaken by North East Scotland College on Parts 3 and 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 for the year 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

##### 2.0. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the Act) received Royal Assent on 24 July 2015. The purpose of the Act is to “*make provision about national outcomes; to confer functions on certain persons in relation to services provided by, and assets of, certain public bodies; to amend Parts 2 and 3 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003; to enable certain bodies to buy abandoned, neglected or detrimental land; to amend section 7C of the Forestry Act 1967; to enable the Scottish Ministers to make provision about supporters' involvement in and ownership of football clubs; to make provision for registers of common good property and about disposal and use of such property; to restate and amend the law on allotments; to enable participation in decision-making by specified persons having public functions; to enable local authorities to reduce or remit non-domestic rates; and for connected purposes*”. The Act is available here: -

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/pdfs/asp\\_20150006\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/pdfs/asp_20150006_en.pdf)

- 2.2. Part 3 *Participation Requests*, and Part 5 *Asset Transfer Requests*, of the Act place an obligation on Public Service Authorities (PSAs) to publish annual reports on work undertaken on those Parts of the Act. North East Scotland College is defined as a PSA under the Act.

##### 3.0. PARTICIPATION REQUESTS

##### 3.1. Reporting Requirements

Under Part 3 of the Act, a community participation body may make a request to a public service authority to permit the body to participate in an outcome improvement process. The PSA must report as follows: -

- (a) the number of participation requests the authority received,
- (b) the number of such requests which the authority: -
  - (i) agreed to, and
  - (ii) refused,

- (c) the number of such requests which resulted in changes to a public service provided by or on behalf of the authority, and
- (d) any action taken by the authority: -
  - (i) to promote the use of participation requests,
  - (ii) to support a community participation body in the making of a participation request.

### **3.2. Report for the Year 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020**

For the period 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, North East Scotland College received no participation requests. The College did not undertake any specific work to promote the use of participation requests. It was not requested to, nor did it undertake any work to support a community participation body in the making of a participation request.

## **4.0. ASSET TRANSFER REQUESTS**

### **4.1. Reporting Requirements**

Under Part 5 of the Act, a community transfer body may make a request: -

- (a) in relation to land owned by the relevant authority, for ownership of the land to be transferred to the community transfer body, or
- (b) in relation to land owned or leased by the relevant authority: -
  - (i) for the land to be leased to the community transfer body, or
  - (ii) for the authority to confer rights in respect of the land on the community transfer body (including, for example, rights to manage or occupy the land or use it for a purpose specified in the request).

The PSA must report as follows: -

- (a) the number of asset transfer requests the relevant authority received,
- (b) the number of such requests which the relevant authority: -
  - (i) agreed to, and
  - (ii) refused,
- (c) the number of such requests made to the relevant authority which resulted in: -
  - (i) a transfer of ownership of land to a community transfer body,
  - (ii) a lease of land to such a body,
  - (iii) rights in respect of land being conferred on such a body,
- (d) the number of appeals under section 85 relating to such requests made to the relevant authority that have: -
  - (i) been allowed,
  - (ii) been dismissed,
  - (iii) resulted in any part of the decision of the authority being varied or reversed,
- (e) in relation to a decision of the relevant authority reviewed under section 86 or 87, the number of such decisions that have been: -
  - (i) confirmed,
  - (ii) modified,
  - (iii) substituted by a different decision, and
- (f) any action taken by the relevant authority during the reporting year: -
  - (i) to promote the use of asset transfer requests,

(ii) to support a community transfer body in the making of an asset transfer request.

#### **4.2. Report for the Year 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020**

For the period 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, North East Scotland College received no asset transfer requests. The College did not undertake any specific work to promote the use of asset transfer requests. It was not requested to, nor did it undertake any work to support a community transfer body in the making of an asset transfer request.

APPROVED BY THE REGIONAL BOARD OF NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE  
24 June 2020



REGIONAL BOARD	
Meeting of 24 June 2020	
<b>Title: Programme of Meetings AY2020-21</b>	
<b>Author:</b> Pauline May, Secretary to the Board	<b>Contributor(s):</b> Executive Team, Director of People Services, Regional Chair, Committee Chairs & Vice Chairs
<b>Type of Agenda Item:</b> <b>For Decision</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>For Discussion</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>For Information</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Reserved Item of Business</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Purpose:</b> To enable the Regional Board to establish its Programme of Meetings for AY2020-21.	
<b>Linked to Strategic Goal:</b>	
<b>Linked to Annual Priority:</b>	
<b>Executive Summary:</b> Attached as Appendix 1 is a proposed Programme of Meetings of the Regional Board and its Standing Committees (Audit & Risk, Curriculum & Quality, Finance & Resources, and Human Resources) for AY2020-21.  The draft Programme has been prepared by the Secretary to the Board following discussion with the Executive Team and the Director of People Services given their roles in supporting the Board and its Committees, and to ensure continued alignment with key College processes and reporting deadlines.  Prior to the Programme's inclusion in the meeting papers, Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs were also consulted on the scheduling of meetings.  Changes in the attached draft Programme in comparison to the Programme for the current academic year are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The convening of the October Board Meeting at the beginning rather than end of the month</li> <li>• A reduction in the number of meetings of the Audit &amp; Risk Committee from four to three</li> <li>• The delay of a number of meetings to improve alignment with internal and external reporting cycles.</li> </ul>	

Dates for the Regional Board's Strategy Events are yet to be identified, but it is proposed that one is held in Autumn, with the second in Spring in line with what has been scheduled in previous years. Consideration was given to the rescheduling of the cancelled Strategy Event that was due to be held in April 2020, however it was felt that it would be more appropriate and meaningful to wait and convene an Autumn Strategy Event when it is anticipated that key regional intelligence will be available to inform Event discussions and decisions.

It should be noted that, as in previous years, additional meetings will be convened during the academic year if required. In addition, given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic flexibility in terms of potential in-year changes to the Programme may be required along with the holding of some meetings virtually through the use of Microsoft Teams. Members will be advised of any changes with as much notice as possible.

The reintroduction of a schedule of Campus Visits that was due to start in March 2020 will be reconsidered, if appropriate, during AY2020-21. Annual College events which would also normally be highlighted to Members through an annual Engagement Plan will be also shared if it becomes possible for some of these to go ahead.

Following the approval of the Programme of Meetings, relevant Outlook meeting invites will be sent to each Member's College email addresses.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Board consider and, if so minded approve, the proposed dates for meetings of the Regional Board and its Standing Committees in AY2020-21.

**Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):**

None

**Equality Impact Assessment:**

**Positive Impact**

**Negative Impact**

**No Impact**

**Evidence:**

Draft Programme of Meetings  
Academic Year 2020-21

<b>Strategy Events</b> Details to be confirmed in due course		
Date	Time	Venue
Autumn 2020		
Spring 2021		

<b>Regional Board Meetings</b>		
Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday 07 October 2020	1000 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 16 December 2020	1000 hours	G10, Aberdeen City Campus
Wednesday 24 March 2021	1000 hours	MEG01, Aberdeen Altens Campus
Wednesday 23 June 2021	1000 hours	Boardroom, Fraserburgh Campus

<b>Audit &amp; Risk Committee Meetings</b>		
Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday 23 September 2020	1030 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 02 December 2020*	1030 hours	G10, Aberdeen City Campus
Wednesday 02 June 2021	1030 hours	G10, Aberdeen City Campus

<b>Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee Meetings</b>		
Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday 11 November 2020	1030 hours	G10, Aberdeen City Campus
Wednesday 24 February 2021	1030 hours	G10, Aberdeen City Campus
Wednesday 09 June 2021	1030 hours	G10, Aberdeen City Campus

<b>Finance &amp; Resources Committee Meetings</b>		
Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday 02 December 2020*	1130 hours	G10, Aberdeen City Campus
Wednesday 03 March 2021	1030 hours	G10, Aberdeen City Campus
Wednesday 02 June 2021	1400 hours	G10, Aberdeen City Campus

<b>Human Resources Committee Meetings</b>		
Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday 30 September 2020	1030 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Wednesday 26 May 2021	1030 hours	G10, Aberdeen City Campus

<b>Annual Chairs Meeting</b>		
Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday 23 June 2021	1300 hours	Boardroom, Fraserburgh Campus

<b>Governance Steering Group Meetings</b>		
Date	Time	Venue
Monday 14 September 2020	1400 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Monday 16 November 2020	1400 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Monday 22 February 2021	1400 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams
Monday 24 May 2021	1400 hours	Virtual through Microsoft Teams

In addition to the Programme of Meetings, al Board Engagement Plan will be circulated to Members and updated throughout the academic year as appropriate.

\*The Audit & Risk Committee and Finance & Resources Committee will jointly consider the College's Financial Statements



REGIONAL BOARD		
Meeting of 24 June 2020		
<b>Title: Trade Union Nominees – Observers at Regional Board Meetings</b>		
<b>Presenter:</b> Ken Milroy, Regional Chair	<b>Author:</b> Pauline May, Secretary to the Board	<b>Contributor(s):</b> Governance Steering Group; Neil Cowie, Principal & Chief Executive; Kimra Donnelly, Director of People Services
<b>Type of Agenda Item:</b>		
<b>For Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>For Discussion</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>For Information</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Reserved Item of Business</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Purpose:</b> To provide the Regional Board with an opportunity to consider a proposal to approve two Trade Union Nominees to attend Regional Board Meetings in an observer's capacity.		
<b>Linked to Strategic Goal:</b>		
<b>Linked to Annual Priority:</b>		
<b>Executive Summary:</b> Attached as Appendix 1 is a paper which details a proposal to implement a locally agreed arrangement to enable two Trade Union Nominees to attend Regional Board Meetings in an observer's capacity. This arrangement would remain in place until such time that planned new legalisation changing the composition of Boards is enacted.		
<b>Recommendation:</b> It is recommended that the Board consider and, if so minded, approve the proposal for implementation from the beginning of AY2020-21.		
<b>Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval</b> (if applicable): None		
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>		
<b>Positive Impact</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Negative Impact</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>No Impact</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Evidence:</b>		

## **Trade Union Nominees – Observers at Regional Board Meetings**

### **Background**

The College Good Governance Task Group was set up in 2015 to consider what further measures could be put in place to make governance in the sector more effective. The Group published its recommendations in March 2016 - [Good College Governance Task Group: final report](#). A Good College Governance Consultation was then initiated with its findings published in April 2017 - [Analysis of responses](#).

In February 2019 Richard Lochhead MSP, Minister for FE, HE & Science, confirmed changes to be implemented as a consequence of the consultation – this included the introduction of two trade union nominees to the boards of incorporated colleges, the Lanarkshire Board and the Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board *in addition* to the existing staff representatives.

The introduction of trade union nominees will bring the college sector into line with changes made in universities by the Higher Education Governance Act 2016, and will build on the fundamental principles of the Fair Work Convention, an agenda supported by the Scottish Government, which recognises the positive impact of trade unions at individual, workplace, sector and national level and the unions' role in promoting progressive workplace practices that contribute to the health of the economy and civil society in Scotland.

Legislation is expected to be introduced later this year to provide a mechanism for the election of these nominees. The sector's Good Governance Steering Group has been tasked with producing guidance for the election of these members. This guidance will define:

- Criteria for selection of candidates
- Stages of the Election Process leading to Appointment to a College Board.

### **Proposal – NESCol Regional Board**

Given that the new legislation referred to above is yet to be enacted and is likely to be delayed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, alongside an ambition for NESCol to strengthen its partnership working with its local Trade Union representatives, it is proposed that the LJNC is asked to self-select, from amongst its membership, 1 EIS Nominee and 1 UNISON Nominee to attend Regional Board Meetings in an observer capacity until the new legislation is enacted.

This interim arrangement would commence from the beginning of AY2020-21 with Trade Union Nominees invited to observe the first Board Meeting, expected to be held in October 2020.

Prior to attendance at their first Board Meeting, the two Nominees will be receive an induction from the Regional Chair and Secretary to the Board to provide an overview of the operation of the Board and to restate how the interim arrangement will operate.

Similar to the Board's two Staff Members, Trade Unions Nominees will be a representation from rather than representation for their respective groups. There are very well established mechanisms in place for formal representation, such as the College's Local Joint Negotiating Committee (LJNC)s and national forums aligned to National Collective Bargaining arrangements.

There will be a clear distinction between the Trade Union Nominees and Board Members.

The arrangement would operate with a number of agreements in place. The two Trade Union Nominees would:

- attend Regional Board Meetings only and have observer status at these meetings
- not have voting rights
- be required to treat any information received or obtained through Board Meetings or papers as confidential

- be able to contribute at Board Meetings
- have access to Regional Board Meetings agendas and papers, with the exception of reserved items of business
- be asked to leave Meetings for the consideration of reserved items of business
- be unable to send a substitute to observe a Board Meeting if they are unable to attend.

This proposal has been considered and endorsed by the Board's Governance Steering Group.

This proposal is due to be discussed with the College's local Trade Union Representatives at a LJNC meeting scheduled for w/c 15 June 2020. Feedback from the Representatives will be shared at the Regional Board Meeting on 24 June 2020.

### **Enactment of Legislation**

The interim arrangement implemented at the beginning of AY2020-21 will cease following the enactment of the new legislation. The status of Trade Union Nominees will change from observer to a full Board Member, however an agreed election process will be required to be conducted by the Unions to elect the two Trade Union Nominees to serve on the Regional Board.

Following appointment the two Nominees will receive an internal induction to the Board and its Committees, and will also be required to complete the sector induction process delivered by CDN. It is thought that CDN will also offer specific training tailored to Trade Union Nominees which will provide guidance on the management of conflicts of interest.



<b>REGIONAL BOARD</b>		
<b>Meeting of 24 June 2020</b>		
<b>Title: Board Membership &amp; Recruitment</b>		
<b>Presenter:</b> Ken Milroy, Regional Chair	<b>Author:</b> Pauline May, Secretary to the Board	<b>Contributor(s):</b> Governance Steering Group; Neil Cowie, Principal & Chief Executive
<b>Type of Agenda Item:</b>		
<b>For Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>For Discussion</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>For Information</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Reserved Item of Business</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Purpose:</b> To provide the Regional Board with an opportunity to consider proposals in relation to Board membership and recruitment.		
<b>Linked to Strategic Goal:</b>		
<b>Linked to Annual Priority:</b>		
<b>Executive Summary:</b>		
Attached as Appendix 1 is a paper which details a number of considerations regarding upcoming changes to Board Membership and a supporting recruitment process that requires to be initiated.		
Attached as Appendix 2 is a new format of Skills Matrix that it is proposed is completed ahead of the next Regional Board recruitment process to help highlight desired skills of new Members.		
<b>Recommendation:</b>		
It is recommended that the Board consider and, if so minded, approve:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• six month extensions to the terms of office of A Simpson and A Bell</li> <li>• the completion of a new Regional Board Skills Matrix</li> <li>• the approach for the next Regional Board recruitment process.</li> </ul>		
<b>Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):</b>		
None		
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>		
<b>Positive Impact</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Negative Impact</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>No Impact</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Evidence:</b>		

## **REGIONAL BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

### **Non-Executive Members**

Under legislation the Regional Board must operate with a minimal membership of 15.

The Regional Board is currently operating with two long-term Non-Executive vacancies, with a membership of 16.

In addition, the ceasing of two Non-Executive Members' terms of office in AY2020-21 increased the requirement for the Regional Board to initiate a recruitment process.

Current Vacancy AY2018-19	Created following end of term of office of Ian Gossip
Current Vacancy AY2019-20	Created following resignation of Adrian Smith
Future Vacancy AY2020-21	Anne Simpson's term of office ends 31/10/20
Future Vacancy AY2020-21	Ann Bell's term of office ends 28/02/21

### **Scottish Government Guidance**

On 18 March 2020, guidance was received from the College Governance & Workforce Policy Department acknowledging that the Scottish Government realises that the exceptional circumstances relating to COVID-19 will interrupt governance arrangements for all of the sector, including Board Member recruitment. Colleges were advised that if Board Members are due to step down in the next 3 months then the rules will be relaxed to allow Board Members to stay on in their non-executive roles to allow for business and governance continuity.

*"If you have a case where a board member is stepping down due to reaching their maximum term of eight years or because they are not seeking re-appointment but are willing to stay on for a short period of time they will be able to continue in their role until the situation allows for recruitment to take place for example. We will not ask for a letter for these extensions but would be grateful if you would let us know if your board is in this situation and what members are staying on."*

Colleges were advised that the relaxation of appointment rules was originally to apply until mid-June. Further guidance was then received on 15 June 2020 to advise that the relaxation had been extended and would be reconsidered again mid-September.

### **Proposal**

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is proposed that NESCol's Regional Board extends the terms of office by six months for both Anne Simpson and Ann Bell. This is to ensure there is continuity with the membership at a time when the Board will be responding to ongoing and longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and considering the longer-term future strategy of the College, and to ensure that membership legislative requirements continue to be met:

- Anne Simpson to remain a Non-Executive Member until 30/04/21
- Ann Bell to remain a Non-Executive Member until 31/08/21.

During the extension period, both Members would continue with their offices as follows:

- Anne Simpson – Chair of Curriculum & Quality Committee
- Ann Bell – Vice Chair and Equality & Diversity Champion, Chair of Human Resources Committee.

If the Regional Board approves this proposal, the College Governance & Workforce Policy Department has requested that it be notified of the extensions to Member's terms of office.

A recruitment process to fill both the long-term vacancies and the future vacancies for the two Members above will however be initiated.

### **Staff Member**

In addition to Non-Executive recruitment, it should be noted that the term of office of one of the Board's Staff Members ceases on 07 May 2021. Martin Dear will be eligible to stand again for this office but a staff election process will require to be held.

## **REGIONAL BOARD RECRUITMENT**

### **Skills Gaps**

Consideration of the desirable skills required for the Board to help the College develop its new strategy and address expected challenges will be critical.

The Governance Steering Group, in consultation with the Principal & Chief Executive, has identified the following areas as desirable to seek in terms of skills, knowledge and experience of new Members:

- Local authority
- Education
- Economic development
- Community affiliation
- Commercial
- Legal.

In addition, it is proposed that prior to commencing the recruitment process, that the Regional Board adopts a revised Board Member Skills Matrix (attached as Appendix 1) to inform the selection process.

### **Advertising of Vacancies**

As with previous recruitment processes, a microsite will be created on the NESCol website to make supporting information and the application form easily accessible.

The vacancies will be advertised on a number of websites and through various online bulletins issued by key stakeholders. Social media - Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn – will also be utilised.

Board Members will again be asked to highlight the vacancies to their existing networks. This has proved to be a successful way to recruit high quality applicants in recent appointment processes. In addition, it's proposed that Aberdeen Burgesses, City and Shire Rotary and Probus Clubs, and Trades Councils are approached to highlight the opportunity to serve on the Regional Board. Requests will also be made to Fellows and past Guest Speakers and College staff to highlight the recruitment process to their networks and employer contacts.

It's proposed that the advertising of the vacancies will commence in August 2020, with a detailed timeline of recruitment and selection activities to be prepared in due course.

Once approval for appointments has been received from Scottish Ministers, inductions will be provided to the incoming Members and they will be invited to observe Regional Board Meetings and relevant Committee Meetings ahead of their terms of office commencing.

**List of skills and knowledge required to maintain a balanced board**

Generic skills that all Board Members should have

1. Working with others: Ability to engage effectively; facilitate constructive discussion and successfully influence a diverse range of stakeholders.
2. Strategic thinking: Ability to think strategically and contribute to the development of strategies and delivery of outcomes in challenging circumstances.
3. Evidence and decision making: Ability to weigh up conflicting opinions, complex evidence and exercise reasoned judgement when reaching or contributing to decisions.
4. Effective Communication: Ability to communicate effectively ensuring confidence and credibility.
5. Governance: Working experience and understanding of how governance works in major public, private or voluntary basis.

Additional skills set that individual Members should have, which bring balance to the Board

6. Experience at a senior level of industry, including large employers in the priority sectors (required by more than one member)
7. Knowledge and experience of the SME sector (required by at least one member)
8. Knowledge and experience of how young people, from all backgrounds, interact with the education, skills and employability sectors (required by one member)
9. Knowledge and experience of economic development in a Scottish and UK context, in particular regarding interactions with education, skills, employability and/or labour market issues (required by at least one member)
10. Knowledge and experience of local/community engagement (recognising a geographic spread throughout Scotland and reflecting both urban and/or rural contexts) and /or the voluntary/third sector in relation to skills and employability matters (required by one member)
11. Knowledge and experience of delivering in a large public sector organisation, including in a further or higher education institution (required by at least one member)
12. Business Management Skills (required by more than one member)
13. Financial Management Skills. Advance skills and substantial experience in this area (which includes audit and risk management experience) (required by more than one member)
14. Skills and experience of delivering innovative and integrated services to individuals, companies and communities (required by more than one member)
15. Skills and Experience in commissioning and supply chain management (required by one member)
16. Skills and experience of delivering complex transformation programmes including technology enabled change (required by more than one member)

## Skills balance of current Regional Board

Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Offices Held	Current Term end	
David Anderson																	Chair A&R	28/02/23	
Ann Bell																	Vice Chair, E&D Champion, Chair HR	28/02/21*	
Neil Cowie																	Principal	N/A	
Martin Dear																		07/05/21	Eligible for reappointment
Abdul Elghedafi																		31/07/22	Eligible for reappointment
Susan Elston																	Vice Chair HR	31/07/22	Eligible for reappointment
John Henderson																	Vice Chair, SIM, Chair F&R Com	21/10/22	
Abha Maheshwari																		21/10/22	Eligible for reappointment
Ken Milroy																	Regional Chair	02/03/22	
Neil McLennan																		31/07/22	Eligible for reappointment
Sheena Ross																	Vice Chair F&R Com	31/08/23	Eligible for reappointment
Drew Russell																	Vice Chair C&Q and A&R Com	31/05/23	
Anne Simpson																	Chair C&Q Com	31/10/20*	
Gwen Watt																		27/03/23	Eligible for reappointment
Graham Mutch																	Co-opted C&Q Com		

Note: enter a ✓ in the appropriate box to indicate that a Member has each of the specific skills

\*Proposal to extend term of office in light of current circumstances



REGIONAL BOARD	
Meeting of 24 June 2020	
<b>Title: Board Policies</b>	
<b>Author:</b> Pauline May, Secretary to the Board	<b>Contributor(s):</b> Governance Steering Group – Ken Milroy, Ann Bell, John Henderson
<b>Type of Agenda Item:</b>	
<b>For Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>For Discussion</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>For Information</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Reserved Item of Business</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Purpose:</b> To provide the Regional Board with an opportunity to consider two policies which relate directly to Board Members.	
<b>Linked to Strategic Goal:</b>	
<b>Linked to Annual Priority:</b>	
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	
Attached as Appendix 1 to this paper is an updated version of the Recruitment and Selection Policy for Board Members.	
Attached as Appendix 2 to this paper is an updated version of the Induction Policy for Board Members.	
Both Appendices have a number of proposed changes highlighted which are recommended by the Governance Steering Group.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	
It is recommended that the Board consider and, if so minded, approve the updated Policies.	
<b>Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval</b> (if applicable):	
None	
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	
<b>Positive Impact</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Negative Impact</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**No Impact**



**Evidence:**

The Recruitment and Selection Policy takes cognisance of legislation regarding gender representation on the boards of public bodies and seeks to ensure that unconscious bias is avoided.

# Recruitment and Selection Policy for Board Members

---



Agenda Item 25-20  
Appendix 1

## Recruitment and Selection Policy for Board Members

Review Date: June 202<sup>19</sup>

## Recruitment and Selection Policy for Board Members

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Model Code of Conduct for Public Bodies, 2014 states that the Board of a Scottish Public Body should consist of “board members who reflect Scotland’s diverse population with the right skills, knowledge, experience and attributes to make a valuable contribution to an effective board.”
- 1.2 The Code of Good Governance for Scotland’s Colleges states that “The board must seek to reflect in its membership, the make-up of the community through offering maximum opportunity of membership to a range of potential members and removing potential barriers to membership.”
- 1.3 The Regional Board acknowledges that it is critical to ensure that an effective and open and transparent recruitment and selection policy is followed to:
- maintain public accountability
  - ensure that the Board is properly equipped to perform its role and to achieve positive outcomes
  - encourage participation from a wide and representative group of individuals.
- 1.4 The Regional Board will ensure that its recruitment and selection process is undertaken in a manner that encourages equal opportunities and, in particular, observes Scottish Government Policy in relation to the gender equality on the boards of public bodies.
- 1.5 This Policy relates to the recruitment and selection of non-executive Board Members.
- 1.6 The recruitment and selection of the following categories of Board Members is undertaken by other formal processes:
- the principal of the college
  - a person appointed by being elected by the teaching staff of the college from among their own number
  - a person appointed by being elected by the non-teaching staff of the college from among their own number
  - two persons appointed by being nominated by the students’ association of the college from among the students of the college.

### 2.0 Legislation

- 2.1 In meeting the requirements of the Post 16 Education (Scotland ) Act 2013 “Every post-16 education body and regional strategic body must, when making appointments to its governing body or exercising any of its other functions, do so in a manner which encourages equal opportunities and in particular the observance of the equal opportunities requirements.”
- 2.2 In line with the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018, the Board will seek to improve the representation of women in non-executive positions on public boards, noting the

## Recruitment and Selection Policy for Board Members

'gender representation objective' – a target that women should make up 50% of non-executive board membership. The Board will take positive action in relation to Board Member recruitment to encourage applications from a diverse cross-section of the region's population, striving for a 50/50 gender balance in terms of its membership but also taking cognisance of all other protected characteristics as part of its recruitment and appointment process. The Board will however always, above all other considerations, appoint the person who has the skills required at that time.

- 2.3 As defined in the Post 16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 "In appointing members ..... and in extending the period of appointment of any member so appointed, the board ..... must have regard to any guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers in relation to the making of such appointments (including any guidance on the desirability of appointing members with particular skills and experience)."
- 2.4 Eligibility for appointment to the Regional Board of North East Scotland College is as set out in the Further and Higher Education Acts 1992 and 2005, and the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013.
- 2.5 An appointment has effect only if approved by the Regional Chair and Scottish Ministers.

### 3.0 College Sector Board Appointments: Ministerial Guidance

- 3.1 The Ministerial Guidance:
- identifies the skills, knowledge, experience and attributes of board members to enable college sector boards to perform effectively; and
  - outlines, in general terms, the process by which appointments should be made or extended to support a robust, effective and transparent system in which learners, staff, business, wider society and Ministers will have confidence.
- 3.2 The current Ministerial Guidance can be accessed on the Scottish Government website – <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/17135/CollegeGovernance>

### 4.0 Skills Matrix

- 4.1 A non-executive Board Member Skills Matrix is maintained to ensure that the Board has, within its composition, the appropriate coverage of skills, qualities and expertise required to effectively govern the College.
- 4.2 The Skills Matrix is used to identify possible gaps which could be addressed by the recruitment and selection process.

## Recruitment and Selection Policy for Board Members

### 5.0 Recruitment Process

5.1 The key stages of the recruitment process can be summarised as follows:

- ~~The Governance Steering Group will agree the timescales to be adopted for the recruitment and selection process following consideration of the Board's Skills Matrix, terms of office of current Board Members, and the Board's Succession Planning Policy for Board Members~~
- The Principal & Chief Executive will be consulted on skills and experience aligned to the College's future strategy that it would be desirable for new Board Members to have
- The Secretary to the Board will prepare an advertisement which will highlight desirable skills and experience
- The advertisement will be placed ~~in the Press & Journal newspaper~~ and on appropriate websites and online bulletins, including Scottish Government Public Appointments, College Development Network, Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC), ~~and~~ Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI), and Community Planning Partnerships
- The advertisement will also be highlighted on the College's Facebook page, LinkedIn and Twitter account
- A microsite will be created on the College website to make available the application form, person specification, Board Member terms and conditions, and information pack along with key supporting information.
- Targeted emails may also be issued to organisations and businesses which relate to particular skills or sectors from which applications are particularly welcomed
- ~~Board Members will be asked to highlight the opportunity to join the Regional Board to their existing networks~~
- Fellows and past Guest Speakers will be asked to highlight the vacancies to their networks
- College staff will be asked to highlight the vacancies to employer contacts
- A shortlist of applicants will be agreed by the Board's Governance Steering Group and the Independent Person. The shortlisting of applicants will be undertaken with anonymised applications i.e. names and dates of birth will be removed, to help avoid any unconscious biases
- The Secretary to the Board will establish an interview schedule.

### 6.0 Selection Process

6.1 The key stages of the selection process can be summarised as follows:

- Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed by the Regional Chair, one of the Board's Vice Chairs and the Independent Person, with the Secretary to the Board in attendance
- Applicants will be asked an agreed set of interview questions
- Applicants will individually meet with the Principal
- A list of preferred candidates will be agreed by the Regional Chair and the Independent Person
- Consideration will also be given to the identification of highly



## Recruitment and Selection Policy for Board Members

regarded candidates for which there is no immediate position i.e. observing Board meetings prior to a future vacancy arising, co-option to a Standing Committee

- A letter from the Regional Chair seeking approval of the appointments, along with a supporting letter from the Independent Person, will be sent to the Deputy Director, Colleges, SFC and Young Workforce
- Upon receipt of approval of the appointments, the Secretary to the Board will inform successful and unsuccessful candidates
- If any preferred candidates do not receive Scottish Ministers approval a further recruitment process will be undertaken to appoint to any remaining vacancies.

Status:	<u>For consideration</u> <del>Approved</del> by Regional Board
Date of version:	June 20 <del>20</del> <sup>19</sup>
Responsibility for Policy:	Regional Board
Responsibility for implementation:	Regional Chair and Secretary to the Board
Responsibility for review:	Regional Board
Review date:	June 202 <del>1</del> <sup>0</sup>

# Induction Policy for Board Members

---



Agenda Item 25-20  
Appendix 2

## Induction Policy for Board Members

Review Date: June 2021<sup>0</sup>

## Induction Policy for Board Members

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 It is important that when new Board Members are appointed they receive appropriate induction training to enable them to discharge their responsibilities with confidence.
- 1.2 This Policy identifies the process that will be followed to ensure that new Board Members receive an effective induction in preparation for their new role.
- 1.3 It should be noted that induction arrangements for staff and student members of the Board may differ to those detailed to reflect existing knowledge of the College and the Scottish Further Education Sector.

### 2.0 Induction Programme

- 2.1 The College's Board Member Induction Programme aims to:

- assist new Members to familiarise themselves with their roles and responsibilities;
- enable new Members to understand what is expected of them; and,
- provide new Members with key information regarding the operation of the College and its Regional Board, and the College's operating environment.

- 2.2 The College's internal Induction Programme consists of three stages:

#### 2.2.1 Stage 1

New Board Members will meet with the Regional Chair and the Secretary to the Board to be briefed on the terms of their appointment and made aware of the responsibilities placed on them for the proper governance of the College.

At this time, new Board Members will be provided with an introduction to the Regional Board, including the following aspects:

- The Scottish Further Education Sector and the role of colleges
- A College overview and history, including ASET and the NES FE Foundation
- The Board's role and main functions
- The operation of the Board and its Committees
- The Role of a Board Member
- Board engagement activities
- Board evaluation processes
- Key College publications.

The following key governance documents will also be highlighted:

- The Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges
- The North East Scotland College Governance Manual
- The Code of Conduct for Members of the Regional



## Induction Policy for Board Members

- Board of North East Scotland College
- Guide for Board Members in the College Sector: your essential guide to being a board member
- A Board Development Framework
- Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Associations in Scotland.

New Board Members will receive an introduction to the College intranet, COLIN, a valuable source of information on the operation of the College. The use of online Board and Committee Collaborative Spaces to access meeting agendas, papers and minutes, and supporting reference materials will be explained.

New Board Members will also be registered for the College Development Network (CDN) Governance Hub which provides access to sector training courses and various supporting resources.

### 2.2.2 **Stage 2**

Briefing sessions with each Committee Chair to gain an understanding of the remit and business conducted by each of the Board's Committees will be arranged.

[Meetings with the Principal & Chief Executive, and the two Vice Principals will also be arranged.](#)

### 2.2.3 **Stage 3**

Six months following appointment, Board Members will be asked to identify any topics/issues/College processes they feel it would be beneficial to gain a greater awareness and understanding of e.g. curriculum planning, financial reporting. A tailored programme will then be scheduled by the Secretary to the Board.

At this time, Board Members will also be invited to meet with the Governance Steering Group to share their experience to date as a Member of the Regional Board,

2.2.4 In addition to the above three stages, newly appointed Board Members will be provided with an opportunity to informally meet with serving Board Members, and to advise if they believe a mentoring arrangement with a long serving Member would be beneficial.

2.3 Board Members will also be required to complete the mandatory National Induction Programme, delivered by CDN on behalf of the sector. The Programme provides Members with an opportunity to:

- understand what they are accountable for and what their rights as well as duties are
- hear from key national decision makers on what is expected from the college sector and its Boards



# Induction Policy for Board Members

- build skills and confidence in the governance role, identifying the 'hard' procedural and 'soft' behavioural requirements of good governance in the college sector
- review key source documents and guidance, exploring crucial lessons from the past
- discuss and share insights into the typical challenges facing Board members in the sector
- build a network of personal contacts from other Boards that can be developed over the years.

### 3.0 Continuing Professional Development

- 3.1 Following initial induction Board Members will be provided with ongoing opportunities to undertake training and continuing professional development activities. This will include internal and external training courses, briefing sessions, joint events with other educational institutions, Campus Visits and various engagement opportunities with staff and students, ~~and Board visits across College Campuses and to various curriculum areas.~~
- 3.2 Board Members will have the opportunity to undertake online training~~Blackboard~~ courses and to attend internal staff development sessions provided by the College's Organisational Development Team.
- 3.3 Opportunities to identify Board training and development needs will be ongoing throughout the year and will be discussed at Board and Standing Committee meetings and as part of the Board's evaluation process and at the Annual Chairs Meeting. Individual Board Member training and development needs will be discussed during Annual Board Member Development meetings with the Regional Chair.

Status: For consideration ~~Approved~~ by  
Regional Board

Date of version: June 20~~2019~~21

Responsibility for authorisation: Regional Board

Responsibility for implementation: Secretary to the Board

Responsibility for review: Regional Board

Review date: June 202~~19~~1



REGIONAL BOARD	
Meeting of 24 June 2020	
<b>Title: Annual Priorities AY2019-20 Progress Update</b>	
<b>Author:</b> Pauline May, Director of Strategy & Planning	<b>Contributor(s):</b> Leadership Team
<b>Type of Agenda Item:</b>	
<b>For Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>For Discussion</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>For Information</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Reserved Item of Business</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Purpose:</b> To provide the Regional Board with an opportunity to consider a progress update against the College's Annual Priorities for AY2019-20.	
<b>Linked to Strategic Goal:</b> This Agenda Item has reference to all five Strategic Goals.	
<b>Linked to Annual Priority:</b>	
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	
<p>At its meeting in June 2017, the Regional Board approved the College's first set of Annual Priorities.</p> <p>The Priorities were introduced for AY2017-18 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enable action to be taken in a collective, agreed way to move the College forward and towards excellence.</li> <li>• enable any issues of poor quality or performance to be addressed.</li> <li>• enable any particular areas of development or innovation to be highlighted.</li> <li>• establish a mechanism for the College to measure achievements against in 12 months time.</li> <li>• inform detailed enhancement plans for the period.</li> <li>• enable communication of key College priorities to staff providing a clear rationale for plans and actions.</li> </ul> <p>Attached as Appendix 1 to this paper is a further progress update against each of the Annual Priorities for AY2019-20 highlighting any further developments which have occurred since the interim progress update which was shared with the Board in March 2020.</p> <p>In terms of current RAG status, out of the 20 Priorities set for AY2019-20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 are red</li> </ul>	

- 15 are amber
- 3 are green.

The updates provided indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted on the ability to fully complete a number of the Priorities. The Priorities identified as either red or amber will therefore be carried over to AY2020-21 to ensure that delayed planned work to enable these to be completed is undertaken by, at the latest, the end of AY2020-21 Block 1. The Progress Update contains revised deadlines for each of the red or amber Priorities. A further update of progress against AY2019-20 Annual Priorities will be reported to the Board at its meeting in March 2021.

At the annual June Board Meeting, the Regional Board is asked to approve the College's Annual Priorities for the coming Academic Year. An amended timescale for this in light of the COVID-19 pandemic will be shared with Members under Agenda Item 29-20 at the meeting on 24 June 2020.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Board note the information provided.

**Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable):**

None

**Equality Impact Assessment:**

**Positive Impact**     

**Negative Impact**   

**No Impact**           

**Evidence:**

The delivery of a number of the Annual Priorities support the College's ambitions in relation to equality, diversity, access and inclusion.

ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

Being Responsive

**1. Build on the “Campus Futures” approaches and plans for Fraserburgh, Aberdeen City and Altens, specifically in relation to STEM, engagement with employers and schools and new and differentiated provision.**

**FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE**

Campus Futures meetings at the City Campus are themed according to revised Terms of Reference. Key outcomes to date include:

- More student work being displayed at the Campus resulting in more footfall of visitors;
- Signage at the Campus has been revised to reduce unnecessary negative messages and notices and replace with positive messages relating to RESPECT, wellbeing and where to go for support;
- Workshops on enhancing student engagement have taken place and as a result there are a number of positive suggestions to take forward. This engagement exercise will be repeated at all campuses;
- The next theme will be on supporting positive behaviour and revising the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures - this engagement exercise will be repeated at all campuses;
- Over 300 primary school pupils came to the Campus during December to engage in basic sound production tasks before watching the Pantomime;
- The CodeCraft Saturday Club at City remains popular;
- Staff working at the Campus can follow progress as records of meetings and actions plans are available on COLIN.

Campus Futures meetings at the Fraserburgh Campus continue to take place on a monthly basis where the campus enhancement plan is updated with progress on actions. Key themes include employer engagement and commercial opportunities, schools activity and diversifying our portfolio with a specific focus on evening class provision.

As a result of the success of a new school-college engagement model, including the Next Steps campaign, Fraserburgh Campus has seen double the number of school pupils participate in the new format Open Day and the Discover courses offered in May has increased from an offer of 450 places in AY2018-19 to 1,000 places in AY2019-20. This activity is well received and supported through the Enhancing Engagement meetings with Head Teachers from Fraserburgh feeder secondary schools.

In addition to the secondary school activity, 12 feeder primary schools are engaged in Environmental Studies and Science programmes and there is potential to offer computer coding moving forward. Community, Health and Wellbeing programmes are also currently offered to a local primary school and there is an opportunity to expand this.

A major success this year has been the delivery of Craft Maths to Fraserburgh Academy. This was initiated through discussions with a local employer who highlighted a skills gap, and through effective partnership working between the employer, the school and the college, this programme was set up and has been very well received. Fraserburgh Academy are in the process of collating quantitative data to allow for analysis of impact on results. This will be rolled out to at least 2 other schools in AY2020-21.

There is an increase in evening class provision at Fraserburgh Campus, which has seen multiple classes running on both Tuesday and Thursday nights with a variety of students including community groups, Scouts, Boys Brigade and Men's Shed are all getting a full STEM experience by getting a variety of experience across a number of disciplines.

Curriculum teams continue to work closely with the Business & Community Development Team to identify commercial opportunities and engage with local employers.

Curriculum planning is progressing on a Campus by Campus basis, with appropriate emphasis on the STEM agenda and technological developments. For example, plans are underway to re-establish a CNC machining capacity at Altens Campus and training in 3D-printing has been undertaken by staff with a view to incorporating more into the existing curriculum, as well as planning additional part-time

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

provision. Plans are also underway to increase capacity to offer and deliver STEM short courses for school pupils and staff in schools in Aberdeen City and Shire to increase access to activities, address equalities and improve career awareness. Working with OGTC and ESP, Altens Campus hosted a regional heat of an international Lego League competition for 9-14 year olds in December which was oversubscribed and so occasioned a second event held in Fraserburgh Campus. This brought a number of school groups and teachers onto the Campus along with their industry sponsors and offered an opportunity to showcase College facilities and courses.

### MAY 2020 UPDATE

The coronavirus epidemic and associated lockdown restrictions have impacted significantly on all campus futures activities. With an immediate need to focus on the completion of qualifications, redesign and development of assessment strategies and the ongoing support of staff and students curriculum and support teams shifted focus and resource from developmental and enhancement activities to these core activities.

As a consequence of the closure of schools, all planned delivery and engagement/recruitment activities that would typically take place towards the end of the academic year have been cancelled. Despite this, campus futures teams are still meeting to help support the applications and admissions process, a focus on which must continue despite the ongoing lockdown situation. On 19 May 2020, Fraserburgh Campus will host a "Virtual Open Day" with curriculum and support teams available all day to meet online with potential applicants, and live information and advice sessions being delivered via webinar.

**Revised Deadline:** February 2020

**2 Improve the attractiveness and effectiveness of our community provision across the region and develop an improved range of flexible pathways for adult learners, families and those in the workforce who require upskilling.**

### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

BCD continually refines its community offer with a broad range of programmes across a wide geographic area. This is designed to make courses as popular and accessible as possible. We have recently introduced a SCQF Level 4 Skills for Work – Early Education & Childcare course which is delivered over 1 day per week with family friendly hours as an entry level for candidates returning to work after raising a family or caring responsibilities. This has proved popular and offers progression to further study or a role within early years support.

In partnership with Aberdeen Foyer, we have introduced a Family Learning & Employability programme. This was delivered in Fraserburgh during the summer of 2019 and will now be offered in Peterhead this year. Childcare and lunch are provided to make it more accessible.

Our partnership with Aberdeen Foyer has also seen the introduction of REACH2 aimed at those who have completed REACH but require more time to be work ready and have the skills, knowledge and confidence to progress into work. This course has been introduced to fill a gap we have identified with candidates completing the REACH programme with no obvious progression route.

We are also offering a range of short 10 hour courses to help with digital inclusion/literacy. Courses include Computing Essentials, Social Media for Beginners and Internet Security. These are proving popular with older adults who have lost confidence using computers, social media etc.

We have also been supportive of local employers whose staff have faced barriers to their own development. For example, NHS Grampian had a number of staff wishing to progress into Nursing but without the numeracy ability to meet the degree entry requirements. Through a tailored programme, we have been able to upskill 30+ staff to commence their degree programme and (with time) help to address the huge skills shortage in this area.

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

Finally, we continue to work closely with partners to develop a suite of distance learning programmes which are offered at zero or very low cost to help individuals or employers upskill for work. The programmes are mainly care related, but many go into other areas like leadership or Health & Safety.

### MAY 2020 UPDATE

The corona virus epidemic and associated lockdown restrictions have impacted significantly on part time and community programmes. In some part-time courses were curtailed as they were 'too practical' to deliver online. Many staff have embraced the remote working requirement and adapted programmes for delivery through Microsoft Teams and Collaborate. NESCol staff have also provided some helpful guidance to CPP partners who have been delivering ESOL programmes funded through NESCol core grant. Community ESOL has undoubtedly suffered as a result of the need for online learning and some of those most vulnerable groups are the most impacted. The College has also provided Foyer candidates with laptops for those without digital access.

During the lockdown period, BCD staff have been involved in voluntary activities in the community from 3D printing of visors, to pharmacy deliveries to sewing bags for washing PPE for nurses/care workers.

Looking forwards, we are reviewing short courses to focus on those most able to support employability and the economic recovery in the region.

#### Revised Position:

BCD will be launching an updated portfolio for delivery commencing in September 2020 which focuses on economic support for business customers and employability support for those who are out of work. Leisure courses will halt until January 2021 and a decision will be taken nearer that time on whether some or all can recommence.

### **3 Deliver a new website improving access to information and services to prospective and existing students and for all stakeholders.**

#### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

The new website [www.nescol.ac.uk](http://www.nescol.ac.uk) went live on 05 November 2020, following a period of extensive work by staff from NESCol's Marketing & Communications, IT and Web Services Teams, together with the appointed agency, BLUE2Digital. The deadline coincided with full-time applications opening for AY2020-21 and formed part of an integrated marketing launch to support online applications.

The site continues to be developed, both by the developers and NESCol staff, and a comprehensive snagging list is being addressed on a user-priority basis.

The planned Phase 2 launch of targeted personalisation, enabling a greater website experience, is due to be rolled out by Easter 2020. This, together with added further rich media content and migration of the Scottish Maritime Academy site, will see the site deliver the platform envisaged by the Project Group.

The Content Management System in particular has been a great success and has allowed input and responsibility for site content and development from a much wider body of staff within Marketing & Communications.

To date the site has received 1,217,755 page views from external traffic – a 14% rise from the same period in the previous year. On completion of Phase 2, a full site QA audit and general evaluation will take place and feedback sought from representative user groups – as used in the planning process.

Budget - £70,134 has been spent to date on the project, which includes 3 years hosting. A final invoice amount has been requested to cover considerable development changes to address NESCol-driven changes.

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

### MAY 2020 UPDATE

A project meeting was held on 10 March 2020 to update on the progress with the snagging list and agree priorities. This list continues to be worked through between the Marketing & Communications Team and BLUE2, with progress being made in completing the actions. It is anticipated the current snagging list will be completed in June, although there is the understanding that the development of the site is an iterative process and work will continue on a rolling basis.

It is acknowledged there is work required on Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) to increase traffic and enhance the user experience. Issues with sporadic site downtime have been encountered in May and BLUE2 continue to investigate, with issues related to UNIT-e identified as a possible cause. Work to increase analytical capabilities, through Google Tag Manager, is being carried out.

### Developing People

#### 4. Improve individual and College performance through consistent application of operational frameworks for planning, curriculum management and student support.

### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

The [Framework for Supporting Students](#) and [Faculty Management Framework](#) are available to all staff on COLIN.

Following the implementation of the recommendations identified by the Student Support Internal Review and the subsequent evaluation a [Framework for Attendance Monitoring and Funding](#) was published in October 2019. This informs all staff involved in the process what their responsibilities are in the process. Duplication was removed, and some tasks were taken away from Academic Tutors and passed to College Administrators to make the process more efficient and give a better service to students.

The Planning & Reporting Framework is currently under review to reflect recent discussions and changes to the operation of the College's Leadership Team. Other ongoing reviews in relation to the operation and remits of the College's Action Teams, curriculum planning and self-evaluation processes will also require changes to be made to the Framework.

### MAY 2020 UPDATE

The Framework for Supporting Students was in the main welcomed by curriculum staff and allowed staff to concentrate more on academic support. Some revision of when students are referred to Academic tutor needs to be undertaken by Student Advice Centre to make the process clearer and easier for students. The use of SIP has widened although some teams are still not updating student profiles appropriately. Training in the use of SIP took place on the January Staff Development Day, and also at some team meetings. SIP phase 2 is being designed at the moment which will include work on student support referrals, student funding and student attendance. The use of SIP has been a useful communication tool to record the progress and engagement of students while we work remotely.

We also plan to introduce a new register mark so that we can record engagement without physical attendance (which is a requirement to justify student support funding payments), as this has caused anomalies, and difficulties for students and support teams this session.

Changes to procedures have been implemented to ensure that students are not disadvantaged financially because of COVID-19.

The Faculty Management Framework needs to be revised and updated to reflect the introduction of the KPI meetings and the impact and consequence of remote working as a result of COVID-19. Working from home, including leading and managing individuals and teams and monitoring output remotely can be particularly challenging. A revised Framework should address some of these

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

challenges and offer solutions in addition to signposting available training and support. This work will be completed by the start of AY2020-21.

**Revised Deadline:** September 2020

**5. Deliver a year of “Digital” improving digital skills across our workforce in support of the delivery of innovative learning and teaching and effective business management systems.**

### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

#### **Development Day & Year of Digital:**

The College's 'Year of Digital' was promoted during the Development Day held in January 2020, with further staff training sessions planned during 2020 to complement the Day's activities. 73% College staff took part either by facilitating or attending a workshop on the Day. Staff feedback is currently being obtained, but initial feedback has been extremely positive.

#### **Increase Usage of Blackboard Grade Centre, Digital Assessment & Feedback:**

An action identified by the Learning & Development Action Team (LDAT) is to increase the usage of Blackboard Grade Centre across all curriculum areas. Usage statistics have been collated and have identified only 1 curriculum area with zero usage. A more detailed analysis of the usage in each team is currently being undertaken. During the Development Day sessions 50 staff attended session on Blackboard Grade Centre. 33 staff were also trained on the Fraserburgh Campus last November. Out with these more formal sessions the Learning Technologies Team has provided advice to 41 staff about using the Grade Centre.

The Learning Technologies Team is also continuing to promote the use of digital assessment and feedback tools to increase their usage. During the Development Day, sessions were held covering topics such as Turnitin, OneNote Class Notebook, Blackboard Grade Centre, Medial, SOLAR and online quizzes and tools.

#### **Changing Practice & Introducing New Tools:**

The Construction Teams are actively using the new Blackboard Ultra courses at the moment as well as ASET. The next stage is to encourage various other practical/trades courses in Fraserburgh and Altens to use Ultra and to increase usage of Blackboard overall. This will include Electrical Engineering, Automotive and Mechanical Engineering. Another period of promotion will be held during Block 2 after new features such as blogs and journals are potentially going to be introduced to Ultra courses that are expected around Easter which may increase adoption further. 21 staff attended a Blackboard Ultra session on Development Day.

The Social Science Team began using Blackboard Collaborate from late-August 2019 to provide students with access to recordings. As of January 2020, 99 recorded sessions covering 82 hours have been played 1,673 times. Across the College, including Social Science, 1,836 Collaborate sessions have been created covering 308 hours. Two sessions promoting the use of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra were held during the Development Day with 29 staff attended. News articles have been added on COLIN in recent months to highlight the flexibility that Collaborate can offer especially during winter with potential travel disruption or to add flexibility for students with issues that may affect attendance.

#### **Accessible Learning Materials:**

Blackboard Ally was promoted during Block 1 to students and staff via Institution Page banners and links to resources. Over 7,000 accessible file formats have been downloaded to date with 66% of students who click on the accessible format link are then downloading one of the file types available. 646 courses have had 1 or more accessible file formats downloaded and the most active courses are from subject areas such as Healthcare, Social Care, Childcare, Hair & Beauty and ESOL. 26 staff attended a Blackboard Ally session run by Blackboard staff during the Development Day.

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

### **Improved College Communication & Collaboration:**

Three sessions promoting Microsoft Teams were held during the Development Day with 53 staff attending. This increased awareness of the potentials that Teams can offer. Many support staff attended these sessions and some who attended these sessions have provided feedback that they have already started to use Teams for chat/group chat and to enhance how they were already using it.

### **MAY 2020 UPDATE**

#### **Development Day & Year of Digital:**

The College's 'Year of Digital' was promoted during the Development Day held in January 2020. 73% College staff took part either by facilitating or attending a workshop on the Day. 178 staff provided feedback through a post-event survey and the vast majority indicated that the day was well organised and they enjoyed the sessions.

Since remote working was initiated, a Learning Pathways tool has been released that details many training opportunities available to staff during the lockdown to improve their digital skills, use of technology, deliver courses online and provide assessments via Blackboard. Further training will be available to staff via webinars in the coming weeks and the Learning Development Team continues to meet with many staff & teams to teach the use of digital tools and to provide advice. Since remote working began (23 March 2020) the Team has provided more than 480 training or advice sessions with staff across all campuses.

The Pathway also includes many recommended LinkedIn Learning courses and usage has continued to increase. Since January 2020 the Top 5 courses watched include: Word 2016 Essential Training; Windows 10 Essential Training; Mindfulness Practices; Excel 2016 Essential Training; Photoshop CC 2019 One-on-One: Advanced. 177 staff viewed 533 different courses totalling 738 hours over 6,985 videos with 439 fully completed courses.

The Digital Futures Toolkit has been further expanded to provide more self-service guidance to staff and students. Since January, over 2,000 users have visited the website and viewed nearly 8,000 pages and spent, on average, two minutes on the site.

#### **Increase Usage of Blackboard Grade Centre, Digital Assessment & Feedback:**

An action identified by the Learning & Development Action Team (LDAT) was to increase the usage of Blackboard Grade Centre across all curriculum areas. Usage statistics continue to be monitored and all 27 curriculum areas are now using Grade Centre. Usage continues to increase with the move to solely e-assessment and there are 6,827 assignments, 5,881 Turnitin assignments and 1,024 tests making use of the Grade Centre this academic year.

#### **Changing Practice & Introducing New Tools:**

The new Blackboard course format 'Ultra' is now being used by ASET as well as the Construction teams in Fraserburgh & Altens Campuses. A dedicated training course available for staff using Ultra courses has also been launched to support the increase in usage.

During the first Block, the main user of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra was the Social Sciences Team. However, since remote teaching began usage has hugely increased across the College – 3,803 Collaborate Sessions were created, lasting 8,644 hours; 2,033 recordings have been made, lasting 1,044 hours; 4,7636 non-unique attendees across these sessions with peak unique attendees at 1,714 on 23 March 2020.

In the first 2 weeks of remote teaching there was an average of 1,408 unique attendees per day in Collaborate and, in the 17 teaching days since the Easter break, the average unique attendees increased to 1,576.

Blackboard usage continues to rise with over 117,000 users using the platform viewing over 6 million pages since 01 January 2020.

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

The Learning Technologies Team is continuing to explore the new Blackboard Data service to provide usage insight with more granular statistics about how Blackboard is being used and to provide data to curriculum teams. We are working with the Business Systems Team to explore using Power BI to generate dashboard based on this data.

### Accessible Learning Materials:

Blackboard Ally continues to be promoted to students and staff via Institution Page banners and links to instructional resources. Over 11,400 accessible file formats have been downloaded to date with 67% of students who click on the accessible format link are then downloading one of the file types available. The most popular formats are Tagged PDF, HTML and Audio (MP3).

998 Blackboard courses have had one or more accessible file formats downloaded by students and the most active courses are from subject areas such as Healthcare, Social Sciences, Social Care, Media, Childcare, Hair & Beauty and ESOL.

A training course is being development to raise awareness of creating accessible learning materials and Ally alongside the objectives of the Digital Accessibility Working Group.

### Improved College Communication & Collaboration:

The Learning Technologies Team continue to promote the use of Microsoft Teams during the academic year and since lockdown began the usage has dramatically increased:

Month	Call Participate	Channel Message	Chat Message	Meeting Participate
January 2020	32	463	2,480	15
February 2020	43	969	2,965	53
March 2020	3,495	19,622	64,358	1,271
April 2020	6,784	24,976	96,473	3,000
May 2020 (up to 12 <sup>th</sup> May)	1,304	3,318	17,439	541

The April statistics include the 2-week Easter holidays and, even with only 7 working days included in the May statistics, it exceeded usage in January and February combined by a huge margin.

Staff were asked to comment on Communication in the recent Wellbeing and Support Survey. 99.6% of staff who responded rated communication within their team positively. The use of Microsoft Teams as a tool for communication was cited by almost all staff who commented.

### 6. Establish a standardised approach to curriculum design within each faculty that embeds opportunities for students to develop the meta-skills necessary to become future-proofed and adaptive learners.

#### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

A comprehensive review and redesign of NESCol's approach to curriculum planning and course design is now underway. A short life working group, has been formed and following the completion of a service design workshop in January that involved a range of key stakeholders, the following project deliverables have been identified:

1. A systematic curriculum review model with detailed process/procedure comprising:
  - a) A multi-stage review cycle
  - b) Detailed instructions for each phase
2. A Curriculum Review Toolkit.
  - a) Sector/market insights report, analysis tools etc.
3. An associated two-year planning and development timeline.
4. Replacement for the CADP to document key planning information.
  - a) Sector insights

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

- b) Integrated with master planning spreadsheet
5. Curriculum Roadmap to highlight future direction (e.g. a 5 year forecast).
6. A course/curriculum design toolkit comprising
  - a) Course/module design framework
  - b) CDU design process
  - c) Guidance on FE POS design
  - d) Guidance on meta skills and digital skills integration
7. Communications strategy to promote and disseminate new approaches and resources.
8. Staff training plan to support implementation.

NESCol's curriculum must be shaped by our vision to drive and support innovation and economic prosperity, raise aspiration, create success, promote diversity, fairness and opportunity for all, whilst ensuring the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills across the region. The redesign of the curriculum planning and course design process, and the creation of a suite of resources to better support curriculum staff engage in related activities will help to ensure improved regional relevance across all College campuses, via a more collaborative planning process that ensures greater involvement of key internal and external stakeholders. The outputs of this project will help to ensure that all of NESCol's courses are designed in a modern, flexible and evidence-based format, that supports inclusive and sustainable economic growth, embeds the development of key meta and technical skills, yet also contribute to the achievement of key social and community priorities, such as the reduction of child poverty, dependence on alcohol and the development of connected communities.

### MAY 2020 UPDATE

The short life working group made very good progress on developing the majority of the project deliverables during February and March. A process had been drafted, along with some template documents and a timeline. Work still had to be completed on the toolkit at the point of lockdown, as well as cross-referencing with the development group working on self-evaluation. Some development has taken place since then but the group's attention has had to be diverted towards the curriculum changes necessitated by the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown. Work on the project will be picked up once COVID-19 priorities have been delivered. The impact of COVID-19 is likely also to influence the final form of the design process.

**Revised Deadline:** February 2020

**7 Promote talent management, innovative learning and teaching and excellence in leadership and business management through the development of a new and integrated approach to organisational development.**

### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

The People Services and Quality Teams restructures are now fully implemented. The Quality Team has recently recruited a Quality Enhancement Manager (QEM) and People Services are currently recruiting a Learning & Development Advisor. The Learning & Development Manager, Learning Technologies Manager and the QEM are working closely together to deliver opportunities that support the development of enhanced learning and teaching skills of our lecturers.

Opportunities for leadership development are currently being offered on an ad-hoc basis. A formal Leadership Development Framework is to be created, led by the Learning Development Advisor, and will be in place for AY2020-21.

To ensure an integrated approach to learning and development and that development opportunities offered support the strategic objectives of the College, the Learning & Development Action Team (LDAT) will oversee and set priorities for the Corporate Development Plan.

### MAY 2020 UPDATE

There is very little to update from February. The membership of LDAT has been reviewed and will now report to the Leadership Team. Significant amounts of future planning and joint working between

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

Quality and Learning Development Teams has been delayed to prioritise the current issues resulting from COVID-19. The changes in the way we work and deliver the curriculum will now inform our Corporate Development Plan.

**Revised Deadline:** December 2020

### Working in Partnership

**8. Create and implement a Framework that supports new, campus relevant, approaches to working with regional schools throughout the academic year.**

#### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

A [Framework for Working with Schools](#) is available on COLIN. It outlines the College's response to the Learner Journey and Developing the Young Workforce. The resource encourages each Head of Faculty to increase engagement opportunities with schools, which will be dependent upon the availability of appropriate resources and capacity in staffing levels. Examples of increased engagement include:

NESCol at Fraserburgh: As a result of feedback from a local employer and Fraserburgh Academy regarding the level of maths required for engineering related jobs, staff trialled a Craft Maths course for students without National 5 Maths. A member of College staff delivers the subject to one class in school and offers support to teachers with delivery to other groups.

NESCol at the City Campuses: A range of CPD courses to teachers have been arranged during December through to February. Subjects include: technical media, sound engineering and film. Engagement with primary schools to deliver STEM related activities.

All Heads of Faculty are involved in marketing events. The expectation is that Heads of Faculty will collectively build on initiatives to increase engagement and thus credit bearing activity with Schools, with the support of the Schools Liaison and Marketing & Communication Teams.

#### MAY 2020 UPDATE

Ongoing in-year engagement and partnership work with City and Shire schools has been severely impacted by the coronavirus outbreak and associated closure of school and College buildings. Work is underway to support school pupils in the completion of current college courses and recruitment for AY2020-21 is advancing well. Planned expansion of the school offer across all Campuses for the last quarter of AY2019-20 has had to be cancelled but ideas and plans will be carried forward for implementation as appropriate when circumstances allow.

Despite the obvious challenges work has begun at a more strategic level to co-design a tertiary model of education for the North East that maximises value for the public purse and ensures efficiency in the learner journey. One initiative is being planned with Aberdeen City Council and Northfield Academy and another workstream will examine a more College-led approach with key schools and HE partners.

Liaison is taking place with school partners with respect to delivery of school programmes in AY2020-21. Scenario planning is being undertaken which will include reference to programmes most at risk in the event of ongoing social distancing requirements and other public safety measures. Planned expansion of school delivery therefore remains at risk.

The Framework for Working with Schools remains relevant in terms of providing a structure for communication, identifying demand and engagement opportunities despite the impact of COVID-19. The operational group, the College's Action Team for working With Schools (CATS) has now been disbanded as it has fulfilled its objectives.

Our outsourced Distance Learning remains popular despite the challenging economic climate and our delivery is further ahead than at the same point last year. We are now in our final year of the contract and have to consider our future position. Distance Learning is likely to be a popular choice

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

for many who are isolated or reluctant to come back into group settings. Synchronous teaching might also be harder to deliver in the future as employers operate shift rotations to maximise social distancing.

252 of our 370 Modern Apprentices are currently furloughed, however only one has so far been made redundant. We continue to engage well with employers and apprentices and progress continues to be made in their qualifications meantime. We are however watching closely what SDS propose for the months ahead

Flexible Workforce Development Fund activity is much slower with staff furloughed. Some of the portfolio has been moved online, but the majority of it still requires face to face delivery. Similarly, CPD appears less of a priority for employers meantime. We will shortly be tendering for additional Associate Trainers to support the economic bounce when it comes to maximise the funding we have been given.

**Revised Position:** February 2020

### **9. Continue to build on the strong strategic partnership with RGU through further development of the Two Plus Alliance.**

#### **FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE**

Early in this calendar year, 'reset' discussions took place between the Principals of both NESCol and RGU in order to establish a greater clarity and focus on progressing shared plans for collaboration. At the time of writing further meetings are due to take place which will lead to the development of specific projects aimed at delivering a tertiary sector offer for the region; an offer which is well-supported by the SFC who remain keen to see how NESCol and RGU can develop further their collaboration to better address regional need.

Potential projects have been identified between the two organisations, ones which institutional representatives believe have the potential to grow and deliver tangible outcomes. These include:

- Data and widening access: Shared use of data and industry contacts to target regional demand and address issues pertaining to widening access, social mobility and inclusive economic growth;
- Digital skills: The development of a complimentary digital offer for key regional stakeholders including small businesses seeking to market their activities;
- Upskilling: The development of a complimentary upskilling offer for employees seeking to develop their skills for professional progression e.g. energy transition;
- Articulation and the Apprenticeship Family: The development of a one-stop shop offer and progression pathways which encompass Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships.

It is expected that on-going discussions will lead to the development and implementation of some, and possibly all, of these projects in time for the start of AY2020-21.

#### **MAY 2020 UPDATE**

Despite the advent of coronavirus meetings between the Principals of both the College and RGU have taken place to continue this work. However, the impact of COVID-19 and overtures from both Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council re. the development of a post-COVID 'tertiary sector offer, has meant the emphasis of possible collaboration has now sharpened. Accordingly, the two institutions are now exploring, and seeking to develop the following:

- A closer alignment in relation to curriculum planning which includes all of the curricula and skills-related areas identified above in the February update;
- A shared approach to widening access which seeks to address the skills development requirements of those within our Region who are economically disadvantaged, including those impacted by the consequences of COVID-19;
- The development of a shared qualification development and accreditation entity which enables both NESCol and RGU to create and accredit bespoke awards which address regional stakeholder needs.

Further activities are scheduled to take place to progress these plans and will incorporate discussions with both the new Chair and Principal Designate of RGU.

**Revised Deadline:** December 2020

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

### **10. Create a range of Senior Phase Hubs across the region that bring together the Campus Six Model with other senior phase curriculum pathway opportunities.**

#### **FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE**

The Campus Six 'brand' has not gained traction with partners schools or local authorities. Simply, the appetite for this has waned. However, significant progress has been made through the College's Fraserburgh Campus on developing enhanced partnership working with many Aberdeenshire Schools including The Gordon Schools, Huntly and Banff, Turriff, Meldrum, Mintlaw, Peterhead and Fraserburgh Academies. Indeed, the work associated with the latter has, as well as improving outcomes for school pupils, gained the interest and recognition of Education Scotland and has been lauded as potentially 'sector-leading'.

Whilst this initial annual priority was developed long before any notice was given by the Scottish Government's to review the Senior Phase, it is the view of College representatives that the schools-related work conducted through the Fraserburgh Campus has inadvertently and successfully pre-empted some aspects of the aforementioned review.

The work with Aberdeen schools is not so well progressed. This said, senior College representatives are presently involved in developing a way forward to address some of the challenges impacting on City schools including attainment and the recruitment and retention of staff. At the time of writing the College and universities are due to meet with ACC and SFC officials to explore ways in which a bespoke review of the senior phase can be conducted.

#### **MAY 2020 UPDATE**

The College's more progressive work on its schools-College links has been somewhat stalled by the advent of COVID-19. This said, the work developed with Aberdeenshire schools through the Fraserburgh Campus continues and, considering the circumstances, is progressing well.

Immediately prior to COVID-19, the College's work with Aberdeen City had progressed significantly and agreement had been reached to pilot, through a Local Governance Review initiative, a project aimed at developing a bespoke and refreshed senior phase within Northfield Academy. This project has the involvement of the College, the local authority, both universities and industry partners. The project also has the endorsement of SFC. Despite the impact of COVID-19 work continues on the development and implementation of this initiative. The subsequent review of its success could lead to similar projects being developed in other City schools.

**Revised Deadline: TBC**

### **11. Deliver a revised approach to external engagement ensuring a positive contribution to regional ambition that supports the delivery of the College's Strategic Plan.**

#### **FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE**

Work continues to evolve on enhancing regional partnership working. Executive and Leadership Team members are represented on a variety of regional entities and since coming into post the Principal has (re-) established contact, and held constructive and positive discussions, with many key stakeholders including RGU, UoA, ACC, ONE, SDS, OPITO, AGCC, RESG, DYW NE, Score, etc.

The activities of the College's Leadership Team have very recently been reviewed and revised. Consequently, roles and responsibilities are being reshaped to ensure that the College maximises opportunities for leaders and College staff to 'get out more' and become 'better connected' to regional stakeholders and to understand, more fully, their needs.

Leadership Team meetings will now seek to prioritise and monitor regional partnership working as part of the cycle of fortnightly meetings. Further progress updates will be provided to the Regional Board at the end of the academic year.

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

### MAY 2020 UPDATE

The advent of COVID-19 and the recent oil price crash has undoubtedly impacted on the ability of the College and its regional partners to successfully progress any mutual ambition for regional prosperity. However, as organisations, including the College, get to grips with the immediate challenges presented by the coronavirus crisis to their respective institutions the focus is now beginning to turn towards the development of a shared, post-COVID response to emerging and emergency Regional economic needs.

At the time of writing this update discussions between members of the Regional Economic Strategy Group were pending. The outputs from these meetings will undoubtedly begin to shape the College's contribution to a revised Regional Economic Strategy, NESCol's revised approaches to external engagement and the development of its own strategic direction, activities and plan.

**Revised Deadline:** October 2020

### 12. Deliver a data analysis project that supports an improved understanding of the effectiveness of our marketing approaches and which can inform curriculum planning and recruitment strategies.

Ongoing: Work is being undertaken to establish a project with a focus on creating a reporting framework to provide regular analysis of metrics (social media engagement and website data primarily) associated with marketing and communications activity. This will be used to evaluate effectiveness, inform future strategy and to support curriculum planning activity.

### MAY 2020 UPDATE

Further preparatory work was undertaken between February and May, but has been paused due to staff furlough. The intention is to resume activity in July 2020.

**Revised Deadline:** October 2020

## Delivering Quality

### 13. Ensure that our approach to self-evaluation links directly to an integrated planning framework leading to actions that will improve all business services and improve outcomes for learners.

#### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

The College's approach to self-evaluation is integrated into all working practice across curriculum and support teams. Enhancement Plans have been developed across all service delivery and they are continuously reviewed throughout the year, formally updated in February and June of every year. The formal self-evaluation process also allows service providers to identify good practice and individual teams to reflect on the quality of service they are providing to stakeholders.

To support the formal self-evaluation process the following key activities have been undertaken in AY2019-20. Key activities are directly linked to the Quality framework How good is our College? These activities promote forward thinking approaches to service review, stakeholder engagement and outcomes for learners:

- Regular faculty meetings capturing evidence on student and external stakeholder engagement, curriculum planning & design and outcomes for learners. An integrated review of faculty enhancement plans is built into the meeting schedules.
- Three Faculty Performance Review meetings are arranged each academic year. This assists in the creation of self-evaluation reports and in the college's ambition to improve KPIs. To date two review meetings have been held per faculty.
- Our Framework & Toolkit to Advance Student Engagement serves as a resource to signpost where engagement practices and opportunities are working well, along with resources to help us develop future practice. Work undertaken around the Framework is integrated into self-evaluation approaches which will be evidenced in faculty and support self-evaluation reports.

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

- The Partnership Agreement between North East Scotland College and the Students' Association support the self-evaluation activities across college, evidencing the engagement which is embedded in the Quality Framework. This year 34 pledges were made to the Students' Association, by teams across the College. The pledges detail specific commitments to work with the Students' Association to further develop the working partnership.
- Microsoft Power Bi Data Dashboard has been updated this year to provide live data which is more aligned with self-evaluation requirements. Curriculum teams have completed an interim review of student performance and levels of student satisfaction.
- The College introduced an Environmental and Social Sustainability section into the Faculty and Support Self-evaluation Report templates AY2018-19. All faculty and support areas provided an overview of the activities implemented within their individual teams to improve environmental performance. This requirement has been developed further with all faculty and support areas tasked to identify at least one action in their enhancement plan for AY2020-21. A whole-College Sustainability Enhancement Plan will then be developed and the progress will be monitored by the Sustainability Committee.

The curriculum self-evaluation process is currently being reviewed by a working group to establish if a more innovative approach to formal self-evaluation can be developed.

### MAY 2020 UPDATE

Regular faculty meetings are still taking place but the main focus has been on completing the learner qualifications due to the current COVID-19 situation. Learner engagement is monitored daily to ensure we identify and provide the necessary support. Curriculum planning and design is currently under review to ensure the College is effectively planning for all potential scenarios for the new academic session

Faculty Performance Review meetings are currently postponed due to the COVID-19 situation. Faculties are currently focusing on the new assessment and resulting process to ensure learners have every opportunity to complete their qualifications, based on a holistic approach to meet qualification aims.

As a result of discussions at the Regional Board Meeting held in November 2019 and the College's seminar on engagement held on 06 March 2020, the Framework will be updated, along with the Partnership Agreement. The intended purpose is to strengthen the student voice and identify priority activities.

The Students' Association's capacity to engage with the student body has been severely compromised as a result of COVID-19. They do maintain a presence via social media and by messaging on MyNESCol and the VLE, and College colleagues, in a remote capacity. This however will not be captured formally as the self-evaluation activities have been postponed for 2019-20, therefore reports will not be produced.

The pledges made to the Students' Association are currently postponed due to the current remote working conditions but will be reviewed when college staff return to normal working conditions.

Although all future self-evaluation activity has been postponed for AY2019-20 Power Bi Data Dashboard is now fully aligned to all of the self-evaluation requirements. The Student Satisfaction & Engagement Survey has been postponed for the current academic session, due to COVID-19, and endorsed by SFC therefore will not be available on the Power Bi Data Dashboard.

The Environmental and Social Sustainability activities will continue, where possible, in the new remote working practices. Areas for improvement however will not be formally recorded due to the postponement of formal self-evaluation activity AY2019-20.

The review of the curriculum self-evaluation process is currently on hold due to the new College priorities. The working group will reconvene at an appropriate time to continue this review.

**Revised Deadline:** February 2020

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

### 14. Develop and deliver actions that will embed a whole college ethos of environmental and social sustainability.

#### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

NESCol holds two international standards, the Environmental Management System bsi ISO14001 and Energy Management System bsi ISO50001. The adoption of these standards and subsequent ongoing accreditation ensures all operations at all campuses are driven with environmental and social sustainability issues at the forefront of all activities and decision making processes. The College is leading the way, and is at the forefront, of the attainment of such standards throughout Scotland and the UK within both universities and colleges. The implementation of the standards ensures the college not only meets but exceeds all associated legislation and continues to demonstrate best practice in all areas of environmental sustainability and energy management. The College will continue to maintain the standards at this exemplary level ensuring that we continue to be leaders throughout the sector.

As a signatory to the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\) Accord](#), in addition to other measures, the College is committed to delivering goals and reporting on progress to share the learning with other institutions both nationally and internationally. Once again this will be embed a whole College ethos to environmental and social sustainability issues. NESCol will continue to embed SDGs into our education, research, leadership, operations, administration and engagement activities.

The College also introduced an Environmental and Social Sustainability section into the Faculty and Support Self-evaluation Report templates for AY2018-19. All faculty and support areas provided an overview of the activities that they implemented within their individual teams to improve environmental performance. Information was provided on how improvements were made across a range of key themes such as continual environmental improvement and the prevention of pollution, compliance with relevant legal requirements; identification of waste types; waste disposal, segregation and storage; energy management and environmental and social sustainability.

A summary report was created and presented to the College's Sustainability Committee, this provided an opportunity for the Committee to review cross-College activity. The report formed a baseline per faculty and support area to establish where further improvements can be made, and to identify good practice. To ensure the environmental performance continues to be monitored all faculty and support areas will identify at least one action in their Enhancement Plan to improve environmental performance in their areas of responsibility. This progress will be monitored by the Sustainability Committee.

#### MAY 2020 UPDATE

On the 16 and 17 March 2020 bsi remotely audited the College against the Environmental Management System, bsi ISO14001 Standard. The outcome of the 2 day audit was successful with no observations or non-conformities being noted against the College. The College continues to successfully meet all requirements of the standard from policies and procedures to operations throughout all of the campuses.

On the 11 and 12 May 2020 the College underwent a two day external assessment for its Energy Management System, bsi ISO50001, which was carried out remotely. The audit was a full recertification audit covering all aspects of the standard. The audit was extremely successful and no observations or non-conformities were noted against the College. In addition to this success enough work had been carried out to be assessed against the new BS EN ISO 50001:2018 Standard. A 100% transition was recorded against the College's progress towards the new standard. We are, therefore, now fully accredited to the 2018 standard for all operations at all campuses.

As a signatory to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Accord, the College is committed to mandatory annual reporting on how we contribute to the SDG's. Although the deadline date was extended until June 2020 the College met the original deadline and submitted the report at the start of this month. There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals in total and the College was able to

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

submit evidence for each goal. Moving forward the College will integrate the SDG's into the Environmental Management System to demonstrate commitment and continual improvement.

**15. Refresh the College's Access & Inclusion Strategy to ensure that processes, practices and behaviours promote the mainstreaming of equality for all protected characteristics and take cognisance of Scottish Government priority groups relating to widening access.**

### **FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE**

Following recent guidance from the SFC, and as a consequence of recent changes made to the structure and delivery-model of our students information, advice and support services at the College we are now required to review and update our existing Access and Inclusion Strategy, branding the document as the NESCol Access and Inclusion Plan.

The review is being overseen by the Student Support Action Team and involves the participation of other key staff, students and external stakeholders. It is anticipated that the update will be complete by March 2020.

Student success is at the centre of everything we do at NESCol and we strive to make the learner journey as accessible, positive and seamless as possible. This begins with our vision to support people from a wide range of backgrounds to access a high quality educational provision and ultimately improve their positive destinations in life.

The Plan will detail our whole-College approach to access and inclusion and outlines how we support the achievement of regional economic and community priorities, Government objectives, and comply with our legislative duties whilst working within the constraints of available resources. It will also outline the inclusive service that we provide for students and demonstrates our commitment to enabling a culture of collaboration through a commitment to partnership in the design, evaluation and evolution of our student-support services. In addition, the Plan will also outline the stretch objectives that we have set ourselves in relation to developing and improving the student experience and learner journey, and identifies specific ambitions relating to student recruitment, success on course, and post-course transitions leading to positive destinations.

### **MAY 2020 UPDATE**

The Access & Inclusion Strategy has been updated in draft form and the new document is ready for wider circulation. As a consequence of the coronavirus outbreak and associated closure of College buildings, the full schedule of student consultation has yet to be completed so final refinement of the document may yet occur.

In response to the coronavirus outbreak and limitations that this places on colleges, the SFC has deferred the deadline for submission of the new Strategy until the new academic year.

**Revised Deadline:** SFC to confirm

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

### 16. Improve outcomes for all learners, regardless of protected characteristics. Through a reduction in early withdrawal and an increase in completed success rates.

#### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

In AY2019-20 a major focus has been placed on supporting curriculum teams to develop a greater understanding of their role in enabling and maximising student success, and supporting Curriculum Managers to acquire an increased sense of ownership of their students and the associated key performance indicators.

This has been done in several ways:

1. Via a robust student recruitment process
2. Through the roll out of a more systematic and rigorous student welcome and induction at the beginning of term
3. Via a focus on individual staff responsibilities relating to the new “whole-college” support model and academic tutoring function
4. Through improved teamwork between curriculum and support staff
5. Via the introduction of the new Student Information Portal (SIP).

There are several actors that are well known to impact positively on student early retention and success, and through all of the work outlined above College staff have been proactive at:

- Ensuring financial support is in place for all who are entitled as soon as possible
- Ensuring students are placed on the correct course, at the correct level
- Providing ALL students with a thorough and effective induction, clearly signposting where and how to access support
- Quickly establishing effective staff/student relationships via strategic timetabling and the academic tutor role
- Encouraging and providing opportunities for student “connectedness” via the SA and various events, class trips and initiatives
- Enabling opportunities for early successes through strategic course design
- Facilitating multiple opportunities for student engagement, both individually and collectively, in and out of class
- Ensuring effective interaction of support providers by ensuring targeted class-based support in addition to individual student referral and self-referral
- Building each student's capacity to engage via embedded academic tutoring
- Monitoring student engagement in class and discussing at team level
- Evaluating impact of services provided, and identifying planned support interventions via focused KPI meetings with each Curriculum Manager chaired by the VP Curriculum & Quality.

As a consequence of this work early withdrawal was improved in AY2019–20, and further intervention, support and oversight systematically planned the College is well placed to improve student success by the end of the academic year.

#### MAY 2020 UPDATE

As reported in February, good progress had been made in building capability and confidence within curriculum teams in regard to improving student attainment. Unfortunately the impact of corona virus, and the associated shift to remote working for all staff and students will limit our ability to ensure improvement in student attainment.

It is extremely challenging to shift an entire skills-focused, vocational curriculum online and the College faces substantial challenges associated with:

- engaging and supporting young, non-advanced learners online
- Redesigning all course and assessment schedules to enable “holistic” assessment decisions to be made and courses to be completed on time
- delivering practical and work-based learning without access to specialist facilities
- effectively supporting the academic performance and pastoral wellbeing of students online
- preventing students who disengage from online learning dropping out completely.

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

As a result it is likely that the College will not be able to increase the number of students successfully completing their course this academic year. Furthermore it is certain that a significant number of students will be required to defer completion of their course until access to College facilities is permitted once again.

Furthermore, with the impacts of coronavirus projected to persist for the foreseeable future, it is anticipated that AY2020-21 will also be severely disrupted, with an almost complete redesign of the academic year, curriculum delivery model and teaching approach required. This in turn will impact on our ability to drive improvements in academic performance.

**Revised Deadline:** Will be taken forward with AY2020-21 Annual Priorities.

### **17. Deliver a phased implementation of the Student Information Dashboard to improve monitoring of student progress and to enhance the provision of effective support for learners.**

#### **FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE**

Phase 2 of the Student Information Portal project is currently active and is focused on the areas of absence and additional support. Following lessons learned sessions after phase 1 we have changed our approach to the project and are now completing analysis and design up front before agreeing a functional design specification with all project stakeholders. We will also complete a DPIA as part of the design stage not as a separate exercise.

Currently work in the absence area is nearing the end of the analysis stage with final workshops being held with senior users. Information from these sessions along with existing information from phase 1 analysis will be used in the design stage.

Work in the additional support area has moved into the design stage and sessions are being held with senior users and developers that will shape how the system looks and works in practice. Wireframes of the user interface will be produced and the functional design specification will be completed. The full design specification for both areas will be completed by the end of March and at this point we will confirm a delivery date for phase 2 functionality.

There have been some challenges around resource availability and management of this project that did impact the early stages of phase 2. These have now been addressed and good progress is now being made.

#### **MAY 2020 UPDATE**

Phase 2 of the Student Information Portal project has been affected by the advent of COVID-19 with delays experienced towards the end of the analysis and design phase. These delays were due to a shift in focus from development work to operational tasks and project team members having to adapt to a working from home and delivering their services remotely.

After settling into our new way of working the project is now progressing with online meetings taking place involving all project team members. Regular meetings between the developers and key users are also continuing remotely, with positive feedback about the current designs.

The build phase was due to start at the beginning of April but is now scheduled to start at the beginning of June.

**Revised Deadline:** September 2020

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

### Building Sustainability

#### 18. Deliver a financial plan that reduces reliance on SFC funding and ASET gift-aid and increases capacity for in-year resourcing flexibility.

##### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

The Five Year Financial Plan approved in June 2019 includes increases in commercial income and reduces the reliance on ASET gift aid to nil, instead utilising this to fund future projects via NESFEF. The plan also includes an operating surplus which could be utilised for in-year flexibility. This, however, is dependent on a number of factors which are not within the College's control: national bargaining for pay and conditions may lead to excessive pay awards; while the SFC has indicated colleges should assume pension cost increases will be centrally-funded, there is no guarantee of this; student activity targets have proved challenging and will continue to do so.

##### MAY 2020 UPDATE

Prior to the impact of COVID-19, the College had reviewed its 2019-20 outturn forecast, taking account of lower-than-planned student numbers, and the resultant shortfall in Credit income and fees. While still projecting a break-even position, there would have been no donation to NESFEF. All other things being equal, the SFC funding announcement of 07 April 2020 would likely have had a positive impact on future years, enabling the aims of the five-year financial plan to be met.

COVID-19 has now had a significant impact on both 2019-20 and future years. Without SFC support, the College will post an accounting deficit in 2019-20 and we are working through the implications for future years, particularly 2020-21 when physical distancing and significant changes to the way we operate will have a cost.

ASET's operations ceased in March 2020 and it is, as yet, unclear what level of operation may be re-instated in the coming months, effectively eliminating the likelihood of any gift-aid contribution.

**Revised Deadline:** Will be taken forward with AY2020-21 Annual Priorities.

#### 19. Devise a medium-term IT resourcing plan that supports business and curriculum priorities.

##### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

The investigation into all information and processes that feed into IT resource planning is ongoing and will be completed by the end of February. Main areas covered are below:

- IT hardware replacement programme
- Technical Services equipment replacement programme
- Software licensing and support contract information
- IT Projects programme
- Annual requirements gathering for curriculum and support departments
- Course approval and modification process.

Equipment replacement programmes can be mapped out for 5-6 years, software and support contracts for approximately 3 years and IT projects for 2-3 years. A good understanding of the other processes will allow us to estimate requirements for each year.

Our aim is to have a 3 year plan in place by the end of March with a fully documented process and a mechanism to view the plan and carry out scenario planning.

##### MAY 2020 UPDATE

While the mechanism for planning IT budget over the next 3-5 years is in place and information sources are known the potential changes to budgets brought about by COVID-19 make it difficult to pull together and publish plans with any confidence at this time.

Spending for the current academic year is on hold and it is not yet clear what funding will be available for AY2020-21.

## ANNUAL PRIORITIES AY2019-20 – PROGRESS UPDATE MAY 2020

With curriculum areas currently looking at how we deliver teaching and learning in the future the device replacement programmes and projects we need to deliver could look very different to those currently planned or in the pipeline

It is suggested to delay creating and publishing any longer-term ITTS budget plans until the wider financial implications of COVID-19 are known and we have more information about future curriculum delivery.

**Revised Deadline:** February 2021

**20. Within a wider estates strategy, devise an estates plan which re-furbishes and re-purposes under-utilised space at the Aberdeen City Campus.**

### FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

In response to staff and student feedback, the 2019 works programme included refurbishing of the first floor of the South Block, creating a more coherent learning space for digital design and media, with large modern classrooms, breakout space, informal learning space and staff workrooms and offices.

The 2020 programme includes plans to continue the theme of coherence, moving the photography studio from the Basement to South Block, increasing the space available to the hair and beauty salons, and moving the teaching gym to the Basement. Future years' plans are currently being considered.

Following a meeting with the SFC indicating that they were seeking to identify revenue funding streams, a business case is being prepared for submission in June 2020. This will likely take the form of a phased development of teaching space within the Aberdeen City Campus, with the possibility to accelerate our plans.

### MAY 2020 UPDATE

The principles established in the Estates Strategy have been continued into the planned works programme for 2020. This includes expansion and improvement of facilities for hair and beauty programmes, new photography studios and the creation of an enterprise hub.

COVID-19 has, however, had an impact on the timing of these works with completion unlikely in summer 2020. Similarly, the provision of the business case to SFC is also currently on hold.

**Revised Deadline:** February 2020



REGIONAL BOARD	
Meeting of 24 June 2020	
<b>Title: Innovative Practice at NESCol</b>	
<b>Author:</b> Neil Cowie, Principal & Chief Executive	<b>Contributor(s):</b> Leadership Team
<b>Type of Agenda Item:</b> <b>For Decision</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>For Discussion</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>For Information</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Reserved Item of Business</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Purpose:</b> To enable the Regional Board to consider a summary of examples of innovative practice at NESCol.	
<b>Linked to Strategic Goal:</b> This Agenda Item relates to all 5 of the College's Strategic Goal.	
<b>Linked to Annual Priority:</b>	
<b>Executive Summary:</b> Attached as Appendix 1 is a summary providing information on examples of innovative practice as identified by members of the Leadership Team.  The information has been collated following a request from Members at a previous Board Meeting where it was noted that the College's Outcome Agreement is now required to contain a section on innovation.  The examples identified by the Leadership Team are practices which have mainly been introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the requirement to teach and work remotely.	
<b>Recommendation:</b> It is recommended that the Board consider the information provided.	
<b>Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval</b> (if applicable): None	
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b> <b>Positive Impact</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Negative Impact</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No Impact</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Evidence:</b>	

## **Leadership Team Innovative Practice Examples**

### **Director of Business Development - D Abernethy**

Since lockdown, BCD has developed new online FWDF training materials in mental health which are being delivered to Expro, Aberdeen Harbour, Altus, Thistle Seafoods, CNRL, Aberdeen City Council and ASCO. These feature recorded training sessions which increases the flexibility of the provision and reduce College costs. BCD has also delivered a new Conflict Management programme for Aberdeen International Airport. They anticipate more customer issues due to COVID-19 and see this as an essential component for staff in the airport as we exit lockdown. BCD has also developed a new report writing training programme for Food Standards Scotland.

BCD is also in the process of scoping out a new project to move level 3 assessment from a paper based system to an online one. This is already being used elsewhere in some College teams, notably Care, but has still be completed for Engineering. This initiative will reduce travel time for assessors and cut down on wasted journeys.

Staff from across the College have also used their talents and skills to help and support health and care professionals with the manufacture of Personal Protective Equipment and other vital supplies. Using the College's 3D printing equipment and expertise, more than 1,000 visors have been produced and distributed via the Protecting Essential Workers in the North East Community Hub established in Peterhead by two NESCol students as part of the regional response to the pandemic. One of the latest projects was the manufacture of 160 visors for sheltered housing wardens in the North East, helping the Aberdeenshire Council staff to safely support residents and enabling essential home visits to continue.

### **Learning and Teaching – Directors of Learning**

Curriculum staff have adapted extremely well to these fast-paced and ever-changing circumstances and moving to online delivery. Within the first week of delivery there was a huge increase in the use of Blackboard Collaborate. The first day saw more than 400 hours of online learning sessions being delivered. There were 581 different sessions, joined by more than 1,700 learners and 29 hours of content recorded. Staff have also embraced Teams as a key communication tool for their own teams as well as across the organisation. In addition to more formal meetings, Teams is being used to host 'Virtual Cuppies' to keep that social aspect, which many are missing by not being on campus.

Staff have worked hard to work through the new COVID-19 Assessment and Resulting Process, a process created to allow as many students as possible to complete their qualification this academic year. As part of this process, teams have not only adapted their teaching materials and delivery, but adjusted assessments using creative and innovative approaches. Much of the materials, skills and connections made during this time will play a key role in the planning and execution of AY2020-21.

### **Director of Learning - S Betty**

HND Photography and HND Visual Communication year 2 students will hold their End of Year Show online from 12 June 2020. Their lecturers have supported this by creating "Art Steps" virtual galleries and each student will have their own dedicated space to preview their work, add a personal creative statement and a link to the student's own web page.

This event replaces the usual End of Year Show in College, with students positively engaged with this idea and motivated to make selections of their best work to showcase their talents. Lower level students will be able to view these exhibitions and be inspired by the creativity of their peers, aspiring them to progress and achieve at this level. The "Art Steps" galleries will be on view to the wider public and an e-invite will be sent to stakeholders as well as the links to the galleries being promoted through subject area social media pages.

Since lockdown commenced many curriculum teams have developed a 'Class Notebook' approach to learning. For example, Level 2 Hairdressing and Fast Track in Hair and Beauty are using 'Class Notebook' in almost all sessions. The groups find it easy to use and upload photographs and are treating it like a portfolio of their work.

Our Modern Apprentices have also been continuing their learning through 'Classroom Notebook' and video calls. They are also really enjoying the new interactive platform, Pivotpoint Lab, which is an interactive resource with quizzes, step-by-step videos with question and answers throughout, and supports practical skill development. It allows the lecturer to track their progress, informing them of who has completed activities within units. The group also enjoy having all their materials on 'Classroom Notebook', as they are able to be more flexible with their learning, having had a very positive impact on the completion of tasks. Student feedback on this approach has been excellent.

### **Director of Learning - A Du Plessis** **The Remote Revolution**



In response to the COVID-19 Assessment and Resulting Process and the need to create time for curriculum staff to complete a Qualification Mapping exercise, as well as the need to re-engage students following the Easter break, support teams came together to offer 'The Remote Revolution'.

The Student Advice and Support Team worked in partnership with Libraries, Student Access and Information, Marketing and Communications, Learning Technologies, Digital Skills Development and Curriculum teams to run a variety of live and pre-recorded sessions. The timing of the event coincided with Students' Association elections, and these were promoted as part of the programme. External partners also participated with sessions from RGU and University of Aberdeen on transitions and SDS provided employability advice.

This was an excellent opportunity to engage with students and the teams were able to explore and develop their skills with new technologies and thoroughly enjoyed working with colleagues across the organisation. (Closing video - <https://youtu.be/MgPFq8mCWlo>)

### **Fraserburgh Campus Virtual Open Day**

Fraserburgh's Open Day was planned for 19 March 2020, but unfortunately had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Marketing and Communications did a fantastic job in taking the Open Day online by hosting a Fraserburgh Campus Virtual Open Day on 19 May 2020. Working in conjunction with both curriculum and support teams, a variety of introductory videos, live chat and call-back options were made available to prospective applicants. There were 125 pre-registrations for the event and 55% of those positively engaged at the event and up to 5 days afterwards. This generated 69 new quality prospects for Fraserburgh Campus - a very good, worthwhile event. (<https://www.nescol.ac.uk/virtual-open-day-fraserburgh-campus/>)

### **Director of Learning - S Grant**

The post-COVID-19 closure of College buildings made practical cooking lessons impossible so the Hospitality and Catering Team decided to set the challenge to our students to show us what they have been cooking at home and they did not disappoint. Simply because the College is in lockdown this does not mean that it should spoil the love of cooking and great food. We were all very proud of what our students produced and for continuing their passion throughout this challenging time.

[https://nescol-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/person/msmi6\\_nescol\\_ac\\_uk/EZ8tC9thKcJLs9ifpaXZpucB-fGxO2F64rg1iEZmeQMC\\_g?e=0zq5Cl](https://nescol-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/person/msmi6_nescol_ac_uk/EZ8tC9thKcJLs9ifpaXZpucB-fGxO2F64rg1iEZmeQMC_g?e=0zq5Cl)

[https://nescol-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/person/msmi6\\_nescol\\_ac\\_uk/EfjV6yb8mxNBoyEikedbwaEBHNmROh45RgpN7XlywblV4w?e=CdhrlC](https://nescol-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/person/msmi6_nescol_ac_uk/EfjV6yb8mxNBoyEikedbwaEBHNmROh45RgpN7XlywblV4w?e=CdhrlC)

### **Director of Marketing and Communications - P Smith**

Enhancing digital communication is an integral part of the Marketing and Communications Strategy and in 2020 there has been a focus on improving content to create a more engaging online experience. Innovation in video production and animation has been an important strand of this work and has been used across all key campaigns.

The shift to online operations has also brought innovation in College events, with the inaugural NESCol Virtual Open Day (see above) staged on 19 May 2020. The session, with a focus on opportunities at the Fraserburgh Campus, attracted more than 500 visitors to the landing page and around 100 pre-registrations. A number of prospective applicants have been identified through engagement on the day and the impact is continuing to be monitored. The format, which included live-chat, instant email response and call back facility, was replicated for a series of 'Focus On' events in June 2020. Virtual open events will enable NESCol to engage with students and prospective applicants on a more frequent basis and in a digital environment desirable to large sections of the target demographic.

### **Head of Health, Safety and Security - C Beattie**

The Health and Safety Department is fundamentally a front facing team with the vast majority of its work requiring the physical supervision and application of UK Health and Safety Regulations. This said, working remotely during lockdown has given rise to some positive opportunities.

For example, it has not always been possible to attend campus and supervise works, yet the use of video technology has allowed live footage to be sent to our media devices so whilst remote from the work activities we can still ensure the required safe work practices are being followed.

In addition, the initial campus 'reconnaissance missions' for planning the return to all College campuses was conducted with trade union representatives for both EIS-FELA and UNISON. This inclusive approach was initiated by the Health and Safety Team and has helped the College and its recognised trade union representatives build an enhanced approach to collaboration and engagement.

### **Financial Controller - M Wilson**

The adoption of an online payment platform will benefit those who want to pay the College for various services, and whenever they want, as access will be available around the clock, 24-7. The payment platform has the potential to improve the student experience by making it easier and more convenient to make payments, as well as reducing the amount that the College writes off as bad debt.

This proposal has been in the planning stage for a few months now, and will be a positive step in modernising the College's collection processes. However, given the current circumstances and restrictions around COVID-19 it makes even more sense to progress it now and keep students and staff safer during the payment process.

### **Director of IT and Technical Services - P Smith**

With campus closures there was an immediate need to completely change our service delivery model and the ask of the team was to switch to a 'virtual helpdesk'. With all team members based at home the use of collaborative working tools such as MS Teams became essential to delivering our service. Our team began to use Teams as a primary method of communicating with our customers and delivering remote support. This was complemented by other remote support tools that would be used to allow work that required elevated privileges on customer devices. Use of video calls was encouraged to maintain a level of engagement with our customers and close relationships were formed with other departments such as Learning Technologies who were providing much of guidance for staff to use our online tools and systems.

Collaborative working within the team also had to become an online exercise and MS Teams again provided the platform to allow this to happen. Groups were formed for each of our main areas, IT Operations, IT development and Technical Services to allow open discussion about daily tasks and problems and the sharing of relevant information. Team meetings are now held daily using the platform with ad-hoc video calls commonplace to keep in touch with individuals and groups.

A real strength of the ITTS team is the closeness of the team members and there was real risk that the isolation of home working could lead to wellbeing issues for our staff. The same tools we were using so successfully to work in a collaborative way were also used to maintain social bonds in the team with informal catch-ups held, virtual tea breaks and quizzes being run by team managers. All challenges that have been faced over the last few weeks have put us in a great place to provide a flexible and efficient service in the future.

### **Director Student Access and Information - L Taylor**

Our Data Protection Officer, Jacqueline Gillanders, produces a regular blog relating to Data Protection which is made available on COLIN with a link to a YouTube music video at the end e.g.

<https://nescol.interactgo.com/Interact/pages/modules/blog/teamBlog.aspx?sectionid=7259#post197>

This great idea is good for getting across relevant points in an interesting way. She usually bases her blog on something current, not necessarily just College-based, that will be useful to staff in their work and/or home life. Jacqueline has been doing this for some time, but it's another useful method of getting information to staff while we work remotely.

The College's Student Records team members rely heavily on accessing systems using Remote Desktop from home, to process, view data and to run reports. This is slower at home, so to compensate for this staff have been working out with 'normal' working hours when there is less demand on our systems, to get work done more quickly; early mornings, evenings. This practice has also been adopted by the College's Administration and Examinations team.

All my teams are obviously now working remotely. Most have a daily or at least weekly catch-up and coffee break on Teams where last night's tv or the latest Netflix series is discussed to keep a sense of the team togetherness. WhatsApp groups have been set up for informal contact. More regular formal weekly team meetings on Teams ensure key messages are shared and reinforced and include the obligatory team quiz too.

### **Director of People Services - K Donnelly**

The excellent work that the Learning Technologies Team have done to provide innovated ways to support the delivery of the curriculum has been widely reported on and continues to be developed and truly appreciated by many.

People Services is now generating employment contracts and letters directly from the data held within the HR/Payroll system. This significantly reduces the amount of typing that was required to generate these documents. Once the documents are generated they are automatically uploaded and available to staff on their MyView dashboard. Automating contracts in this way will reduce human error and enable staff to access personal contractual information both easily and remotely.



REGIONAL BOARD	
Meeting of 24 June 2020	
<b>Title: Strategic Risk Register</b>	
<b>Author:</b> Pauline May, Director of Strategy & Planning	<b>Contributor(s):</b> Neil Cowie, Principal & Chief Executive
<b>Type of Agenda Item:</b>	
<b>For Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>For Discussion</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>For Information</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Reserved Item of Business</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Purpose:</b> The purpose of this paper is to provide the Regional Board with an update in relation to the College's Strategic Risk Register.	
<b>Linked to Strategic Goal:</b>	
<b>Linked to Annual Priority:</b>	
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	
<p><b>Current Status</b></p> <p>Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Principal requested that a detailed review of the Strategic Risk Register was undertaken by the College's Leadership Team. This was carried out at the beginning of March 2020.</p> <p>Since then, the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the College and its operating environment has led to the identification of many new strategic and operational risks. Following the closure of campuses, these risks have however been fluid with unknowns being addressed as key external guidance has been made available, with short, medium and long term impacts on the College shifting on a regular basis. This, along with conflicting priorities, has led to the Director of Strategy &amp; Planning being unable to share, as previously advised, a new version of the Strategic Risk Register.</p> <p>Risk has of course been, and will continue to be, a key consideration of the Executive and Leadership Teams, and has critically informed the College's ongoing approach to scenario planning with the identification of operational risks under the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum delivery</li> <li>• Campus access</li> <li>• Transport</li> </ul>	

- Finance & funding
- Staffing
- Communications
- Information, advice & support
- Key partners & stakeholders

Five Workstreams are currently addressing these risks in the work they are taking forward as part of the College's detailed planning activities for AY2020-21. Further information on the progression of scenario planning will be provided at the meeting under Agenda Item 30-20.

### **Review of Risk Management Approach**

The COVID-19 pandemic and the undertaking of detailed scenario planning has both re-emphasised the importance of the comprehensive identification of risks, and the critical role the Leadership Team must undertake to demonstrate collective ownership of the identification and mitigation of risk.

Recent discussions between the Principal and Director of Strategy & Planning have led to the conclusion that it would be beneficial to review the College's approach to risk management. This will not only ensure that a clear, comprehensive and strengthened approach is in place for AY2020-21, but it will also support the timely identification and implementation of mitigating actions for the new academic year and beyond. The following actions are therefore proposed:

<b>Action</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Preparation of revised Strategic Risk Register	July 2020
Risk to be a standing item at the conclusion of Leadership Team Meetings	01 July 2020 onwards
Leadership Team to consider updated Strategic Risk Register	12 August 2020
Preparation of new Operational Risk Register	August 2020
Leadership Team to consider new Operational Risk Register	26 August 2020
Review of format of Strategic Risk Register (incl. consultation with internal auditors)	By 16 September 2020
Amended format of Strategic Risk Register to be considered by Audit & Risk Committee	23 September 2020
Strategic Risk Register to be standing item at Audit & Risk Committee meetings	23 September 2020 onwards
New Operational Risk Register to be shared with Audit & Risk Committee	23 September 2020
Risk Management Training Workshop – Regional Board and Leadership Team	Potential dates to be discussed with Henderson Loggie

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Board consider the information provided.

**Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval** (if applicable):

None

**Equality Impact Assessment:**

**Positive Impact**

**Negative Impact**

**No Impact**

**Evidence:**



<b>REGIONAL BOARD</b>		
<b>Meeting of 24 June 2020</b>		
<b>Title: NESCol's Future Strategy</b>		
<b>Presenter:</b> Neil Cowie, Principal & Chief Executive	<b>Author:</b> Pauline May, Director of Strategy & Planning	<b>Contributor(s):</b>
<b>Type of Agenda Item:</b>		
<b>For Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>For Discussion</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>For Information</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Reserved Item of Business</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Purpose:</b> To share with the Regional Board the approach to be adopted to key aspects of the College's strategic planning process.		
<b>Linked to Strategic Goal:</b> This Agenda Item relates to all 5 of the College's Strategic Goal.		
<b>Linked to Annual Priority:</b>		
<b>Executive Summary:</b> Given the current circumstances and uncertainty surrounding many key aspects of the College's operating environment, i.e. the regional economy, awaited guidance from external bodies, the impact of COVID-19 on student outcomes and enrolments, the following is proposed:		
<u>Strategy Event</u> As Members are aware, the Board's Strategy Event scheduled for April 2020 was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A possible rescheduling of this Event was discussed but it was thought that it would be more appropriate and meaningful to schedule an Event for Autumn 2020, whilst ensuring that the Board remains updated on key developments as appropriate in the meantime. Proposed areas of focus for the Autumn Strategy Event will be the longer term impacts of COVID-19, regional economic recovery, regional engagement and the College's commercial activity, including ASET's Business Recovery Strategic Plan and its relationship with the College. The Event will of course also focus on considering the College's direction of travel.		
<u>Strategic Plan</u> The College's current Strategic Plan covers the period up to 31 July 2021. Discussions regarding the process for developing the College's next Strategic Plan, including stakeholder consultation activities, would have been held as part of the Regional Board's Strategy Event which was due to be held in April 2020.  It is proposed that the current Strategic Plan is extended until 31 July 2022, with a process to consult on and develop the College's next Strategic Plan to be		

undertaken throughout AY2021-22 - with a timeline for this to be presented and agreed at the Strategy Event planned for Spring 2021.

Delaying development of the College's next Strategic Plan will enable more meaningful consultation, both internally and externally, to be undertaken at a time when there is more certainty of the longer-term impacts on COVID-19 on the College, the region and the college sector. The delay will also enable the Regional Board and Executive and Leadership Teams to redefine the College's strategy and ambitions in light of the 'new normal'.

In addition, it is proposed that an interim strategic position for AY2020-21 is developed by the Executive Team in liaison with the Leadership Team and in response to discussions and decisions taken at the Autumn Strategy Event. This document would be for internal purposes.

#### Annual Priorities AY2020-21

The Regional Board is usually asked at its June Meeting to approve the College's Annual Priorities for the upcoming academic year. It is however proposed that Annual Priorities for AY2020-21 are instead presented to the Board at its meeting scheduled for October 2020. This will enable the Priorities to be identified when there is (hopefully) greater clarity in terms of the College's operating environment and Scottish Government expectations of the college sector. This delay will also enable refocused sector commitments that the SFC plans to publish later this Summer to help inform the identification of the College's key strategic Priorities for AY2020-21.

The Executive Team have however given some initial consideration to areas of focus for the new Priorities:

- Student Experience & Outcomes
- Financial Sustainability
- Staff and Student Health & Wellbeing
- Regional Economic Recovery
- Community Affiliation
- Environmental Sustainability, Net Zero and Energy Transition.

The approach to be adopted for AY2020-21 Annual Priorities will be to identify a smaller number in comparison to the current 20 Priorities, and to ensure that they are meaningful, progressive and innovative.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Board consider the information provided in relation to the College's strategic planning process.

**Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval** (if applicable):

None

#### **Equality Impact Assessment:**

**Positive Impact**

**Negative Impact**

**No Impact**

**Evidence:**