NORTH EAST
SCOTLAND
COLLEGE

REGIONAL BOARD MEETING

14 December 2022

G10, NESCol City Campus

REGIONAL BOARD

NOTICE
There will be a meeting of the Regional Board of North East Scotland College on Wednesday 14 December 2022 at 1000 hours in the Boardroom of NESCol City Campus.

AGENDA		
Agenda Item		**Paper**
24-22	Apologies for Absence	
25-22	Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any Agenda Items	
26-22	Minutes of Previous Meeting – 12 October 2022	X
27-22	Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting	X
	Reports to the Board	
28-22	Report by the Regional Chair	x
29-22	Report by the Principal	X
30-22	Report by Committee Chairs	X
	Governance Matters	
31-22	Committee Membership Update	X
	Matters for Decision	
32-22	Regional Outcome Agreement AY2022-23	x
33-22	College Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan	x
	Reserved Item of Business	
	Matters for Decision	
34-22	ETZ Ltd – NESCol Advanced manufacturing Skills Hub Proposal	x
35-22	Approval of Financial Statement as at 31.07.22 (including letter of representation) **– please note this will be a late paper due to late alterations made by External Auditors.**	
36-22	Annual Report to the Regional Board by the Audit & Risk Committee	x
	Matter for Information	
37-22	First Impressions Survey Results	x
38-22	Net Zero and Sustainability Framework for Action update	x
39-22	**Any Other Business**	
	Private Reserved Matters for Information	
40-22	Financial Savings/Scenario Planning (presentation)	
41-22	Strategic Risk Register	x
42-22	National bargaining update	x
43-22	VP Recruitment Update	x
44-22	Principal's Performance Management Objectives update	x

REGIONAL BOARD

Draft Minute of the Meeting of the Regional Board of North East Scotland College held on Wednesday 12 October 2022 at 1000 hours in G10 of NESCol City Campus.

Agenda Item	
	Present: David Anderson Carrie Beaton Neil Cowie Susan Elston (virtual attendance via Microsoft Teams) Jim Gifford John Henderson – Interim Regional Chair Bryan Hutcheson Nicole Matthews Leona McDermid Andy Rodden Sheena Ross Drew Russell Gwen Watt (virtual attendance via Microsoft Teams) **In attendance:** Jim Kirkwood, Acting Vice Principal, Finance & Risk Scott Matthew, Acting Vice Principal, Resources & Estates Robin McGregor, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality Susan Lawrance, Secretary to the Board Karen Fraser, Minute Secretary **Trade Union Observer:** Sue Porter, EIS/FELA **Guest attendees:** Colin Beattie, Head of Health, Safety and Security Kimra Donnelly, Director of People Services Alesia Du Plessis, Associate Vice Principal Kirsty Pettitt, Student Engagement and Wellbeing Manager
	The Interim Regional Chair welcomed all Members both in-person and virtually to the first Regional Board meeting of AY22/23 and greeted new non-executive Member B Hutcheson.
01-22	**Apologies for Absence** Apologies were received from D Blackhall and N McLennan.
02-22	**Declaration of any Potential Conflicts of Interest in relation to any Agenda Items** L McDermid declared a potential conflict of interest by virtue of her position with Aberdeen Foyer. A Rodden declared a potential conflict of interest by virtue of his position with ETZ Ltd, (Agenda item 19-22)

03-22	**Minutes of Previous Meeting – 22 June 2022** The Minute of the previous meeting was approved as a true and accurate record.
04-22	**Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting** Members noted that all matters arising had been addressed.
	Reports to the Board
05-22	**Report by the Regional Chair (verbal update)** J Henderson placed on record his congratulations to all involved in the delivery of the recent graduation ceremonies, and thanked everyone for their hard work. Members noted the highlighted potential to rejuvenate the involvement of NESCol Fellows. The Interim Regional Chair thanked members for their participation in the annual Board engagement and evaluation 1:1 meetings.
06-22	**Report by the Principal** Members noted the Report. N Cowie highlighted his recent evidence session for the Scottish Parliament's Education, Children and Young People Committee (21.09.22), and urged Members to review the link to the session circulated earlier by the Board Secretary.
07-22	**Report by Committee Chairs** Members noted the report by the Committee Chairs. **Audit and Risk Committee:** D Anderson, as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, summarised the key points from the meeting held on 21.09.22, noting the proposed amendments to the Internal Audit Annual Plan which are being taken forward by J Kirkwood and the Internal Auditors. **Governance and Nominations Committee:** The Board Secretary outlined the key business, noting the launch (11.10.22) for the recruitment of new non-executive Board Members. Recognition of the challenges underpinning Board recruitment was expressed with all Members encouraged to publicise the opportunity to join the Board with their respective networks. **Action: Skills Matrix to be shared on RB Microsoft Team Space.** Members noted no update is available at the time on the appointment of a new Regional Chair. Members agreed that, once appointed, the new Chair will be asked to join the ALF. **Human Resources Committee**: J Henderson highlighted the priority actions concerning equality, diversity and inclusion for AY22/23. Members also noted the updates provided on job evaluation and staff absence due to Covid-19 at the meeting, and the discussions held regarding the College sector trialling of a 4-day working week.
	Governance Matters
08-22	**Regional Board Terms of Reference**

	Members noted the information provided in order to review the Terms of Reference and agreed to re-adoption of these.
09-22	**Programme of Business AY2022-23** Members considered the information provided, recognising the content is subject to change as required. The recommendation to present the ASET and BCD update to the March meeting of the Board was agreed. It was also agreed that the Appraisal of the Regional Chair should be removed from the December meeting. **Action: Board Secretary to make amendments to Programme of Business as discussed.**
	Matters for Decision
	A Du Plessis and K Pettitt joined the meeting.
10-22	**SA Partnership Agreement** Members considered the agreement as presented and updates provided to the ongoing work of the SA. The Board commended the ongoing collaborative project response to the cost of living crisis and thanked the SA for their commitment. A discussion took place regarding the potential to consider wider engagement and potential partnerships out with College with employees and other institutions to create a wider reach, with greater SA involvement in projects to support students uppermost. The SA were encouraged to highlight resource requirements to aid project delivery. The Board approved the Partnership Agreement, noting progress updates will be provided to the Board throughout the year.
	A Du Plessis and K Pettitt left the meeting. *C Beattie joined the meeting.*
	Matters for Discussion
11-22	**Health & Safety Annual Report** The Board acknowledged the work undertaken by the whole of the H&S Team and in particular, the work undertaken by the late J Murray. The positive annual report was summarised by C Beattie, who highlighted the Covid-29 measures still in place; the changes to the fire department call-outs (which the College have already implemented), and the H&S training (including wellbeing and mental health). The positive lower than Scottish Sector accident statistics were also noted by Board Members. A discussion took place with regard to the reporting of Dangerous Occurrences and Near Missises with C Beattie providing clarity on the type of incidents classes as Dangerous Occurrences by the College (very much different to those reported within the Oil and Gas Industry). **Action: C Beattie to include clarification of Dangerous Occurrences in the next H&S Annual Report.** C Beattie gave the Board reassurance of the multi-layered approach to Health and Safety throughout the College, including enhanced

	engagement with the SA, trade unions, curriculum and support colleagues. The Board placed on record their thanks for the excellent report and figures contained within it.
	C Beattie left the meeting.
	Presentation
12-22	**New Academic Year Update including enrolments** Members received a presentation from R McGregor giving details of the current activity levels and the ongoing work to meet the planned full-time enrolments, the future predicted demand for ESOL courses in early 2023, and the close working relationship between the College, stakeholders and partners. Members also noted the continuation, where business and student needs exist, for hybrid working/delivery. R McGregor also highlighted the key strategic ongoing initiatives, the wrap-around support being offered and the demand for the offer; the national and regional sector challenges and opportunities, plus the Education Scotland review planned for March 2023. The wish to focus on KPIs was also highlighted by R McGregor; noting the requirement to grow national engagement, whilst ensuring the College continues to make a positive local response without overwhelming staff. A Rodden encouraged the Executive Team to ensure Leadership Team colleagues look after their own mental health and wellbeing. The Board also highlighted the need for successful outcomes. Members noted the challenge to flex the curriculum to meet emerging trends; the College's aspiration to continue to offer as broad a curriculum as possible, including core areas of activity and renewable energy opportunities and the trials of ensuring everyone is aware of the existing opportunities within new industries. The suggestion to include a discussion on the future curriculum offer and challenges faced at the next Strategy Event was noted.
	Matter for Information
13-22	**Strategic Risk Register** J Kirkwood provided a summary of the Strategic Risk Register and the changes made. Members noted the Register is reviewed regularly by the Leadership Team.
14-22	**Interim NESCol KPI Report AY21-22** R McGregor gave a summary of the data contained within the draft report which Members noted is still subject to change and only includes full time delivery and not any BCD activity. R McGregor highlighted that many subjects remained online throughout last year, with only students in practical spaces taken onto campus. Teams are now reflecting on last year and lessons learnt to re-implement structure, lesson observations and robust quality processes, including the Curriculum Spotlight Review process. Members also noted students have been in College over the summer period to complete their courses.

	An observation by S Porter that students' achievements of "soft skills" such as confidence and resilience should be recognised was noted.	
15-22	**Priority Enhancement Initiatives** Members noted the paper outlining the progress against each Priority Enhancement, and the taking forward of these as part of NESCol Fundamentals.	
16-22	**Any Other Business**	
17-22	**Summation of Actions and Date of next meeting**	
	A summation of the actions was provided by the Board Secretary.	
	Reserved Item of Business	
	Matters for Decision	
18-22	**Approval of Financial Forecast Return**	
19-22	**ETZ Advanced Manufacturing Proposal:**	

Draft

20-22	
20-22	**Nomination for non-executive Director of ASET**
21-22	**Principal's Performance Management Objectives**

Draft

	J Kirkwood and S Matthew left the meeting.
	K Donnelly joined the meeting.
	Matters for Information
22-22	**VP Recruitment**
23-22	**Summation of Reserved Items of Business Actions** The Board Secretary provided a summary of the actions from the reserved items of business.
	D Anderson, as Vice Chair, acknowledged the meeting as J Henderson's last as Interim Regional Chair and commended his conduct and commitment to the Regional Board. J Henderson, in response, expressed his gratitude to all Members for the time spent working together.

Agenda Item	Actions from Regional Board Meeting 12.10.22	Responsibility	Deadline
07-22	Skills Matrix to be shared on RB Team space.	Board Secretary	October 2022
09-22	Amendments to PoB as discussed to be made.	Board Secretary	October 2022
11-22	Clarification of Dangerous Occurrences to be included in next H&S Annual Report.	C Beattie/ S Matthew	October 2023
	Reserved Items of Business Actions		
19-22			.
21-22			

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REGIONAL BOARD

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An update on matters arising from the meeting of the Regional Board of North East Scotland College held on Wednesday 12 October 2022.

Agenda Item	
07-22	**Action:** Skills Matrix to be shared on Regional Board Team Space.
	Status: Complete – Updated Skills Matrix now available Regional Board Non Executive Skills Matrix - Nov 2022.xlsx
09-22	**Action:** Amendment to Programme of Business made.
	Status: **Complete –** Programme of Business now available Regional Board Programme of Business AY22-23.docx
11-22	**Action:** Clarification of Dangerous Occurrences to be included in next Health and Safety Annual Report.
	Status: Complete – C Beattie advised to include narrative against any Dangerous Occurrences in future H&S Report.
	Reserved Matters Arising
19-22	**Action:** .
	Status: Complete –
21-22	**Action:**
	Status: Complete –

REGIONAL BOARD
Meeting of 14 December 2022
REPORT BY THE REGIONAL CHAIR
The purpose of this report is to update the Regional Board on recent developments in the College sector and at the College and a summary of the Chair's attendance at meetings out with scheduled meetings of the Board and Committees.

1	**Introductions**
	Since taking up the position of Regional Chair on 1 November 2022 the following meetings have been held:
	Board Member Meetings: Individual meetings with Board Members have been conducted.
	ASET Chair and CEO: Introductory meeting held with I Gossip and A Menzies.
	University of Aberdeen Chair: Introductory meeting held with J Ashworth.
	Robert Gordon University Chair: Introductory meeting held with C Hunter.
	It has been agreed that regular meetings will be set up to enable the Chairs of the UoA, RGU and NESCol to meet.
	Colleges Scotland: Introductory meeting with S Struthers, Chief Executive of Colleges Scotland.
	Principal: Regular weekly meetings set-up.
2	**Appointments Update**
	Board Recruitment: After a successful recruitment campaign and interviews two candidates have been selected and are being put forward to Scottish Government for approval to join the Regional Board as non-executive members. Two additional candidates, who were unable to attend the original interview dates, will be interviewed early in 2023. There remains a vacancy on the Regional Board and a refreshed recruitment campaign will be undertaken in early 2023 with direct targeted marketing to individuals who could help create as diverse, inclusive and gender equal Regional Board as possible.
	RGU Board: As Regional Chair I have been invited to join the Board of Robert Gordons University and attended their meeting on Tuesday 29 November, and will be attending their Strategy Event in early February 2023.

| | **Colleges Scotland Board:** As Regional Chair I have been invited to join the Colleges Scotland Board and will attend their next meeting and AGM scheduled for late March 2023. I will also now join the All Chairs and Principals Group. |

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<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">**REGIONAL BOARD**

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<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">**REPORT BY THE PRINCIPAL**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">The purpose of this report is to provide the Regional Board with information relating to the period immediately prior to the Board Meeting; information which may have relevance, significance, priority or challenge for future College activity.</td></tr>
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Colleges Scotland Convention – 'Think the Unthinkable'

At the behest of the Chair of Colleges Scotland, three sessions have now taken place with College Board and Executive Team members to determine how best the college sector should respond to the on-going financial challenges it faces.

Separately, Colleges Scotland representatives have met with Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council representatives on 25 October 2022 and with the Minister for Higher Education, Further Education, Youth Employment and Training on 26 October 2022.

A sense of urgency has been established in finding solutions which can be implemented quickly, for the 2023-24 academic year and beyond. In addition, Chair, Principal and Senior staff representatives from across the sector have been meeting regularly with both SFC and SG colleagues exploring the flexibilities required in the more immediate term. It is evident that Scottish Government is looking to the sector for solutions.

The recently convened third 'Think the Unthinkable' session was facilitated by Huw Morris, Professor at the University College London and who was, until recently, the senior civil servant in Wales responsible for Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong learning. He was also the architect of the new tertiary model that has recently been implemented in Wales.

Professor Morris was accompanied by David Cragg, founder of the Four Nations Leaders Alliance; an alliance within which NESCol is represented. David has experience of governance and chairing colleges within the English system and was previously interim CEO and a Policy Director in the Skills Funding Agency.

Further updates will be provided to the College's Regional Board as outputs from this on-going activity are developed and agreed.

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SFC North-East Pathfinder

The SFC NE Pathfinder Regional Delivery Board (RDB) continues to meet in order progress the work of four proposed projects, namely:

- National Energy Skills Accelerator (NESA): Energy Transition Skills Interactive Pathway (Lead - UoA);

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- Developing demand-led aligned and sustainable learner pathways within the NESCol-RGU Alliance (Lead - NESCol/RGU);
- Health and Social Care Partnership Working (Lead - RGU), and
- Senior Phase Review (Lead - NESCol).

As confirmed at the previous Regional Board meeting, the projects have each been approved and the on-going RDB meetings will aim to 'fine-tune' the proposals and agree the subsequent resourcing of them.

The most recent meeting of the RDB, held on 29th November, 2022, confirmed that - subject to additional updating of project paperwork - the resourcing of each project will now be in place early 2023. This will allow the projects to be implemented during the forthcoming calendar year.

It is also proposed that a Regional Learner Engagement Group be established to ensure that the student voice is captured as the projects progress. It is also anticipated that learner engagement will contribute to the on-going evaluation of the four projects. NESCol's Student Association President, Nicole Matthews, and Deputy President, Carrie Beaton, have agreed to participate on the College's behalf.

3	**Colleges Scotland Draft Budget 2023/24**

Colleges Scotland (CS) has submitted its draft budget to Scottish Government. The submission stresses the contribution that Scotland's colleges make to the nation's economy, across many industries and communities.

The CS submission also stresses that appropriate investment in the college sector will deliver significant gains for Scotland as a nation and allow colleges to support students at every stage of their learning journey.

The submission recognises the challenging financial position that Scotland, the Scottish Government and the college sector faces as the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, turbulent macro-economic conditions with high inflation, and a cost-of-living crisis, impact the fiscal position for us all.

However, the draft budget emphasises that a lack of investment will create many harms including ones relating to young people, families, communities, key sectors and Scotland's ambitions re. Net Zero and the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

In summary, CS states a case for a revenue allocation of £674.5million, excluding student support, which will allow for Scotland's colleges to deliver high quality learning, teaching and support for all learners in AY 2023/24.

In terms of a capital allocation, CS has requested £25million for lifecycle maintenance for 2023/24. It is worth noting that estimated backlog maintenance requirement for the sector stands at £250million. Consequently CS has also stated a case for a replacement infrastructure programme which is costed at £525million.

A copy of the full submission can be accessed by using the link below:

	https://collegesscotland.ac.uk/documents/briefings-and-publications/publications/2042-draft-budget-202324-final/file
4	**Qualifications and Assessment Review – Schools and Colleges (Phase 2)** Professor Louise Hayward and the Independent Review Group charged with leading the independent review of qualifications and assessment have now opened up phase 2 of the review. This explicitly seeks responses from colleges. This phase of the review aims to: • Host a public consultation; • Explore different options for the future of qualifications and assessment; Both schools and colleges are being asked to host group discussion(s) on the topics contained within our public consultation and then to submit a response to the Review Team. NESCol representatives are currently developing a college response which will be submitted for the closing date 13th January 2023. A copy of the College response will be circulated to Regional Board members in due course.
5	**College Develop Network (CDN) Annual Awards – 25 November 2022** NESCol's innovative collaboration with industry partner Shell has been recognised at the recently convened CDN Awards. The College was named winner in the Employer Connections category at the CDN ceremony in Glasgow. The awards attracted 160 entries from across the college sector in Scotland. There was a double celebration for NESCol as Information Services Manager Jill Leishman was commended as a finalist in the Colleague of the Year award. The Employer Connections prize celebrates the College's well-established and productive partnership with Shell; a partnership which, over the course of 17 years, has focused on creating high-quality, rewarding and sustainable regional jobs. Twelve Shell-sponsored technicians have been trained each year to enter the industry with a variety of employers, including Shell. Our award-winning Girls in Energy programme and S2 skills competition have been established, ensuring over 1,300 Girls in Energy have been introduced to the opportunities in the sector and more than 20,000 S2 pupils have been encouraged to pursue STEM beyond school. The recently introduced Shell Digital Passport is another key initiative, supporting those who are out of work or at risk of being out of work. The link to the CDN Winner's video is provided below: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPwGY8Jt3zU

6	**External engagements, selected key meetings and events attended since the previous Regional Board meeting:**
	- Multi-Agency Transformation Management Group Meeting (17th October 2022) - Colleges Scotland 'Think the Unthinkable' Session 2 (20th October 2022) - SFC Regional Pathfinder Meeting (27th October 2022) - Executive Team Clinterty site visit (2nd November 2022) - Aberdeen Seven Incorporated Trades Dinner (5th November 2022) - College Principals' Group meeting (8th November 2022) - College Employers Scotland meeting (9th November 2022) - Aspen VP recruitment meeting (11th November 2022) - Non-Executive Regional Board Member shortlisting meeting (14th November 2022) - LJNC meeting (15th November 2022) - College Employers Scotland meeting (16th November 2022) - University of Oxford/Said Business School Tutorial (17th November 2022) - Aspen VP recruitment meeting (17th November 2022) - Denis Law Legacy Trust Dinner (18th November 2022) - Colleges Scotland 'Think the Unthinkable' Session 3 (21st November 2022) - Non-Executive Regional Board interviews (22nd/23rd November 2022) - Richard Lochhead MSP Ministerial visit (22nd November 2022) - Meeting with CEO Protocol (28th November 2022) - Meeting with David Russell EFT (28th November 2022) - SFC Regional Pathfinder meeting (29th November 2022) - University of Oxford/Said Business School FESLP Module 3 (4th to 8th December 2022) - DYWNE Board meeting (13th December 2022)

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<tr><td colspan="2">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.

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.</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>The following meetings have been held since the last meeting of the Regional Board:

Committee	Meeting Date
Audit and Risk	30 November 2022
Joint Audit and Risk/Finance and Resource	30 November 2022
Finance and Resource	30 November 2022
Curriculum and Quality	1 December 2022
Governance & Nominations	1 December 2022

Copies of the draft minutes from the above meetings will be available in the Meeting Channel of the Regional Board Team space very shortly.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>**Audit and Risk Committee – 30 November 2022**

Summary of key business:
- Internal Audit Report – Health and Safety
- Internal Audit Report – Debtors/Income
- Audit Certification of Student Activity and Support Fund Year End Return
- Audit BSI Assessment Report
- Strategic Risk Register

Agreed Actions:
- Internal Audit Report – Debtors/Income recommendations to be taken forward.
- Review of whole Strategic Risk Register to be undertaken by ET and Audit and Risk Committee once VP Recruitment complete.
- Date to be identified post SG Budget Announcement (15 Dec) for either Audit and Risk or full Regional Board to meet in early 2023.</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>**Joint Audit and Risk/Finance and Resource Committee – 30 November 2022**

Summary of Key Business:
- Draft Audited Financial Statements, 12 months to 31 July 2022
- IT Strategy Annual Report 2022

Agreed Actions:
- Two amendments to be made to final accounts re. A Russell meeting attendance and J Gifford councillor status.</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>**Finance and Resource Committee – 30 November 2022**</td></tr>
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	Summary of key business: • Committee Terms of Reference • Programme of Business AY2022-23 • Course Fees AY2023-24 • Estates Strategy Annual Report 2022 • October Management Accounts Agreed Actions: • Contract Limits and number of Contracts to be reviewed.
5	**Curriculum and Quality Committee – 1 December 2022** Summation of key business: • Committee Terms of Reference • Programme of Business AY2022-23 • Overview of Credits activity and credits position • Business and Community Development Update • Students' Association Activity Report • AY2021-22 Annual Quality Report Agreed actions: • Terms of Reference and Programme of Business to be discussed with Governance and Nominations Committee.
6	**Governance and Nominations Committee – 1 December 2022** Summation of key business: • Committee membership • Committee Terms of Reference (all) Agreed actions: • Regional Chair to contact Board members regarding Chair/Vice Chair Committee positions and amendments to Committee membership. • In early 2023 date to be identified to fully review all Board and Committee Terms of Reference and Programmes of Business

REGIONAL BOARD
Meeting of 14 December 2022

Title: Board Committee Membership

Author: Susan Lawrance, Secretary to the Board	**Contributor(s):** Governance and Nominations Committee

Type of Agenda Item:

For Decision ☐

For Discussion ☐

For Information ☒

Reserved Item of Business ☐

Purpose: To enable the Regional Board to discuss and note the proposed changed recommended by the Governance and Nominations Committee and the Membership changes as will be outlined by the Regional Chair, to reflect the end of tenure of John Henderson and the appointment of Susan Elston to Regional Chair.

Linked to Strategic Theme:

4. Delivering Excellence and Innovation

Linked to Strategic Risk(s):

n/a

Executive Summary:
The Governance and Nominations Committee acknowledged the changes required following the end of John Henderson's tenure as not only Interim Regional Chair but also Chair of the Finance and Resource Committee, and the new Regional Chair, with regard to her position as Chair of the Human Resource Committee. Sheena Ross has now moved from Vice-Chair to Chair of the Finance and Resource Committee, and has therefore resigned from the Audit and Risk Committee.

The Regional Chair will be in contact with all Board Members who are being requested to either change Committee membership or take on additional Committee roles. A paper highlighting the changes, once agreed with Members, will be tabled at the Regional Board Meeting and will be shared on the Regional Board Team space.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Board note the information provided.

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

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact   ☒

Negative Impact   ☐

No Impact   ☐

Evidence:

REGIONAL BOARD
Meeting of 14 December 2022

Title: Regional Outcome Agreement - AY2022-23

Author: Robert Laird Head of Planning and Academic Partnerships	**Contributor(s):**

Type of Agenda Item:

For Decision ☒

For Discussion ☐

For Information ☐

Reserved Item of Business ☐

Purpose:

To enable the Board to consider and approve the College's draft Regional Outcome Agreement for AY2022-23.

Linked to Strategic Theme:

The Regional Outcome Agreement is linked to all strategic themes.

Linked to Strategic Risk(s):

Executive Summary:

The Regional Outcome Agreement aims to capture, at a high level, the College's contributions, impact and outcomes, and to provide assurance to the SFC on the use of allocated funding in AY2022-23. The document has been produced in line with SFC guidance relating to content, format and length. The document was written by members of the Leadership Team and collated by the Head of Planning and Academic Partnerships.

Supporting Data, including national measures and associated targets are included as Appendix A. In setting targets for AY2022-23, the College has taken into account its own past performance; the most recent national performance outcomes (AY2020-21); the current regional economic circumstances and the impacts of COVID-19. Please note that articulation data, from the National Articulation Database, is not currently available. When this is available, the national measures, for articulation, will be updated. All supporting data will be reviewed in January 2023.

A draft, subject to approval by the Regional Board, has been submitted to the Scottish Funding Council. Following approval by the Regional Board, the final document will be submitted to the Scottish Funding Council, with College branding, images and appropriate infographics. A final copy of the approved document will be placed on the Regional Board Teams space.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Board consider, and if so minded, approve the Regional Outcome Agreement AY2022-23.

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

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☐

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☒

Evidence:

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE

REGIONAL OUTCOME AGREEMENT

AY2022-23

Draft to be presented to the Regional Board for approval on 14 December 2022.

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ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND SOCIAL RENEWAL

Responsive institutions

Confident and highlight capable – work-ready – graduates

Knowledge exchange and innovation

Collaboration

Climate Emergency

CLOSING STATEMENT

APPENDIX A - SUPPORTING DATA

INTRODUCTION

North East Scotland College (NESCol) is the only further education college located within the North East of Scotland, and provides a wide range of education and training opportunities across the region to meet the needs of individuals, communities and employers. The College's main (College-owned) centres of delivery are in Aberdeen (3 sites), Fraserburgh and Peterhead with a number of leased community-based learning centres across the region. NESCol serves an extensive geographical area (Aberdeen City: 186 sq km, Aberdeenshire: 6,313 sq km), with its 2 main centres of delivery, Aberdeen and Fraserburgh, located 41 miles apart.

College services are also provided in a number of the region's main centres of population out-with Aberdeen City: Ellon, Inverurie and The Scottish Maritime Academy in Peterhead. Further detailed information on the College, its courses and services can be accessed at www.nescol.ac.uk.

This Outcome Agreement aims to capture, at a high level, the College's contributions, impact and outcomes, and to provide assurance to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on use of allocated funding in AY2022-23.

The College's Strategic Plan for 2021-23 can be accessed here.

Supporting Data, including national measures and associated targets are included as Appendix A. In setting targets for AY2022-23, the College has considered its own past performance; the most recent national performance outcomes (AY2020-21); the current regional economic circumstances and the impacts of COVID-19. The targets are considered to be realistic, given the challenging and unique circumstances in which the College continues to operate, but ambitious in terms of recovery.

Whilst the targets are for AY2022-23 only, it is acknowledged that the impacts of the pandemic and economic change will continue to impact significantly on the College for a number of years and that recovery will be gradual and dependent on restored confidence in education; improved alignment with the school senior phase curriculum; freedom from restrictions on course delivery and improved understanding of career prospects in the region. Using the College's well-established partnership links will be critical for this purpose.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

FAIR ACCESS AND TRANSITION

NESCol works hard to ensure that anyone who wants to come to College can gain a place on a course, by removing any barriers and providing support so that all students reach their potential and successfully complete their course of study. Groups of particular interest, such as care-experienced and those from the 10% most deprived postcodes on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD10), are guaranteed a place on a course. There is also a focus on student carers and estranged students, to help them be successful.

The College plays a pivotal role in developing skills of young people across the region, most significantly in the region's approach to the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) agenda. The College's relationship with DYW co-ordinators has been strengthened by working together more closely and sharing its offer with school pupils.

An innovative approach to working with schools has been developed to ensure NESCol can meet the needs of senior phase pupils and school leavers. This involves staff from the College Schools-College Partnership Team and other staff from across the College working with teachers, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) careers advisors, DYW co-ordinators and community planning groups. Better sharing of information and data insights will support planning for an appropriate offer to school pupils.

The College also supports many opportunities for mature, part-time and distance learners including those returning to education for up-skilling and re-skilling. Strategic initiatives and community planning partnerships have also been established regionally which offer opportunities to more vulnerable sections of the community across both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. NESCol also works closely with the University of Aberdeen (UofA) and The Robert Gordon University (RGU) and a tripartite approach, branded as the National Energy Skills Accelerator (NESA) is focussed on developing the skills required for the region's energy transition ambitions. These activities support NESCol to provide learning to senior phase school pupils, to extend its reach to the most deprived areas in the regions and to encourage students to continue their studies by articulation to university, or via work-based distance and part-time learning.

NESCol has been working especially closely with RGU to improve students' experiences and outcomes while studying at College. Areas of collaboration include subject level reviews, admissions and offers, validation and marketing school transitions products. A new approach to Additional Funds Places will be introduced next year.

NESCol works closely with a wide range of partners to support fair access and transitions. A key partner is Aberdeen Foyer, with whom the College works to ensure it reaches vulnerable people within the community. This is one example where digital poverty is being addressed. Students referred to NESCol can be supported by the provision of digital devices so that appropriate studies can be completed, especially when some delivery continues to be online.

Care-experienced students is one of the groups of specific interest to NESCol. NESCol wants to expand the number of care-experienced students studying at College, and to improve the outcomes for this group of students. Care-experienced students meet as a group, where tailored support is made available, and essential guidance and advice is shared with them. This approach is being extended to student carers and estranged students. The group will also provide useful feedback on the support provided to them. In the past, a number of students self-disclosed as care-experienced inaccurately and the application process has been redesigned to gather more robust and accurate data.

NESCol continues to run its pioneering and sector leading "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) scheme, where students are required to use their own laptop for their studies, and to bring it to College when they are required to attend. Students are expected to supply their own device, but support is available in the form of a bursary-funded device which can be made available if the student is eligible, or by the student applying for a loan device if their course is not bursary funded. Loan devices are available from funds allocated to the College by the SFC to address digital poverty. Students can also apply for loan devices on courses which are not BYOD courses, if required, as most courses have some element of online delivery. Support from the digital poverty fund is being extended to include or improve internet connection.

HIGH QUALITY LEARNING, TEACHING AND SUPPORT

Moving on from the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus for the College in AY2022-23 is to restore the student experience to a predominantly campus-based model so that students benefit from access to NESCol's excellent facilities and the advantages of learning together. The lessons learned from blended models will be incorporated and applied where they have been successful to build a more sustainable and current framework for learning and teaching with a view to facilitating successful outcomes for all students.

The collation of feedback and evaluation of the learning and teaching experience of both staff and students in AY2021-22 has informed the updated "Framework for Curriculum Planning and Delivery" which sets out standards for course design and delivery. This document, now stored alongside all other curriculum and quality-relevant documents in a single shared space – Curriculum and Quality Essentials - has been prepared to support teaching staff to keep up with good practice and lessons learned from the blended learning experience in previous years whilst retaining the necessary rigour in terms of structure and quality assurance. Quality processes, suspended during the pandemic restrictions, such as lesson observation and internal audit, will also be re-instituted to support enhancement of the student experience.

Student support needs continue to be provided through the "Whole College Support Model". This begins with front-line teaching and support staff and allows referral of more complex needs to progressively more specialised staff in the Student Support and Advice teams. Development of the delivery model will continue in AY2022-23, with training in trauma-informed practice and neurodiversity being particular priorities. The College-devised "Academic and Personal Skills Development" unit was introduced to help Academic Tutors to support students and to develop transferable skills of students. However, outcomes have not been as successful as expected and so improvements to the design and application of this unit have been identified for implementation in AY2022-23. These will improve understanding and consistency of requirements through enhanced resources, communication and opportunities for professional discussion.

Following the curriculum management restructure of AY2020-21, feedback from managers has been gathered, collated and used to inform improvements to process and sharing of good practice. As a result, a revised Curriculum Manager Forum will be introduced to allow these critical leaders to come together and discuss key themes. The introduction of level 1 promoted posts – Academic Improvement Leads – in AY2021-22 has enhanced the leadership capacity in teaching teams with these staff supporting innovation and enhancement cross-campus in designated subject areas. The impact of these posts will be reviewed and monitored during this year (AY2022-23).

Significant resource, through the internal Learning Technologies Team and the use of other learning platforms, will continue to support continuing professional development in developing digital teaching skills so that these can be incorporated into revised approaches to learning and teaching. Further work is planned to deliver webinars on topics such as digital accessibility, universal design, contemporary pedagogy and online assessment.

The College's partnership with RGU continues to be sector-leading with respect to the opportunities offered for transition and widening access to HE (Higher Education) in the region. Work is in progress with RGU through the SFC North East Pathfinder projects to explore joint planning and provision of new programmes and pathways and, also including UofA, to develop a Health and Social Care Partnership to promote routes into careers in this critical sector. The College will also be working on Pathfinder projects with local authorities and regional universities on developing a more coherent senior phase for school pupils, again building on the excellent foundations which have been in place for many years. Further information is included in the "Collaboration" section.

Internal review and self-evaluation is an essential process employed by the College to ensure the ongoing continuous improvement in the delivery of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment, and an effectively integrated and embedded student support experience. A review of student outcomes has highlighted a need to address high withdrawal rates, particularly in Further Education (FE) courses. An enhanced evaluation and action planning process – Spotlight Review - has been instituted in AY2022-23 which will be applied to identified courses and teams to direct resources to, and generate enhanced action plans for, those areas most in need of improvement. The reviews will be based on evidence generated from student outcomes and feedback as well as quality assurance processes such as verification; complaints and internal audit. Any evidence gaps will be addressed, and supportive measures instituted.

Education Scotland undertook its most recent progress visit to the College in March 2022 and the next is scheduled for March 2023. In preparation for this, and to maintain dialogue with Education Scotland, the Director of Quality attends monthly engagement meetings with the College Inspector and reports key messages back to the Leadership Team. The College is currently participating in the SFC review work through a variety of bodies, including the Principal and Vice-Principal groups and the College Development Network (CDN) Quality Network.

PARTNERSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The College has a range of mechanisms to support effective student partnership. These are outlined in the Student Partnership Agreement which sets out the College's approach to student engagement, detailing priority objectives and associated actions. The College and the Students' Association work collaboratively to deliver the objectives and review progress at the Student Engagement Action Group (SEAG), which has been in existence for a number of years and is the main mechanism for overseeing student engagement and partnership.

The Student Partnership Agreement structure which was introduced in AY2021-22 has worked well by allocation both a College lead and a Students' Association lead, demonstrating a true partnership approach to supporting student engagement. This continues in AY2022-23 with four key projects for the session: Student Wellbeing, Healthy Body Healthy Mind, Response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis and the Students' Association strategy renewal.

Two initiatives approved to date so far under the Response to Cost-of-Living Crisis project are the introduction of Community Pantries and Free Breakfast Club. The planning and delivery of these initiatives lie with the Students' Association but are jointly funded alongside the College. Both will be up and running early December 2022 and will continue to be monitored and developed throughout the session. The Free Breakfast Club is in partnership with the catering provider, Inspire, who are providing resources at cost price to help support students.

SEAG continues to be the main forum for ensuring student voice heard. The sabbatical officers continue to sit on relevant committees and action groups, but a more considered approach is being taken to ensure attendance at meetings does not impact negatively on capacity to implement the projects and deliver on their manifestos. Once the executive officers are in place, they will also join some groups and where there is no sabbatical or executive officer represented on a group, input and feedback will be provided via SEAG.

All students are provided with opportunities to take ownership for their own learning and influence their college experience. Students are encouraged to be active participants in College life and encouraged to co-design and steer the way in which key services are provided to them. This is supported via a wide variety of engagement activities including class representative meetings, course committee meetings, peer-led reviews, as well as via feedback shared through the Students' Association.

The College, and the Students' Association will continue to work closely in partnership with Student Partnership in Quality Scotland (sparqs) and National Union of Students (NUS) Scotland to support the work of the Students' Association, including wider student engagement. Class Rep training has again been delivered by sparqs, helping to equip the class reps to undertake their duties and participate in activities such as Course Committee Meetings. Following the review of the class rep system last session, the team are introducing a new format for the class rep meetings by incorporating incentives to encourage attendance and engagement at the on-campus meetings. Clubs and Societies have also been very successful to date and the team continue to build on this. In addition to the promotion of these engagement opportunities during Welcome Week, the Student's Association delivered promotional activities in November through on campus stalls to support students with setting up their own club or society and promoting those already in place.

The sabbatical officers continue to engage with the Wellbeing Matters group established to deliver NESCol's Wellbeing Strategy. This session the Students' Association projects align very well with the aims of the strategy, providing further opportunities for joint projects - for example introducing Sensory Spaces to support the existing Wellbeing Hubs which were introduced last session. The Students' Association have also worked with the sports curriculum teams to promote the opening of fitness facilities on all three main campuses, which further supports the Healthy Body Healthy Mind. In addition, NESCol has signed up to Sport Scotland's Active Campus initiative and are actively engaging with Scottish Student Sport (SSS) to maximise opportunities for students.

LEARNING WITH IMPACT

As part of the whole-College support model, the Student Advice and Support team offer a series of events for transitions support. This year, following review of last year's event, UCAS week has been rebranded as "UCAS and Transitions Week" and will offer a programme of events to help prepare students for the next stage in their journey, whether that is progressing with their studies or moving into employment. The event is being delivered virtually as it was last year, offering a series of live sessions and pre-recorded content. A number of stakeholders are involved in the event including RGU, UofA, The Open University (OU), SDS, SAAS, The Royal Air Force, The Royal Navy, Army and Police Scotland.

This event, and other initiatives like "Hack Your Studies", a week-long programme of study skills sessions supported by the NESCol Study Toolkit, have been incorporated into the delivery of the "Academic and Personal Skills Development" unit (detailed below) and is shared with all Academic Tutors across FE and HE courses. The foundation created during these events will prepare students for future extension events later in the year, including "Enterprise and Employability Week" and "Virtual Careers Week". All employers who participated last year confirmed their intent to be involved again this academic session.

In addition to supporting the above events, RGU regularly engages with NESCol students through information stands on campus and bespoke in-class sessions to promote degree-link programmes. This work supports the annual subject level review meetings focused on articulation arrangements and transition activities.   All the arrangements described above will be further supported working collaboratively with the Head of Planning and Academic Partnerships.

EQUALITIES AND INCLUSION

The College strives to support people from a wide range of backgrounds to access high-quality educational provision and improve their positive destinations in life. To that end, it continues to seek to ensure that as an organisation it creates a more equal, diverse and inclusive learning and working environment where students and staff are respected, valued and supported.

The College produced its Equality Mainstreaming report and revised Equality Outcomes in April 2021 and work in AY2022-23 continues to focus on the application of the actions and outcomes identified by these exercises.

The attainment gap between students with and without a declared disability remains a priority, with work focussing on early identification and intervention; support mechanisms and development of resources to support student resilience. Evidence suggests that action is reducing the attainment gap but that a gap still exists. Additional staff training and promotions will be focussed on neurodiversity as part of the College Respect initiative. This remains a common and sensitive challenge in terms of staff skills and confidence.

Specific interventions for digital poverty and under-represented groups are other areas of focus. This year the region is accommodating a significant number of Ukrainian refugees and so planning is taking account of their needs in terms of language, skills and pastoral support. Partnership working with the Local Authorities, Grampian Racial Equality Council (GREC) and others will facilitate planning and delivery of appropriate activity to support their integration into the community.

Particular attention is also focussed on care-experienced students with the specific intention of improving outcomes for this group. Application of support arrangements for this group continued to be challenging but the attainment gap reduced for full time students in AY2021-22 from 22% to 11%. Additional support measures are now better established, and curriculum colleagues are more experienced in dealing with potential needs of students in this group.

Whilst robust live and trend data is available for most protected characteristics, work is underway to improve qualitative feedback on the student experience. Student-led and run LGBTQ+ and disability groups are planned for AY2022-23 and it is expected that they will help to promote good relations and inform improvements to the student experience. The appointment of staff Equality Champions is also planned to support colleagues in their implementation of mainstreaming.

The College's commitment to provision of an accessible and inclusive environment includes mainstreaming activity such as incorporating challenge questions for support teams to develop understanding of mainstreaming equalities and diversity within their own teams and additional support for equality impact assessment writing, evidence collection and evaluation.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND SOCIAL RENEWAL

NESCol is a driving force in the economic recovery and social renewal of the North East of Scotland. A proactive approach to responding to the downturn in the oil and gas sector and supporting energy transition in tandem with addressing the impact of BREXIT and the many harms of COVID-19 will be crucial during one of the most challenging periods in the region's history.

The North East region is experiencing positive economic recovery fuelled by an emerging renewable sector alongside a relatively strong oil and gas sector with job opportunities often outweighing suitable candidates who can fill them. NESCol is playing a crucial role in developing new and existing talent to support these growth areas as well as other strategically important sectors like digital technology, food and drink, life sciences and tourism. NESCol is embedded in its regional business and community networks and supports numerous initiatives which are mutually beneficial in terms of financial sustainability for NESCol and economic support for the Region.

RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS

NESCol is guided by a wide variety of labour market intelligence which comes from sources including:

- Direct engagement with employers
- Skills Development Scotland (SDS)
- Local Authorities
- Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC)
- Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Industry bodies
- Media releases

NESCol staff represent the College on a variety of regional groups including:

- Community Planning Groups (where the CPA Management Group oversees the delivery of a Local Outcome Improvement Plan through 7 themed Outcome Improvement Groups).
- PACE (Grampian, Shetland and Tayside)
- Local Employability Partnerships
- Employability Training Providers Forum
- Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Hotels Association
- National Energy Skills Accelerator (NESA)
- University links with 9 associate universities

The sources above provide regular and current labour market intelligence which guides curriculum planning and decision-making through discussion at the College's Regional Board, Executive Team and Leadership Team and is cascaded throughout the organisation. Programme development and delivery for NESCol students and commercial clients and stakeholders is also contextualised with this market intelligence.

NESCol benefits from its partnership relationships, and these are becoming increasingly important with bodies including Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) and National Energy Skills Accelerator (NESA) and new membership arrangements with Offshore Energies UK (OEUK), which will bring us closer to new employers and inform new curriculum development.

Through AY2022-23 academic year, the College has seen a significant increase in demand for Modern Apprenticeship (MA) training, with 172 contracted places offered by Skills Development Scotland and demand which significantly outweighs this number. Other colleges are experiencing similar demand and Scottish Government funding seems unlikely to be able to offer additional support. The College will focus on MA training providers and seek to utilise non-contracted places. The recent successes in recruiting Construction and Hospitality MA will continue. The College will monitor the progress of these new frameworks closely offering high quality customer service and seek to expand them in the future (subject to contract capacity and employer demand).

NESCol's support of the apprenticeship family will create 154 new Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) programmes across a range of frameworks. There have been challenges in recruiting students for FA programmes this session, partly due to the lack of opportunities to promote this offer to schools during periods of lockdown. Working with local authorities, SDS and DYW, short film promotional and marketing materials have been developed to raise awareness of FAs and progression opportunities to young people and influencers. In addition, school visits have been arranged to provide guidance and support throughout the year and at specific subject choice events.

The Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) is NESCol's primary focus for commercial delivery, however at the time of writing, colleges still await confirmation of funding for AY2022-23. While delivery of contractual commitment from AY2021-22 continues up to the calendar year end, it is deeply concerning that the College has been unable to pursue new activity with the uncertainty over funding. The College expects that an announcement will be made in the very near future which will enable the College to rebuild momentum with the wholly owned subsidiary, Aberdeen Skills and Enterprise Training (ASET). A waiting list has been established with new and existing customers and the College is ready to launch quickly to secure new activity to support regional economic recovery and indeed new opportunity. The College will continue to work with key partners to promote the FWDF opportunity to small, medium and large businesses in all sectors.

NESCol's longstanding relationship with Shell UK Ltd, is continuing in AY2022-23 with a new cohort of 12 Shell technicians, and growth in "Girls in Energy" where 155 students are now working towards their National 5 Skills For Work Energy and a reinvigorated S2 Skills competition reaching 17 secondary schools (with two new schools this year and over 2,000 pupils in total) across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The Shell Digital Passport programme will continue in the early part of the year until committed activity has been delivered. Over 70 candidates have, so far, benefitted from improvements to their digital literacy and most achieving the Digital Passport qualification. The sponsorship is a great indicator of the strength of relationship between the College and Shell UK Ltd. NESCol was delighted to win a CDN award which celebrates this success.

Wind Technician Training has increased in demand and the main partner, Vestas, has now increased the number of apprentices training at Fraserburgh campus with 8 new offshore technicians commencing their journey alongside four onshore technicians. The onshore technicians have transferred from another college to progress to higher levels of study and on completion in June 2023, will immediately be deployed to a new windfarm development in Shetland.

Wind Technician training has also now commenced at the College's Altens campus where the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) has created scholarships for new entrants to this industry. Growth is anticipated at both campuses as new Scotwind opportunities are initiated, and programmes will evolve in line with employer demand in this sector.

NESCol has benefitted from a very generous 6-figure donation from a local businessperson in AY2020-21 enabling an innovative FutureSkills Centre at its Fraserburgh Campus. A second donation, double that of the previous, has recently been received from the same person and will allow further investment in the Fraserburgh Campus with the development of a renewables workshop. This area will enhance the learning experience of future technicians as well as aspiring young engineers from local schools. Developing inspirational facilities and learning experiences is key to the College's future success. Having supportive partners helps to enable this vision and the delivery of an excellent learning experience.

Within NESCol's commitment to support its business and communities, are a range of partnerships which help to protect some of the more vulnerable regional groups. This provision helps to ensure equality of opportunity in areas which can often be neglected. The College's partnerships with Aberdeen Foyer, Project Search (UofA) and the regional Community Planning Partnership (CPP) offer learning experiences and progression opportunities for candidates at different stages of their learning journeys. With Aberdeen Foyer, the College co-delivers a number of employability programmes for candidates who have often not engaged in school or been impacted by turbulent home lives. The College hopes to continue Foyer Families projects, made possible by Tackling Child Poverty funding, and awaits confirmation from the Scottish Funding Council of this support. This innovative programme encourages family friendly hours and support while upskilling adults and children as a family unit.

Project Search is an international transition to work programme committed to transforming the lives of young people with learning disabilities and Autism. This supported learning and internship opportunity for 12 candidates per year has a high success rate in securing long-term employment which would otherwise have been difficult to achieve. The programme delivered a near 90% success rate of placing candidates in employment in AY2021-22. The College will continue to work with UofA, Values Into Action Scotland (VIAS), SDS and the two local authorities to enhance opportunities for young people.

The University of Aberdeen Medical School and NESCol are in receipt of Scottish Government funding to support an innovative access programme to their MBChB medical degree programme. The first cohort was recruited in AY2017-18 and there has been an intake each year since then, with funding secured until AY2022-23. Students are recruited from groups traditionally poorly represented in medicine, fulfilling criteria such as rurality, SIMD postcode, first generation university and care background. They complete a pre-medical school year, the first half of which is spent at NESCol consolidating their science and they move on to medical school courses in January. Successful completion of the course and UCAT testing allows the students access to the first year of the MBChB degree. Eighty-two students have entered over the first 4 intakes, retention and progression rates have been excellent.

NESCol's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision has doubled in size this year with significant demand primarily from Ukranian refugees but also from other troubled areas of the world. The CPP is collectively supporting this activity, however it creates new challenges and based on forecasts, there could be a doubling of refugees arriving in the region.

Fair Work

The College is committed to the 'Fair Work Statement for the College Sector' that is currently being developed nationally in consultation with trade unions. This aims to continuously improve working practises 'that offers effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect'.

This is demonstrated by:

- Good industrial relations with representative trade unions and all staff.

- The most recent Investors in People (IiP) report which highlighted the improvements that have been made in relation to internal communications, and it also recognised the College's commitment to staff and student wellbeing through the Wellbeing Matters and Respect action groups.

- Significant investment in learning and development, including the majority of lecturing staff holding, or achieving TQFE within three years of employment.

- The College's commitment to paying the Living Wage, recognising that organisational/workforce change can have a significant impact on employees. Therefore, the College applies the fundamental principle that consultation and communication with trade unions and employees during these processes are essential.

CONFIDENT AND HIGHLY CAPABLE – WORK-READY - GRADUATES

Ensuring that all students, regardless of their background or personal circumstances, are provided with opportunities to develop the skills necessary to be successful as confident, resilient and highly capable work-ready graduates, is at the heart of NESCol.

The world of work is changing and along with it, the suite of knowledge, skills and attributes that graduates must possess to thrive in a highly complex and ever-changing work environment. Technological, societal and environmental innovations and disruptions are rapidly transforming a wide range of industries across the world, and these changes are being felt particularly acutely within the North East of Scotland where a combination of BREXIT, COVID-19 and the increasingly urgent need to transition society away from oil and gas to green and renewable sources is fundamentally affecting the economic landscape, and as consequence, wider society as a whole.

NESCol understands the importance of delivering a curriculum that is employer-informed and explicitly designed to address the unique needs and skills demands of the region, ensuring a pipeline of high quality, technically skilled graduates who possess a broad schema of essential knowledge and understanding. One of the defining characteristics of the student experience at NESCol is the way that qualifications are designed and delivered to place the development of essential domain, core and higher order meta-skills front and centre.

All qualifications at NESCol are designed with substantial employer input and industry insight, and are shaped further via close partnership work with students. By engaging directly and working closely with key regional stakeholders the College can ensure that all students are provided with opportunities to develop their work-readiness via regular access to work-placement, work-experience, simulated industry environments and practical hands-on learning using industry-standard equipment and resources. NESCol believes strongly in the vital role of hands-on learning, and the value provided by expert direct instruction and time spent engaged in deliberate practice enabled via placement and on-campus attendance. This philosophy has strengthened during the COVID-19 pandemic and associated campus/workplace lockdowns where the lack of access to campuses, peers, College staff and the workplaces has had a detrimental impact on the student experience.

That is not to say that the College does not see digital, blended or online learning as important elements of current or future provision, indeed NESCol has been at the leading edge of digital learning within the College Sector for well over 10 years. Because of this early commitment to digital learning NESCol was particularly well placed to respond to the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the, previously mentioned, BYOD and "Digital Futures" initiatives, the College had already made considerable investment in its IT infrastructure, student access to devices, online resources and in the digital capabilities of staff and students.

Indeed, NESCol strongly believes that high-level digital skills are the essential underpinning skills for the current and future world of work and so the development of high-level digital skills is integral to and embedded within every course that the College offers. Use of tools such as the JISC digital capabilities model and the CDN Digital Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges have enabled the College to ensure that all students are supported to develop key capabilities that will enable them to work, communicate, create and collaborate safely and confidently online.

Central to ensuring that all NESCol graduates are confident and fully prepared to transition to their next level of study or enter the workplace is investing sufficient time in raising their awareness of the wider world and expanding their personal development and employability skills. To ensure consistency and alignment in this approach across all qualifications, NESCol has designed a bespoke stand-alone module, entitled "Academic and Personal Skills Development", that is aligned to SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6 that is integrated into all FE programmes of study. This mandatory 3-credit module was centrally designed as an "off-the-shelf" product that all academic teams can customise to support contextualised delivery of essential personal and employability skills development. Its integration within all programmes of study helps ensure that sufficient focus is dedicated to the delivery of these skills and provides Lecturers with the essential ring-fenced time that they need to ensure that all students have access to vital employer, peer, group and one-to-one support and guidance.

NESCol works very closely with local authority, third sector and national skills agency partners to address and respond to the skills and training needs of the region and is represented across a wide range of key regional economic, community and skills groups. The College co-chairs the Regional Skills Partnership and is working closely with private sector catalysts, "Opportunity North East" and "Energy Transition Zone" to ensure that NESCol graduates possess the range on industry knowledge, skills and experience so vital in supporting economic recovery within the region and across the country.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND INNOVATION

NESCol is committed to working collectively with partners across higher, further and tertiary education to support strategic and operational knowledge exchange, best practice sharing and innovation.

This is evidenced by the work that NESCol are leading on as part of the SFC's Pathfinder Project, details of which can be found in the "Collaboration" section of this document.

The College's commitment in this area is evidenced via its willingness and enthusiasm to engage with local and national groups, including the Scottish Government, SFC, Education Scotland and Colleges Scotland to influence and co-design national strategies, policies and procedures aimed at supporting the sector (and society more widely) through the pandemic.

Through national entities such as the College Principal's group, Curriculum Vice-Principal's group, the Quality Manager's group, the Finance Director's group and the Business Development Director's group, members of the NESCol Leadership Team play a leading role in sharing good practice and shaping the national approach taken by the SQA, SFC and Scottish Government.

The legacy of proactive engagement and collaboration with key schools and university partners has placed the College in an ideal position to lead on the development of new and innovative models of tertiary provision and it is hoped that NESCol will be able to play a leading role in supporting SFC work in this area.

COLLABORATION

As previously mentioned, the North East of Scotland continues to face unprecedented and unique challenges as a consequence of the legacy impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, continued disruption caused by BREXIT, the downturn of the Oil and Gas Industry, and the financial crisis that has been exacerbated by the terrible events in Ukraine and recent UK government economic policy.

Whilst these issues are all very different in the way in which they affect the region, with some, such as the shift from oil and gas to renewable and greener forms of energy production presenting tremendous future opportunities, it is clear that effective collaboration between local authorities, educational institutions, the third sector, and wider industry will be essential in safeguarding the future success and prosperity of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

NESCol is very much committed to working in partnership with others to address these challenges and ensure the ongoing delivery of sustainable and coherent provision for those progressing from school, looking to re-enter the workplace or for those currently employed looking to diversify or update their skills set. The College engages regularly with a wide range of key industry partners to ensure that its curriculum continues to meet the needs of employers, is tailored to address skills deficits or industry demand within the region and provides opportunities for those facing redundancy because of the current economic crisis.

NESCol has a number of key collaborative projects ongoing in AY2022-23 including the continued growth and development of NESA, the formal partnership between the College, RGU, UofA, SDS and Energy Transition Zone Ltd (ETZ) which aims to provide the energy industry with a clear gateway to access bespoke qualifications, training and skills development, and the research and development expertise required to train workers for the energy transition. In October 2021, NESA was awarded £1,000,000 grant funding through the Scottish Government's Just Transition Fund to conduct an exciting new Pilot Energy Transition Skills project. This will run alongside the NE Pathfinder strand focusing on supporting the energy transition.

Over the coming 2 years, this funding will enable NESA to determine the skills required to meet the needs of a just energy transition. The research and development project will leverage the North East of Scotland's leading academic institutions to assess the energy transition skills landscape from now until 2030, and design pilot training programmes.

The pilot programmes will support people in joining the energy transition by creating accessible, demand-driven courses to attract new entrants, re-skilling opportunities for people impacted by redundancy or transferring from other sectors such as oil and gas, and up-skilling options to improve regional job retention. The pilot scheme will be a testing ground for innovative and novel delivery methods and pave the way for future large-scale programmes. This project will help establish Scotland's North East and Moray as an energy transition hub, bringing further investment and opportunities to the regions' workforce and communities.

Building on twenty years of joint working and trust, NESCol and RGU are intensifying their partnership with the introduction of enhanced course co-design and joint planning arrangements as part of the SFC's Tertiary Provision Pathfinder Project.

This initiative will accelerate a joint approach to skills and provision planning and development between the two institutions and deliver pathways for learners which respond to changing skills needs in priority sectors for the region. Alongside SFC, SDS will play a key role in supporting this intensified approach to skills and provision working. By working together, the partnership will identify and develop new courses and learning routes which provide the highest quality student experience, as well as promoting widening access and participation for the region.

The extension of the partnership through the pilot will make best use of resources and expertise to build highly effective pathways benefiting learners, employers, the North East region, and beyond.

In addition, the College is working both local universities and Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire local authorities to deliver a third Pathfinder Project focusing on enhancing provision across the region's senior phase. This project focuses on three tests of change designed to enhance the senior phase:

- Developing a meaningful winter leaver programme (with progression opportunities)

- Introducing HNC (Level 7) group awards to S6

- Senior phase – regional connections – creation of a strategic working group, comprising local authorities, College and both local universities. The remit of the group would be to maximise opportunities, as a collective, for the enhancement of the senior phase.

Recently the College has strengthened its relationship with Jobcentre+ via the creation of a new "Youth Hub" within the City Campus. From this new Hub, DWP Work Coaches are helping young jobseekers access local training and job opportunities, as well as a range of services to address wellbeing needs. This work aligns well with the collaborative work already underway with SDS which sees their advisors working from within the College's Students Advice Centres.

NESCol is also playing an active role in national collaboration and continues to work closely with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) in the development of the Next Generation of Higher National Qualifications. With representation on the National HN Next Gen Steering Board, as well as leading on the development and piloting of two of the new courses, the College is ideally placed to help shape the future direction of these world class and renowned qualifications.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The College continues to make considerable progress in addressing the climate emergency working on delivering the actions identified in the College's Carbon Management Plan 2020-2025. NESCol aims to reduce the CO_2 emissions from its activities by 50% from the 2018-19 baseline by 2025. A new Sustainability Strategy was launched in July 2022 and sets out the Colleges ambitious target of reaching Net-Zero by 2035.

NESCol fully recognises its responsibilities concerning Environmental and Social Sustainability as an education and training provider, but also as a business, an employer and external partner. The College continues to have representation on the College Development Network Climate Emergency Expert Panel and engages pro-actively with the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC). NESCol is also a partner in the National Energy Skills Accelerator and actively engaged with the North East Energy Transition Zone and the North East Scotland Hydrogen Ambition Board.

For AY2022-23, the College is undertaking several specific actions:

- The College has secured grant funding to take forward several specific estates projects which will reduce its CO_2 footprint, with the Solar PV project completing in early 2023. In addition, funding has been secured from the 'Green Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme' for 2 projects with decisions on a further 2 pending:

  City Campus – South Block glazing – approved
  Fraserburgh Campus – LED lighting – approved
  Altens Campus – double glazing – decision pending
  Building Management System upgrade – decision pending

- NESCol has a new Sustainability Strategy and goals will be delivered via the Sustainability Committee.

- The College is rolling out sustainability training to all NESCol staff in this academic year.

- NESCol are working to meet the requirements of the Deposit and Return Scheme for Scotland Regulations 2020, looking into reverse vending options being in place before the August 2023 deadline.

CLOSING STATEMENT

NESCol has an integral role in realising the ambitions of the North East Regional Economic Strategy. The College, anchored in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire with a commitment to shaping the workforce of the future, is proud of its role in the evolution of traditional industries and excited by the opportunities presented by new and emerging sectors.

An engaging, supportive and inclusive learning environment is at the heart of a College experience designed to give every student the opportunity to fulfil their potential in employment and in life as we work together to build a vibrant, innovative and sustainable future.

APPENDIX A - SUPPORTING DATA

College Outcome Agreement Impact Framework: Supporting Data

Measure		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Base Year 2020-21	2021-22	Forecast 2022-23
A	Credits Delivered (Core)	132,327	137,897	135,312	135,125	130,069	131,296	131,944	130,709	128,812
	Credits Delivered (ESF)	0	3,898	2,881	1,140	2,154	2,433	2,525	1,049	0
	Credits Delivered (Core + ESF)	132,327	141,795	138,193	136,265	132,223	133,729	134,469	131,758	128,812
B	Volume of Credits Delivered to 10% most deprived postcode areas	6,257	6,587	7,130	2,928	2,813	2,597	2,395	4,088	3,220
	Proportion of Credits delivered to 10% most deprived postcode areas	4.7%	4.6%	5.2%	2.1%	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%	3.1%	2.5%
C	Volume of credits delivered to care-experienced learners	16	982	1,314	1,210	1,296	5,332	8,609	8,743	8,373
	Proportion of credits delivered to care-experienced learners	0.0%	0.7%	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	4.0%	6.4%	6.6%	6.5%
D	Number of senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges	154	277	425	553	567	802	575	591	650
E1	Proportion of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Full time FE)	61.9%	67.4%	66.2%	66.6%	64.8%	61.8%	56.7%	56.8%	60%
	Number of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Full time FE)	2,459	2,800	2,649	2,704	2,663	2,565	2,127	2,197	2,520
	Total number of FTFE students	3,973	4,152	4,001	4,058	4,112	4,152	3,750	3,857	4,200
E2	Proportion of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Part time FE	62.2%	71.1%	71.2%	69.0%	72.4%	73.4%	71.8%	76.7%	78%
	Number of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Part time FE	5,481	4,142	4,156	3,018	4,118	4,229	4,743	3,208	3,050
	Total number of PTFE students	8,809	5,827	5,837	4,371	5,687	5,759	6,607	4,183	3,910
E3	Proportion of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Full time HE)	72.0%	77.1%	75.0%	74.1%	72.0%	70.4%	71.2%	64.8%	68%
	Number of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Full time HE)	1,884	2,101	2,135	1,953	1,772	1,703	1,832	1,482	1,350
	Total number of FTHE students	2,616	2,724	2,847	2,634	2,460	2,420	2,574	2,286	1,986
E4	Proportion of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Part time HE)	82.8%	80.1%	80.1%	79.5%	71.8%	66.9%	83.2%	83.6%	77%
	Number of enrolled students successfully obtaining a recognised qualification (Part time HE)	1,293	1,245	1,025	744	599	467	546	585	308
	Total number of PTHE students	1,561	1,554	1,280	936	834	698	656	700	400
F	Number of students achieving an HNC/D qualification articulating to degree level courses	0	600	673	817	772	675	600		
	Number of students achieving an HNC/D qualification articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing	0	411	485	528	453	456	435		
	Proportion of students achieving an HNC/D qualification articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing	-	68.5%	72.1%	64.6%	58.7%	67.6%	72.5%		
G	Total number of full-time FE college qualifiers (in confirmed destinations)	2,268	2,517	2,467	2,550	2,527	2,169	1,917		
	Number of full-time FE college qualifiers in work, training or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	2,042	2,322	2,220	2,415	2,377	2,037	1,849		
	Proportion of full-time FE college qualifiers in work, training or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	90.0%	92.3%	90.0%	94.7%	94.1%	93.9%	96.5%		
	Total number of full-time HE college qualifiers (in confirmed destinations)	1,030	1,177	1,269	1,171	1,065	982	944		
	Number of full-time HE college qualifiers in work, training or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	850	1,069	1,109	1,125	999	916	913		
	Proportion of full-time HE college qualifiers in work, training or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	82.5%	90.8%	87.4%	96.1%	93.8%	93.3%	96.7%		
H	Percentage of students overall satisfied with their college experience (SSES survey)	-	90.6%	90.9%	N/A - see	93.3%	-	90.3%	93.7%	

Please note that 2019-20 figures for measures E, G and H and all 2020-21 figures were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and may not be directly comparable to other years

Data not available
To be updated January 2023

REGIONAL BOARD
Meeting of 14 December 2022

Title: College Evaluative Report & Enhancement Plan	
Author: Gill Griffin	**Contributor(s): Leadership Team**

Type of Agenda Item:

For Decision	☒
For Discussion	☐
For Information	☐
Reserved Item of Business	☐

Purpose: To enable the Regional Board to review the draft College Evaluative Report & Enhancement Plan.

Linked to Strategic Theme:

4. Delivering Excellence and Innovation

Linked to Strategic Risk(s):

Insert relevant risk reference number

Executive Summary:

The College Evaluative Report & Enhancement Plan (EREP) reports on a prescribed set of expectations and measures of success provided by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The EREP also acts as an internal document to allow the leadership team to review progress against the identified actions outlined in the enhancement plan.

The SFC required the self-evaluation report to be submitted alongside the Regional Outcome Agreement. Although the enhancement plan is not a specified requirement of the SFC submission, it is included as an appendix to provide context to the SFC on the proposed areas for development, which the College will implement across AY 2022-23.

The Executive Team approved the draft version on the 2nd December and now requires final review from the Regional Board.

Key Elements:
- Still awaiting the full College Leaver Destination data from SFC – data to be added if we receive in time;
- Submission of report required to remain complaint with the SFC requirement;
- Provides an evaluative report and enhancement plan that will be used for internal and external purposes and allows the Leadership Team to share updates across college, including the Regional Board;
- Provides an additional evidence resource for the Education Scotland progress visit which is scheduled for March 2023.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Board approve the College Evaluative Report & Enhancement Plan.

Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable)**:**
- Reviewed by Leadership Team – 21.11.2022
- Reviewed by Executive Team – 01 12.2022

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact   ☒

Negative Impact   ☐

No Impact   ☐

Evidence

COLLEGE LEVEL EVALUATIVE REPORT AY 2021-22 & ENHANCEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

North East Scotland College (NESCol) is committed to continuous quality improvement. The College recognises that the management of quality is the shared responsibility of every member of staff, with quality improvement processes supported by the collaborative working of cross-College teams. The College serves an extensive geographical area, with three main campuses – two in Aberdeen and one in Fraserburgh and a presence in regional centres. This Report evaluates the provision and services offered by NESCol highlighting the positive aspects of service despite the challenges faced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Areas for improvement are outlined in the College's enhancement plan, which is added as an appendix to this report.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

FAIR ACCESS AND TRANSITION

NESCol found planning for AY 2021-22 difficult as it was uncertain whether any or what COVID-19 restrictions would be in place at the start of session. It was decided to continue to provide offers to applicants who met entry requirements and to meet with applicants virtually where required to discuss their application. NESCol also planned for a virtual induction, providing cross-college information to applicants. Curriculum induction was delivered over the first 2-3 weeks of the session. Feedback obtained from our First Impressions Survey verifies the success, with overall satisfaction increasing to 94% and returning to equal satisfaction pre-COVID. The College also had to accommodate deferred students returning to complete the practical elements of courses, which could not be delivered in AY 2020-21. Unfortunately, although we met our core target we did not achieve our deferred credit target, nor our European Social Fund (ESF) or Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) target delivering 131,758 credits against an overall target of 135,990. It was especially difficult to obtain completed ESF documentation from students as many of these students continued to study remotely.

The College continued to ensure those care-experienced applicants, and those living in SIMD10 locations, were guaranteed an interview for a suitable course. Credits delivered to care-experienced students increased in AY 2021-22, by 0.2%, and credits delivered to students living in SIMD10 locations increased by 70%. Care-experienced (as well as student carers and estranged students) have a named college contact to make it as easy as possible for them to source help. The student funding and administration teams have also updated their procedures to ensure care-experienced students are well supported; payments are only held in extreme situations, following discussion with the named contact and Curriculum Manager.

The College continues to work collaboratively with community groups and has strengthened its links with partners such as Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). SDS advisors continue to work regularly on campus, and a new link with DWP was introduced in January 2022 when the Aberdeen Youth Hub was formed. The Youth Hub Work Coach meets clients on campus, a neutral welcoming space, this increases our reach to new areas and several referrals have been obtained from this service. A new Data Sharing Agreement has been put in place with SDS, local authorities and other local partners. This provides a vehicle to share relevant data to improve transitions and ensure the right support is offered to students. SDS and local authorities have also shared data, which has been particularly useful in deciding which courses to offer to meet the aspirations of school leavers and fulfilling regional need.

The number of senior phase pupils undertaking vocational qualifications decreased significantly in AY 2020-21. This was due to many pupils choosing school–based subjects instead of online college programmes. Activity increased slightly in AY 2021-22 but it was difficult to recruit pupils due to the uncertainty in how we would be able to deliver the programmes. NESCol continues to work closely with our local authority academies and plan to reintroduce roadshows to give pupils a taste of what they can experience at college.

The number of students articulating to Higher Education (HE) with advanced standing reduced again in AY 2021-22, although there was a slight increase in the percentage of HE students articulating to a degree level course. This is mainly due to the number of students entering HE at year 1 in the subject areas that NESCol delivers increasing, and a smaller pool of students choosing to complete an HNC/D at college. A new approach to

articulation is being worked up during AY 2022-23 to raise awareness of articulation routes and the benefit of transitioning from college. (Refer to core national measures table 1 on page <mark>????</mark>)

HIGH QUALITY LEARNING, TEACHING AND SUPPORT

Academic year 2021-22 was, in common with the two preceding years, heavily influenced by pandemic restrictions. As well as the immediate impact of restricted class sizes and requirements for blended learning – implemented until April 2022 – the legacy impact of "lost learning" over the preceding years was also a factor. Despite this, satisfaction rates for students remained high – with satisfaction rates of 92% and 86% for Further Education (FE) and HE students respectively and survey participation rates also being improved on pre-pandemic years. Satisfaction rates were on a par with national figures but the higher participation rates of FT students provided greater confidence in the reliability of the data. This reflects the enormous amount of work done by curriculum and support teams to look after the students and manage their experience and wellbeing. (Refer to table 2 on page <mark>???</mark>)

Health and Safety remained the priority and many students were still required to work online for up to 100% of their time whilst others were able to access campus facilities but on a variably reduced basis. When restrictions were lifted, this was late in the academic year and required a precautionary approach. The need to maintain continuity for students and to take account of anxieties about returning to campus meant that campus access was still significantly compromised for the majority of students. Less practise time was available to groups requiring skills-based learning, although this was an improvement on previous years. Since numbers on campus were restricted, courses which were theory based were not prioritised for face-to-face learning and so had the vast majority (or all) of their courses delivered online.

Quality standards were applied with appropriate rigour, and in keeping with the amendments made by awarding bodies, noting that there were fewer mitigations than in previous years and that examinations were reinstated for National Qualifications. For some students this was their first experience of exam conditions and so this needed careful management.

Numbers of FT HE enrolments continued to decline, influenced by increased access to university places and reduced success in FE courses resulting in fewer progressing students. Evidence suggested that those students who had a prolonged online experience did less well than those who did have campus access. Success rates for HND students who had their 2 year programme delivered via a blended or online model were lower than pre-pandemic levels, suggesting that this model is not sustainable for longer periods as the quality of learning; the student experience and ability to build supportive relationships are difficult to maintain, resulting in falls in motivation and engagement. This, along with accumulative lost learning, has been a contributory factor to the fall in FT HE success from 70% in 2019-20 to 65% in 2021-22. Whilst partial success rates did not vary greatly, withdrawal rates in AY 2021-22 were higher than in previous years, most commonly to employment or for medical/personal reasons although the proportions of each were not significantly different to pre-pandemic levels as might have been expected. (Refer to table 3 on page <mark>???</mark>)

In contrast, FT FE enrolments recovered slightly from the AY 2020-21 low and outcomes stabilised at 57%. This is lower than in AY 2019-20 but higher than at the corresponding period last year. The final published outcome may show some improvement. Whilst there was increased access to campus this year, this was mainly at the year-end, was still not at pre-pandemic levels and varied significantly between subject areas. Withdrawal and partial success rates for these groups remained relatively high. Adaptation of skills-based courses with less mature learners to blended and online models proved very challenging whilst campus access was restricted and so outcomes for those courses where the College was able to provide better campus access were positively impacted. For those where blended or online was maintained, success rates were still poorer than pre-pandemic. Partial success remains a significant issue but is anticipated to improve with full campus access in AY 2022-23, as students will have full practise time and opportunity to complete.

Returning to on-campus learning for the majority or all the time for all FT students is anticipated to improve outcomes in AY 2022-23. In addition, the College has identified particular areas of concern where outcomes have been persistently poor. These areas will be subject to an intense "Spotlight" review overseen by senior managers to identify the root causes and develop appropriate action plans. Numbers of enrolments on PT FE rose back toward pre-pandemic levels. This was largely a reflection of a return of some schools activity, which had been suspended during the pandemic. These courses had high success rates, which are reflected in the overall higher outcome. Improvement in retention and reduced partial success in other PT courses also contributed to the

overall success, reflecting the impact of improved campus access. Numbers of enrolments on PT HE were slightly improved on AY 2020-21 and retention of these students was maintained at a very high level. Partial success was still relatively high at 15% but this was still a great improvement on AY 2019-20 where outcomes were heavily influenced by a particular issue in one teaching team. (Refer to table 3 on page ???)

Engagement with online learning has been challenging to maintain for a significant proportion of learners. Staff have had access to resources to support their skills in design and delivery of online learning and adapted very quickly. However, students learning from home have experienced their own difficulties in engaging with online synchronous learning. Despite persistent encouragement, teaching staff have regularly found themselves addressing students who have been reluctant or have refused to use their cameras. This has been for a number of reasons. For some students, poor or restricted internet access meant they were unable to use their cameras as much as they would have liked. Some students were reluctant to use cameras, which would reveal their home working environment. Crowded or – as they perceived it – less grand home environments made some students unwilling to share their pictures. For others it was simply difficulty in engaging with online learning. Various means, including employability were deployed to encourage students but the issue persisted. However, there is little evidence to support this impacted on partial success rates. Academic and Personal Skills Development (APSD) has had limited success since its introduction, with successful outcomes in the region of 57% for the unit. There has been variable engagement and methods of implementation of the unit, with some teams embracing the concept and others struggling to find ways to implement effectively. To that end, a review has been instituted which has identified some areas for improvement. Some of these are some technical changes to the units but predominantly the focus has been on supporting the implementation across all teams. New support materials have been developed and a new site for sharing has been made available. Support for staff has also been planned, with workshops for curriculum managers in the first instance. In AY 2020-21, the College also introduced 14 new level 1 promoted posts, Academic Improvement Leads. These staff have been deployed across the majority of subject areas with a view to supporting enhancement of the student experience and outcomes. Whilst there has been flexibility in the objectives set for each of these posts, a number of these staff are working with their colleagues to improve and standardise the APSD unit implementation. It is anticipated that outcomes will be positively impacted in AY 2021-22 as a result.

Education Scotland completed a three-day college Progress Visit during March 2022. The Progress Visit explored five overarching themes linked to the college's enhancement plan and priorities around COVID-19 recovery. The outcome of the Progress Visit stated that the College had made satisfactory progress in almost all areas. However, insufficient progress had been made in improving outcomes for all learners; this was predominately applicable to the FT FE outcomes. The findings identified 28 areas of positive progress and 8 areas for further progress and actions. All areas for further progress identified have been addressed within this report. Education Scotland have confirmed that they will be conducting a further three-day Progress Visit at the College in March 2023.

PARTNERSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE
The College has a range of mechanisms to support effective student partnership. These are outlined in the Student Partnership Agreement, which sets out NESCol and the Students' Association's (SA) approach to student engagement, and outlines the joint projects. The Student Partnership Agreement was re-designed in AY 2021-22 by allocating a College lead alongside a Students' Association lead for each project. This approach was very effective in demonstrating true student partnership, and regular reporting at the Student Engagement Action Group (SEAG) resulted in regular progress updates and opportunities for intervention where further support was required. These reports also aided the reporting to the Regional Board, ensuring their confidence in successfully completing each of the projects.

The Framework for Effective Student Engagement was replaced in AY 2021-22 with the redesigned Student Partnership Agreement, which contained a significant amount of content from the Framework. The new Student Partnership Agreement has now become the main college and SA engagement document and will be incorporated into the new self-evaluation process for AY 2022-23, and embedded into working practices for all teams.

Student engagement and partnership remained high on the agenda and was discussed regularly across all committees and action groups, including weekly Leadership Team meetings. It was highlighted during AY 2021-22 that the number of meetings to attend was impacting on the time more needed to execute the SA manifestos. The Student Engagement Action Group will be used as the main platform this session to provide updates, discuss

current topics, issues and feedback. The balance of the group was also addressed as per recommendation from the previous academic session, by removing a number of College staff and adding Executive officers and students to the group. This change was very effective in getting relevant, quality feedback and input from members, which ensured that the student voice was put at the heart of all activity, and informing our approaches to support effective student engagement.

Opportunities for students to take responsibility for their learning and contribute to a successful learning and teaching experience, as well as providing feedback to influence change took place through class rep meetings, Course Committee Meetings, Peer Led Reviews as well as feedback shared through the SA. The College continues to work closely in partnership with sparqs and NUS Scotland who supported the training and induction of sabbatical officers. Sparqs again provided the class rep training this session. A review of the class representative system was carried out in AY 2021-22 with a report produced in June 2022. Recommendations were shared with the new sabbatical team for consideration, however due to timing of the report and the new sabbatical team feedback; no major changes are being implemented for AY 2022-23. The class rep structure will remain the same, however the team plan to change the approach to class rep engagement, considering changes to meeting set up and involving class reps more in some committees and/or action groups to strengthen the student voice.

LEARNING WITH IMPACT
awaiting College Leaver Destinations data – 2020-21
As part of the whole-college support model, the Student Advice and Support Team again offered a series of events for transitions support. The first event was UCAS and Transitions Week, which took place in November 2021. The team offered a variety of sessions including involvement from other stakeholders such as SDS, the local universities and Elevator, the event saw engagement from 229 students across the sessions and both the engagement numbers and feedback will inform the schedule for future events. As part of the event evaluation, a future recommendation is to increase engagement with curriculum teams earlier in the session to help encourage uptake, especially through the Academic Tutor sessions.

One hundred and thirteen students engaged with sessions during Enterprise and Employability Week in March 2022. Virtual Careers Week followed this event, however due to staffing issues the event had to be postponed and the activities were very limited. Following event evaluations for both events it was decided that for AY 2022-23 activities will be redesigned to create an Enterprise, Employability and Careers Month which will allow for more flexibility and creating more opportunities to tailor activities relevant for each campus and the different cohorts.

In addition to the above events, RGU also had a regular presence, initially hybrid although this turned into on-campus presence after April 2022. The offer is a stall for drop-ins to answer questions from students about articulation and university life as well the option to deliver bespoke sessions to classes if required. This work supported the annual subject-level review meetings to discuss articulation arrangements, which were managed by the new Head of Planning and Academic Partnerships.

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY
The academic year 2021-22 should be viewed as two very distinct periods in relation to the measures required by the College as the public health emergency improved greatly after May 2022. After May 2022, due to Scottish Government guidance and the improved COVID landscape, the College was able to return to a more normal pre-COVID mode of learning and working for our staff and students. The College was able remove all its mitigations as the Scottish Government eased the restrictions placed on Colleges and Universities. Whilst the obvious outward signs of mitigations were removed, the College continue to keep all mitigations and plans in reserve and remain prepared to reintroduce any or all as required.

Prior to May 2022 presented a very different landscape and required more in the way of having plans and mitigations in place to manage the public health emergency. The health and wellbeing of staff and students remained the highest priority for the College. The College Leadership continued to meet weekly and received critical updates from the Head of Health, Safety and Security on the public health situation, this covered local national and regional coverage. The context and guidance provided supported all teams across the college and ensured compliance was maintained with Government guidance and expectations. The Students' Association and Trade Unions continued to be consulted and their views and comments helped the College make appropriate decisions that complied with ongoing guidance and ensured the College remained a safe place to

work and learn. COVID-19 risk assessments were regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the ever-changing Government and NHS guidance. The new versions were uploaded to internal and external college websites and intranet so staff and students continued to have the most up to date information and information on control measures.

The College continued to hold regular college-wide Q&A sessions throughout the year, this allowed updates to be provided to staff whilst at the same time allowed the opportunity for staff to ask questions or raise concerns. This was a great success and verbal feedback from staff was they really appreciated these online sessions.

Prior to May 2022 the College continued to deliver student learning by a range of methods, in-person, blended or fully online were all options provided. The curriculum teams continued to meet weekly to review both local and national guidance and this ensured NESCol maintained safe levels of staff and students returning to in-person learning and working. As part of this review, NESCol were able to safely increase the numbers of students allowed on campus cautiously as the situation and guidance allowed. Academic support continued to be provided under a blended working model with teaching and support staff providing advice and guidance as required by the learners.

EQUALITIES AND INCLUSION

The College, through its Equality Committee, continued to oversee the actions taken to progress the Equality Outcomes and actions determined in the report of 2021 and the College's other legislative obligations. The group oversaw the updating of the Equality and Diversity Policy; discussed and highlighted necessary action with respect to college British Sign Language (BSL) obligations and ambitions and reviewed progress on Digital Accessibility.

The College Respect subgroup co-ordinated activity on the selected themes for the year. These were sustainability, anti-racism and LGBTQIA+. A range of activities and materials were developed to promote the themes. However, whilst a group spent some time developing materials to support Black history month and the College declaration on anti-racism, it was noted that wider engagement with these was very limited. The Committee therefore considered how to improve development of, and access to, materials supporting equality mainstreaming in the curriculum. A proposal was developed with respect to the appointment of Equality Champions to support the implementation of this and the mainstreaming of equalities. The intention is to deploy these new posts in AY 2022-23.

An Equality KPI report was prepared and circulated to inform priority areas for action. This was derived from the live data available to all teams. The disability attainment gap, one of the College's Equality Outcomes, was noted to have improved to 5% in AY 2020-21 from 9% in the previous year. This is despite the numbers of student declaring disability peaking at 30% of FT enrolments and the challenging circumstances imposed by the pandemic. This reflects the significant College commitment to supporting students with pastoral; wellbeing and learning support needs through academic tutoring; referral to Student Advice and Support team and to the deployment of external counselling services. A disabled student group was also set up through the Students' Association, which provided some qualitative feedback on the lived experience of students with disabilities.

The Committee also helped inform the People Services team of priority themes for the Equality-themed staff development day. This day consisted of a range of staff development opportunities relating to supporting students belonging to protected characteristic groups such as neurodiversity or LGBTQIA+. Staff feedback was very positive, individuals were required to share what they had learned with their teams and actions were included on enhancement plans where applicable. As a result, overall knowledge and skills relating to protected characteristics was enhanced.

The College was very proactive in addressing digital poverty. 237 loan laptops and 103 dongles were issued to support digital access out with College on top of the 774 devices issued to support the annual College BYOD scheme. Additional funding through Connecting Scotland also allowed investment in 117 iPads and 4G dongles to assist those struggling with internet access. These actions helped to ensure equality of access to learning for all students.

College staff in curriculum, community and support teams worked closely with a range of external partners to support integration and opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers arriving in the region. As a result the number of ESOL classes in AY 2022-23 has been increased to accommodate the growing demand and work is

ongoing to address further needs – for example for school age migrants. As a result, a significant number of refugees and asylum seekers have had enhanced access to learning opportunities and associated support.

A staff LGBTQIA+ group was established although attempts to convene a staff disability group was less successful. Meantime, a member of the People Services team has been undertaking mentoring in supporting staff with disabilities. The knowledge gained will enhance staff services but also be shared more widely with teaching and support teams to enhance their awareness and skills in working with people with disabilities.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND SOCIAL RENEWAL

RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS/FAIR WORK
NESCol works closely with a wide variety of stakeholders across the region as well as nationally and on occasion, internationally. This level of stakeholder engagement ensures that the college remains aligned with industry need as well as political aspiration. Labour market intelligence comes from many sources across public, private and third sectors and the information we glean informs strategic and operational decision-making. This in turn drives our curriculum planning and activity provision for business and communities. During the past year, this engagement has grown, with deepening relationships with Energy Transition Zone (ETZ) and National Energy Skills Accelerator (NESA) and new membership arrangements with Offshore Energies UK (OEUK), which will bring us closer to new employers and inform our new curriculum development.

Commercial training activity continues to be dominated by the delivery of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) and despite the challenges of a two-year backlog of outstanding provision; NESCol recorded its highest contractual commitment by the end of academic year 2021-22. In total, £1,696k worth of activity was secured against a target of £1,910k leaving £214k unclaimed. In total 230 businesses were supported using the fund and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular benefitted with that component fully utilised. Sponsored programmes also showed strong resilience during the year with almost 2,000 pupils completing the Shell S2 Skills competition, 129 benefitting from the Shell Girls in Energy programme, winning a Green Gown Award, and 12 technicians completing the Shell Engineering Scheme, and all securing employment. Shell were also generous sponsors in terms of the support for a Digital Passport programme for individuals who found themselves out of work. This intervention helped upskill 75 individuals and provided them with much stronger levels of digital literacy leading to full time employment or in some cases, full time study. The programme was originally designed as a feeder to a Fast Futures employability programme (out with NESCol), but the age requirements for the programme often made the programme inaccessible. Local provision benefitted as a result.

AY 2021-22 also saw the second intake of offshore wind technicians sponsored by Vestas, the operations and maintenance delivery partner for the Moray East Offshore Windfarm. Candidates on this programme are already employed and almost certainly guaranteed high quality local employment for the next 25 years as well as contributing directly to the Region's Net Zero ambitions. This activity has necessitated a review of college specialist training facilities and led to the design of a 'green workshop' which will be a flexible training area featuring training rigs which allow candidates to get up close to the components that many will work with in onshore and offshore work environments. This facility has been made possible with a £200k donation from a local businessperson who also funded the creation of a Future Skills Zone in AY 2020-21.

Modern Apprenticeship (MA) activity is also an area, which has seen a remarkable recovery post-COVID, and the demand seen in the past year has exceeded the contractual places the college is awarded by SDS. While our year end position for AY 2021-22 saw 117 MAs against a contract award of 172, (this contract runs from April to March and was heavily impacted in the early part of the year by COVID measures), the early part of AY 2022-23 has seen significant employer demand that the College is striving to support. Foundation Apprenticeships (FA) also provide a good opportunity for employer engagement and in AY 2021-22, 167 young people were supported across their academic and vocational FA journey.

NESCol's engagement with Aberdeen Foyer and Project Search have provided inspiring success stories with almost 250 candidates participating and achieving a range of successful outcomes. Candidates on these programmes often have to overcome significant personal challenges and so even partial successes may be seen as great achievements and building blocks for life changing development. One NESCol student is a great example of the Project Search initiative having successfully completed the programme, now working as Scotrail's first Aberdeen Modern Apprentice despite his disability.

The College's role as an anchor organisation in the communities we serve is integral to future success. Fraserburgh being recognised as Scotland's Most Improved Place in the Scotland's Regeneration Forum Awards, delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government, is testament to the partnership work that has been undertaken by NESCol staff, who played a leading role in the bid submission along with local authorities and other partners.

The College is committed to the 'Fair Work Statement for the College Sector' that is currently being developed nationally in consultation with Trade Unions. The aims are to continuously improve working practices 'that offer effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect'. The College's demonstrates this:
- Good industrial relations with representative trade unions and all staff;
- Most recent IIP report highlighted the improvements that have been made in relation to internal communications and it also recognised the College's commitment to staff and student wellbeing through the Wellbeing Matters and Respect action groups;
- Significant investment in learning and development, including the majority of our lecturing staff holding or achieving TQFE within three years of employment;
- Commitment to paying the Living Wage and recognise that organisational/workforce change can have a significant impact on employees and therefore the College applies the fundamental principle that consultation and communication with trade unions and employees during these processes are essential.

CONFIDENT AND HIGHLY CAPABLE – WORK-READY – GRADUATES
Ensuring the delivery of a sustainable, coherent and modern curriculum, that supports all students to develop the skills necessary to thrive as confident, resilient and highly capable work-ready graduates, is at the heart of what we do at NESCol. In a typical year all students are provided with frequent opportunities to develop a high level of expertise, knowledge and skills through regular access to work-placement, work-experience, simulated industry environments and practical hands-on learning using our industry-standard equipment and resources. This hands-on approach to discipline-specific learning is supplemented via the targeted delivery of teaching aimed at developing students' underpinning knowledge and their suite of core and essential skills, so vital to ensuring that they are able to be successful in their chosen career.

In academic year 2021-22, the College's ability to implement this approach continued to be negatively affected because of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public-health arrangements in place to manage the spread of the virus. Despite a general improvement and easing of the formal mitigations in place across the country, for much of AY 2021-22 NESCol remained under tight restrictions, with many students still only attending online with only very limited access to campuses. Those students who did come onto campus were still required to wear masks and adhere to social distancing rule for the majority of the academic year.

Without normal access to practical teaching spaces and work-based learning environments the ability to deliver effective direct skills instruction, facilitate, and implement regular formative practical assessment was detrimentally impacted upon. The Omicron surge that occurred in winter required the tightening of restrictions at a pivotal point in the year and had a highly detrimental impact on our ability to motivate and engage students with their studies, particularly those enrolled on highly practical and vocational qualifications. The ability to ensure that these students were able to continue to develop their skills and employability toolkit was undermined considerably as it was not possible in many cases to recreate or simulate the practical training and practice required online. This led to a considerable increase in the number of students disengaging from their studies, which led to a significant increase in the number of students failing to complete their course fully.

These issues were not only experienced by our full-time FE and HE students, but also by our students enrolled on various work-based and apprenticeship programmes, including our school-based Foundation Apprentices and our Modern Apprentices enrolled across a wide range of industry pathways such as our sector-leading Opito OGTAP programme. The lack of access to campuses and workplaces, and our inability to provide authentic practical learning and assessment was perhaps most acutely felt by our non-advanced FE groups, some of whom did not respond well to online learning.

In AY 2021-22, after 3 years of COVID-affected delivery, for the first time we experienced a decline in the performance of our HE students, many of whom had by now endured many years of disruption and online-learning at school and college, without access to work placements or authentic learning environments. It is likely that all of this, in combination with the similar disruption experienced in secondary schools, will have a

detrimental impact on the region's skills pipeline for several years. Not only will it take some time for many students to "catch up" with learning and skills-development that they will have missed over the past year, but in some instances students will have been put-off studying particular disciplines as a consequence of the experience that they had over the last few years. NESCol is already seeing signs of this in the enrolment trends for AY 2022-23, where a considerable number of young people appear to have elected to stay at school rather than progress to colleges, and in the subject choices that people are making, with demand for applications on vocational disciplines such as hospitality and engineering significantly down on previous years.

Despite these challenges, many academic teams did have success in using digital and online technologies innovatively to support the development of key core, technical, Meta and employability skills within their learners. Two curriculum teams were involved in the piloting of new SQA HN Next Generation qualifications, which put the development of meta-skills at the heart of the new group award. The College has gathered many examples of good practice from the curriculum that illustrate how academic teams continue to use technologies such as Blackboard and MS TEAMS to support skills development.

During the past year, the college engaged regularly with key industry partners to ensure that NESCol's curriculum continues to meet the needs of employers and is tailored to address skills deficits or industry demand within the region. Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic the College's industry engagement intensified during AY 2021-22 as academic teams worked closely with employers and third sector partners to maintain continuity of the student experience, and design upskilling and reskilling opportunities for those facing redundancy as a consequence of COVID-19 and downturn in the Oil and Gas industry. One key outcome of this work was securing our involvement in ETZ Ltd.'s new Advanced Manufacturing Skills Hub that will be co-located next to our Altens Campus and has secured over £4m in Scottish Government Just Transition funding.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND INNOVATION
One of the key positive developments that has emerged within the college sector as a direct consequence of recent sector-wide challenges is the improved way in which individual colleges are now working collectively to support strategic and operational knowledge exchange and innovation. Throughout the past year NESCol has been highly proactive in working with partner colleges and universities to engage with local and national groups, including the Scottish Government, Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Education Scotland and Colleges Scotland to influence and co-design national strategies, policies and procedures aimed at supporting the sector (and society more widely) through the pandemic. Through national entities such as the College Principal's group, Curriculum Vice Principal's group, the Quality Manager's group and the Business Development Director's group, members of the NESCol Leadership team played a leading role in sharing good practice and shaping the national approach taken by the SQA, SFC and government during the pandemic.

Locally, the College sits on a number of groups including the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership, and works closely with partner agencies including the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce to support regional economic development.

The College is extremely mindful of Carbon neutrality and will always aim to work towards having a net zero carbon footprint. Projects will be identified to help the College achieve net zero carbon dioxide emissions by balancing carbon emissions with carbon removal in a bid to eliminate carbon emissions where possible. Projects will be identified and assessed through the ISO Standard as we aim to transition to a net zero society. To support work towards this target the College is currently completing a major Solar PV Project, which will result in 2,898 Solar PV panels being installed throughout our City, Altens, Clinterty and Fraserburgh Campuses. The College has also been awarded £2,736,000 of funding after a successful grant application to the Scottish Government. This money is for further decarbonisation projects, glazing in the South Block and LED Lighting at Fraserburgh Campus, and will help NESCol reach our net zero targets. These projects will start at the beginning of 2023.

The College will need to go beyond the limited scope of conventional net zero plans, to take responsibility for measuring and reducing the entire carbon footprint. This work will be driven by the ISO 14001 Standard and the College's Sustainability Strategy. The College will remain committed to ensuring our Strategy will be at the forefront of our decision-making and will continue to impact, not only on the College, but also on a global scale. NESCol commits to supporting the transition to a Net Zero economy by 2035 and will continue to recognise and deliver decarbonisation projects, based on our pre-capital fund report. All projects will prioritise emissions and reductions over offsets and will achieve absolute emission reductions. When making plans for decarbonisation projects the College continues to be innovative and forward thinking by recognising it is important to get the infrastructure of the College stable in the first instance. Projects such as the recladding and glazing have

therefore been prioritised. The success of our projects can be clearly evidenced in the reduction of CO2 emissions since a baseline was set it 2010-11(pre-merger) with our overall emissions dropping to 1963 tCO2e from 4096 tCO2e.

COLLABORATION

The North East of Scotland continues to face unprecedented and unique challenges as a consequence of the legacy impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, continued disruption caused by BREXIT, the downturn of the Oil and Gas Industry, and the financial crisis that has been exacerbated by the terrible events in Ukraine and recent UK government economic policy. The challenge presented to the region in mitigating against these issues is vast, however similarly substantial is the combined appetite of local government, education, third sector and industry partners and college to combine our power to rise to the challenge of responding to these challenges in a way that ensures ongoing success and prosperity for the North East, the Nation, and its residents.

During the past year, NESCol engaged regularly with a wide range of key industry partners to ensure that our curriculum continues to meet the needs of employers and is tailored to address skills deficits or industry demand within the region. A key output of this work has been the ongoing development of the National Energy Skills Accelerator (NESA), our formal partnership between the College, Robert Gordon University (RGU), University of Aberdeen, SDS and Energy Transition Zone Ltd (ETZ) which aims to provide the energy industry with a clear gateway to access bespoke qualifications, training and skills development, and the research and development expertise required to train workers for the energy transition. In October 2021, NESA was awarded £1,000,000 grant funding through the Scottish Government's Just Transition Fund to conduct an exciting new Pilot Energy Transition Skills project. This will run alongside the SFC NE Pathfinder strand focusing on supporting the energy transition.

Throughout the last year the College has also continued to intensify and develop its relationship with the RGU and in AY 2022-23 will introduce enhanced course co-design and joint planning arrangements as part of the SFC's Tertiary Provision Pathfinder Project. This initiative will accelerate a joint approach to skills and provision planning and development between the two institutions and deliver pathways for learners, which respond to changing skills needs.

In addition, throughout AY 2021-22 the College continued to collaborate effectively with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire local authorities across a range of key essential themes including child services, education, economic recovery and health and wellbeing. As part of this work NEScol has been leading on a third strand of the SFC's NE Regional Pathfinder focusing on enhancing provision across the region's senior phase. Three tests of change have been identified including:

- Developing a meaningful winter leaver programme - with progression opportunities;
- Introducing HNC (Level 7) group awards to S6;
- Senior phase – regional connections – creation of a strategic working group, comprising local authorities, College and both local universities - the remit of the group would be to maximise opportunities, as a collective, for the enhancement of the senior phase.

It is anticipated that major progress will be made to deliver on these objectives during AY 2022-2023 with new opportunities identified for the following academic year.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

NESCol fully recognises its responsibilities concerning Environmental and Social Sustainability as an education and training provider, but also as a business, an employer and role model for other public and private organisations. The College has continued to make considerable progress in playing its part to address the climate emergency, currently sitting at a 52% reduction on carbon emissions from our baseline year 2010-11 despite targets being set before the merger.

The College is a signatory to the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges' (EAUC) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Accord, committing to measure and report on its activities in line with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, as set by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. In the College's latest report, 17 SDG's were addressed and reported on.

The College is accredited to the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) Environmental Management System ISO14001:2015, the most up to date standards. An external auditor from the British Standards Institution (bsi) audits NESCol twice a year. At each audit, the College is required to demonstrate continual improvement

and maintenance of previous actions. All audit outcomes are of an exceptionally high standard with no noted observations or non-conformities. This is a result of a well-established and well-monitored system ensuring the College continues to meet and exceed all legislative requirements and carbon reduction targets. Overall, the environmental impact of the Colleges business is fully managed through both standards, and associated policies and procedures, and therefore minimal due to the practices we have in place.

The College has a Carbon Management Plan (CMP); this remains the most up to date working document. The 2020 CMP will allow the College to build on successes and ensure that NESCol continues to deliver the benefits of the programme over the years. NESCol aims to reduce the CO_2 emissions from its activities by 50% from the 2018-19 baseline by 2025. A new Sustainability Strategy was launched in July 2022 and sets out the Colleges ambitious target of reaching Net-Zero by 2035.

Specific action in AY 2021-22 included the embedding of sustainability within the Evaluative Review and Enhancement Planning process for each sector and support department. Moving forward, the College will set and work towards Net-Zero carbon targets and will take responsibility for measuring and reducing our whole carbon footprint. NESCol will continue to establish and monitor the different sources of emissions within campuses and target efforts to areas, which will have the greatest impact.

The College's Sustainability Committee is represented by curriculum and support staff from each campus along with student representatives. The purpose of the Committee is to promote an ethos of environmental and social sustainability in all aspects of College business. It acts as an enabler in meeting the targets set in the College's Carbon Management Plan and provide a forum for ensuring best practice across the College and reports to the Executive and Leadership Team. The remit is to enable the College to meet its obligations with regard to the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019, the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Accord, and the College's Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council.

The College will incorporating Net Zero carbon targets in all projects, the biggest being the installation of Solar PV panels at the City, Altens, Fraserburgh and Clinterty Campuses. NESCol is currently sitting with 2,898 solar PVs throughout all campuses.

The College has an Emergency Response, Continuity and Recovery Plan and management system bsi ISO14001.In addition to this the College has identified key external and internal risk factors that are identified within the documentation required for the new ISO14001:2015 Standard.

DATA TABLES

FAIR ACCESS AND TRANSITION

Table 1 – Core National Measures

Core National Measures	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Credits delivered	133,730	133,121	131, 758
% credits delivered to SIMD10	1.94%	1.78%	3.10%
% credits delivered to care-experienced students	3.99%	6.41%	6.64%
DYW – no. of senior phase age pupils on vocational qualifications delivered by colleges	802	566	591
Articulation – advanced standing from college level to degree level study	456	394	364

HIGH QUALITY LEARNING, TEACHING AND SUPPORT

Table 2 - AY 2021-22 Student Satisfaction and Engagement survey (SFC Statistics)

NESCol	Further Education		Higher Education	
	Response Rate	Satisfaction Rate	Response Rate	Satisfaction Rate
2018-19	59%	86%	53%	83%
2020-21	65%	92%	59%	87%
2021-22	65%	92%	56%	86%
Scotland	Response Rate	Satisfaction Rate	Response Rate	Satisfaction Rate
2020-21	44%	89%	42%	80%
2021-22	47%	93%	37%	86%

Full-time survey response and satisfaction rates with overall college experience AY2021-22

Table 3 - College Student Outcome Data

The self-evaluation data was taken from Power Bi, the College's internal data platform and includes enrolments for all types of fundable courses and qualifications. This dataset differs from the ROA dataset, which reports only on courses, which lead to recognised qualifications. The ROA data was taken from the FES reports in October and excludes enrolments on fully non-assessed courses and non-vocational programmes.

	Number Enrolled			Withdrawal			Partial Success			Complete Success		
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
FT FE	4178	3535	3844	19%	24%	23%	19%	19%	20%	62%	57%	57%
PT FE	12076	7799	11675	6%	5%	4%	21%	23%	8%	73%	72%	88%
FT HE	2343	2389	2267	14%	15%	20%	16%	14%	15%	70%	71%	65%
PT HE	775	648	682	2%	2%	3%	31%	15%	15%	67%	83%	82%

N.B. Data for 2019-20 and 2020-21 is the SFC published version whilst the data for 2021-22 is College data and so may include some outcomes excluded from the final published data.

LEARNING WITH IMPACT

Image 4 - NESCol College Leaver Destinations Data AY 2020-2021 (to be added if available)

Appendix 1

Enhancement Plan AY 2022-2023

In identifying the actions, it is important to **ensure that they address a specific area for improvement and are designed to positively impact on service delivery.** The actions should be SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound – and should seek to address any areas for improvement identified in commentaries.

Please reference each Developmental Driver using the following coding:

Area for Improvement (from the self-evaluation) – Reference back to OurEvaluation (e.g. AI - 2)

Strategic Objective - Reference number from the Strategic Plan (e.g. SO1.1)

 Supporting Strategy - Reference relevant Supporting Strategies

Reference to Education Scotland Quality Framework *How Good Is Our College?* (E.g. HGIOC 2.4)

Reference risk from Strategic Risk Register (e.g. R2.1)

Reference the Equality Outcomes and/or Equality Enhancement Plan (EO)

NESCol Fundamentals – Reference to the 4 themes

1. Ensuring financial sustainability – (NF1)
2. Delivering an excellent learning experience – (NF2)
3. High quality customer service – (NF3)
4. Supporting effective communication – (NF4)

The enhancement plan will be formally reviewed to capture progress in February 2023 and end of year progress review in October 2023.

No.	Area for Development (Developmental Driver)	Impact (intended difference to be made)	Planned Actions for Improvement	Deadline	Developmental Driver Code
Outcomes for Students - Fair access and transitions					
1.	Improve data sharing by SDS, local authorities and college	Match curriculum offer to needs of school leavers	1. Continue to contribute to community groups	November 2022	NF2, NF4 SO 3.4
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)		**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
2.	Improve collection of data relating to specific groups – care-experienced, estranged students	Identify students so that needs can be met	1. Review wording of questions on application and enrolment forms, reporting tools	December 2022	EO4 NF2, NF4
Outcomes for Students - High quality learning, teaching and support					
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)		**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**

Area for Development (Developmental Driver)	Impact (intended difference to be made)	Planned Actions for Improvement	Deadline	Developmental Driver Code
3. Areas of poor student attainment Low FT FE success rates	Improvement to student experience and outcomes Improve retention of FT FE students	1. Instigation of "Spotlight" review to focus improvement action and support managers in areas of poor performance. 2. Undertake curriculum portfolio review to remove or replace courses with chronic underperformance	June 2023 December 2022	HGIOC 2.3 NF2, NF3 SO 4.1, 4.2, 4.6
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)	**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
4. Falling HE enrolments	Improve HE enrolments	1. Review curriculum portfolio, regional offer and partnership working to refresh curriculum offer; promotion and attractiveness	December 2022	HGIOC 2.2 NF2, NF3 SO 4.1, 4.2
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)	**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
5. Poor outcomes and inconsistent implementation of APSD unit	Improve unit outcome and achievement of support objectives	1. Undertake review of APSD content and implementation 2. Identify and apply additional measures to support curriculum teams to successfully implement APSD	September 2022	HGIOC 2.3, 2.4 NF2, NF3 SO 4.2, 4.4, 4.6
Outcomes for Students - Partnership, participation and student experience				
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)	**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
6. Change approach to class rep engagement	To strengthen student voice	1. Consider changes to meeting set up and class rep involvement in committees and/or action groups	June 2023	AI HGIOC 2.6, 3.1, 3.2 NF2, NF3, NF4 SO2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 SO3.8 SO4.5, 4.9
Outcomes for Students - Learning with impact				
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)	**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**

	Area for Development (Developmental Driver)	Impact (intended difference to be made)	Planned Actions for Improvement	Deadline	Developmental Driver Code
7.	Engage early in the academic session with curriculum staff to ensure Academic Tutors are promoting UCAS and Transitions week to encourage student engagement	To ensure Academic Tutors are promoting UCAS and Transitions week to encourage student engagement	1. Engage early in the academic session with curriculum staff to promote the event	November 2022	NF 2, NF3, NF4 SO 1.1, 1.2 SO 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6 SO 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6
	Area for Development (Developmental Driver)	**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
8.	Redesign transition events	To allow more flexibility and create more opportunities to tailor activities relevant for each campus and the different cohorts.	1. Create an Enterprise, Employability and Careers Month	March 2023	NF 2, NF3, NF4 SO 1.1, 1.2 SO 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6 SO 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6

Outcomes for Students - Public health emergency

	Area for Development (Developmental Driver)	Impact (intended difference to be made)	Planned Actions for Improvement	Deadline	Developmental Driver Code
9.	Continue to review national guidance and adapt the college model if the public health emergency escalates again	Will help the College change its model of delivery and ensure the college remains a safe place to work and learn.	1. Reinstate public health mitigations and college plans, which have been kept in reserve.	June 2023	AI

Outcomes for Students - Equalities and inclusion

	Area for Development (Developmental Driver)	Impact (intended difference to be made)	Planned Actions for Improvement	Deadline	Developmental Driver Code
10.	Support need for increased numbers of trauma-experienced students	Staff better equipped to support trauma-experienced students	1. Work with partners to provide training for staff members most frequently working with trauma-experienced students	June 2023	EO4 HGIOC 3.1, 3.2 NF3 SO3.1
	Area for Development (Developmental Driver)	**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
11.	Need to further improve understanding and promotion of equality of opportunity and promotion of good relations in the curriculum	Better support the mainstreaming of equalities in the curriculum by promotion of RESPECT/equality initiatives and to support colleagues	1. Appoint Equalities Champions	January 2023	EO5 HGIOC 1.3, 3.1,3.2 NF4 SO 4.9

	improve their understanding and practice				
Outcomes for Economic Recovery and Social Renewal - Responsive institutions					
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)		**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
12.	Lobby key stakeholders to secure additional Modern Apprenticeship places for NESCol and its employer base. Approximately 30 additional places will be required.	Increased employer engagement and improved opportunities for local candidates.	1. Lobby Skills Development Scotland and local political influencers	March 2023	Business Development Strategy 3.1 HGIOC 2.6 NF1 SO3.2, SO3.6, SO3.7
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)		**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
13.	Prioritise the use of sponsorship funding to develop NESCol's Green Workshop as a key facility for upskilling full time and employed students, as well as inspiring school pupils into renewable employment.	Improved facilities for NESCol learners. Greater demand for renewables programmes.	1. Plan, design and implement a new and innovative green workshop	July 2023	Business Development Strategy 3.1 NF1, NF2 SO4.1, SO4.7, SO5.2
Outcomes for Economic Recovery and Social Renewal - Confident and highly capable – work ready – graduates					
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)		**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
14.	Support development of the ETZ Advanced Manufacturing Skills Hub	Improved facilities and resources for students to promote articulation from school, reskilling/upskilling of current workforce and community wealth building.	1. Design and implementation of new building adjacent to Altens Campus. 2. Installation of new advanced manufacturing facilities 3. Associated community engagement programme to be initiated	April 2024	HGIOC 1.1, 1.2, 2.6 NF1, NF2 SO 1.1, 3.3, 3.4, 4.7
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)		**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
15.	Continue to contribute to SFC Pathfinder projects	Improved Senior phase pathways across region. Enhanced partnership work with RGU.	1. Key actions from each programme in development	June 2023	HGIOC 1.1, 1.2, 2.6 NF1, NF2 SO 1.1,3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5

		Increased knowledge base to support energy transition Improved health and social care partnerships and associated programmes across the region.			

Outcomes for Economic Recovery and Social Renewal - Climate emergency					
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)		**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
16.	Delivery of the College Carbon Management Plan	Reduction of the College carbon footprint	1. Completion of the Solar PV project	January 2023	NF1 SO 5.7,5.8 Sustainability Strategy
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)		**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
17.	Delivery of the College Carbon Management Plan	Reduction of the College carbon footprint	1. City Campus – South Block double glazing installation	April 2023 - October 2024	SO 5.7,5.8 Sustainability Strategy NF1
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)		**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
18.	Delivery of the College Carbon Management Plan	Reduction of the College carbon footprint	1. Fraserburgh Campus – LED lighting upgrade	December 2022 – October 2023	NF1 SO 5.7,5.8 Sustainability Strategy
Area for Development (Developmental Driver)		**Impact (intended difference to be made)**	**Planned Actions for Improvement**	**Deadline**	**Developmental Driver Code**
19.	Sustainability Training for staff	Raise awareness of Climate emergency	1. Roll out Sustainability Training for Staff	February 2023	NF1 SO 5.7,5.8 Sustainability Strategy

REGIONAL BOARD
Meeting of 14 December 2022

Title: First Impressions Survey Results AY 2022-23

Author: Gill Griffin, Director of Quality	Contributor(s): Senior Quality Coordinator

Type of Agenda Item:

For Decision ☐

For Discussion ☐

For Information ☒

Reserved Item of Business ☐

Purpose: To enable the Regional Board to note the results of the First Impressions Survey AY 2022-23, a key quality improvement tool used to measure levels of student satisfaction.

Linked to Strategic Theme:

4. Delivering Excellence and Innovation

Linked to Strategic Risk(s):

Insert relevant risk reference number

Executive Summary:

The College conducts two key Student Surveys during each academic year, the First Impressions Survey in September/October and the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey in March/April.

The First Impressions Survey is a measurement tool to allow the College to determine the levels of satisfaction from our full-time students.   The First Impressions survey was carried out over a four-week period between 20 September and 17 October 2022. The survey captured student feedback relating to, college induction, curriculum and support services and the overall first impression of college experience.

The AY 2022-23 First Impressions Survey recorded 5,120 responses in comparison to 4,673 in AY 2021-22, an increase of 7%. Overall, 95% of students are satisfied with the College, an increase of 1% on the previous academic year.

The First Impressions Survey report highlights the overall College results for the last 3 years and demonstrates a consistently high level of satisfaction on first impressions of college

experience. A breakdown at Sector level has been provided in appendices 3.1.- 3.6. Team and course level can be accessed from the College's Power BI Report Server.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Board note the information provided.

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

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact   ☒

Negative Impact   ☐

No Impact   ☐

Evidence:

Student feedback is instrumental in the review of key quality processes which impacts positively in the overall college approach to quality enhancement for our learners.

First Impressions Survey Report

AY 2022-23

Table of Contents

1. Overview

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The collection of student feedback allows for early identification of trends which may present a challenge to student success. The curriculum teams and support departments are provided with all qualitative data received and use this to address issues raised and update future practice to improve service delivery.

The Heads of Sector and Curriculum Managers are also issued with quantitative data action reports at course level. The action report identifies survey statements where satisfaction levels were 85% or less, and this allows teams to investigate with individual class groups. The information is also used to support the completion of self-evaluation activities.

Participation Figures

Engagement with the survey is key to gathering data which offers an accurate representation of the student experience. Engagement is monitored across the four week period the survey is live and this information is made available to managerial staff on a weekly basis. This provides an effective support mechanism to target student groups where engagement is low. North East Scotland College (NESCol) achieved the following participation rates:

Academic Year	2020	2021	2022
Number of Full-time Participants	4,349 (-836 or -19%)	4,673 (+324 or +7%)	5,120 (+447 or +10%)
% Participation of FT Students	68% (of 6,372)	79% (of 5,907)	86% (of 5,984)

The chart below shows the figures of student engagement by sector.

Sector Response Figures
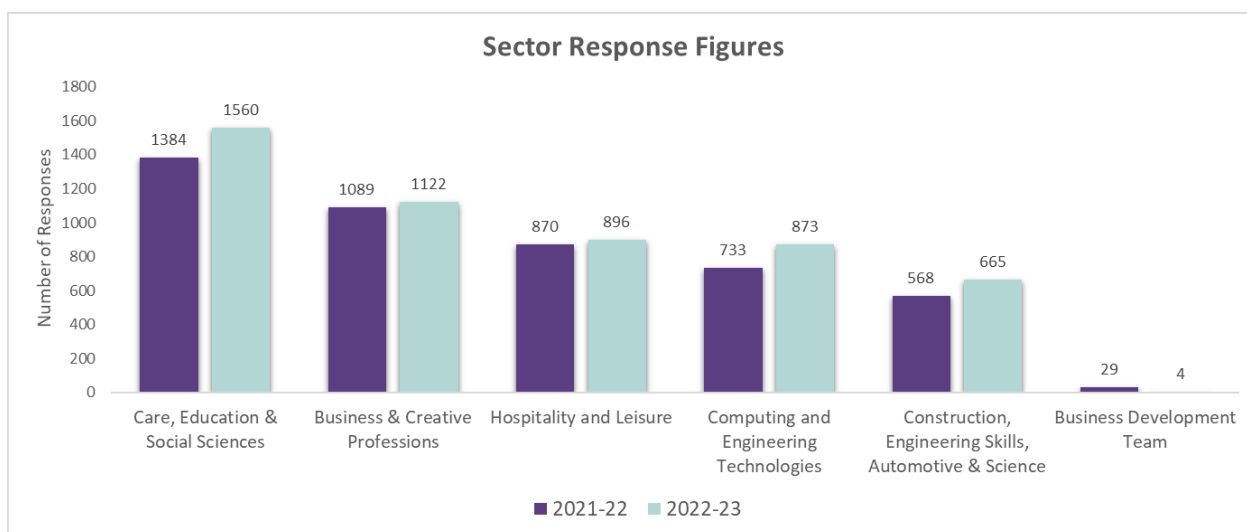
Sector	2021-22		2022-23	
	Eligible No. Participants	Actual No. Participants	Eligible No. Participants	Actual No. Participants
Care, Education & Social Sciences	1,791	1,384 (77%)	1,869	1,560 (83%)
Business & Creative Professions	1,429	1,089 (76%)	1,325	1,122 (85%)
Hospitality and Leisure	1,104	870 (78%)	983	896 (91%)
Computing and Engineering Technologies	904	733 (81%)	1,040	873 (84%)
Construction, Engineering Skills, Automotive & Science	648	568 (87%)	763	665 (87%)
Business Development Team	31	29 (93%)	4	4 (100%)

Understanding the Data

The survey results table in section 2 provides details on the number of students who answered each multiple choice statement and the % positive satisfaction for each one.

The % positive satisfaction results have been colour coded according to their RAG status. The conditions of the RAG status are as follows:

RAG Colour	Status
	% positive of 85.1% or higher
	% positive between 75.1%-85%
	% positive of 75% or lower

2. Survey Results

Quantitative Data

The overall positive satisfaction percentage for the survey data AY 2022-23 is 94.80%. Delivering a quality service to students remains a key priority and the continued challenges presented by COVID-19 have not had a detrimental impact on the student experience; full-time student satisfaction has increased by 0.49% from AY 2021-22.

Academic Year	2020	2021	2022
Overall satisfaction	93%	94%	**95%**

The College continues to maintain a high level of student satisfaction as demonstrated in the 3-year trend table below. The percentage of positive satisfaction for 12 of the 28 statements has increased in comparison to the AY 2021-22 results.

Overall College Satisfaction Results			
Application Process	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	97%	96%	**96%**
The College website was easy to use	94%	94%	**95%**
The College information on social media was helpful	92%	91%	**91%**
The College prospectus was informative	95%	94%	**95%**
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	97%	97%	**97%**
Induction/Introduction to College	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
My first day at College was welcoming and informative	96%	97%	**98%**
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	93%	93%	**92%**
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Advice and Support team	93%	95%	**96%**
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	90%	90%	**90%**
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	92%	93%	**95%**
I am clear about the expected standards of work	98%	98%	**98%**
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance (if required), punctuality and engagement	98%	99%	**99%**
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	97%	97%	**92%**

I received an introduction to MyNESCol and Blackboard (the College's Virtual Learning Environment)	96%	95%	**95%**
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	84%	87%	**88%**
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	98%	97%	**98%**
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	95%	97%	**97%**
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	91%	91%	**94%**
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at college	93%	91%	**93%**
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at college	87%	89%	**90%**
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wi-Fi easily	83%	85%	**85%**
My Course	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	94%	97%	**97%**
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	90%	95%	**95%**
My timetable was clearly explained to me	92%	91%	**95%**
I think I have chosen the right course	97%	98%	**97%**
I believe I am treated fairly	98%	99%	**99%**
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	89%	95%	**96%**
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	95%	98%	**98%**

3. Qualitative Feedback – Full Time Students

Overview of Qualitative Response Rates

A free text comment box is included in the First Impressions survey. This allows students to provide qualitative comments to which supports their qualitative feedback.

Of the 5,120 full-time survey participants, 580 (11%) opted to write a comment about their experience.

Positive Qualitative Feedback Wakelet

Wakelet is a content curation platform that the College has used to collate and present feedback in an effective visual display. This Wakelet displays instances of positive qualitative feedback provided by students in the AY 2022-23 First Impressions survey. The feedback is presented by sector, which hosts the positive feedback provided by full-time students across all services.

https://wakelet.com/@First_Impression_Survey_222363

Appendices 3.1 – 3.6 provide Sector and Business Development breakdown.

Appendices

3.1 Sector Data – Hospitality and Leisure

Overall Sector Satisfaction	95%					
Application Process	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Overall Satisfaction
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	471	389	32	4	0	95.98%
The College website was easy to use	429	429	27	8	3	96.08%
The College information on social media was helpful	336	426	67	11	56	90.71%
The College prospectus was informative	374	432	35	7	48	95.05%
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	606	263	21	6	0	96.99%
Induction/Introduction to College	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Overall Satisfaction
My first day at College was welcoming and informative	640	241	11	4	0	98.33%
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	478	358	44	16	0	93.30%
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Advice and Support team	589	275	28	4	0	96.43%
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	486	312	82	16	0	89.06%
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	643	218	32	3	0	96.09%
I am clear about the expected standards of work	666	212	15	3	0	97.99%
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance, (if required) punctuality and engagement	696	188	11	1	0	98.66%
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	536	277	65	18	0	90.74%
I received an introduction to MyNESCol and Blackboard (the College's Virtual Learning Environment)	615	251	25	5	0	96.65%
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	506	303	67	20	0	90.29%
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	654	220	18	4	0	97.54%
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	621	255	18	2	0	97.77%
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	576	282	33	5	0	95.76%
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at college	580	272	37	7	0	95.09%
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at college	539	287	59	11	0	92.19%
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wi-Fi easily	379	388	74	45	10	86.57%
My Course	Completely Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Completely Disagree	Not Applicable	Overall Satisfaction
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	567	302	25	2	0	96.99%
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	538	309	42	7	0	94.53%
My timetable was clearly explained to me	599	250	42	5	0	94.75%
I think I have chosen the right course	673	199	18	6	0	97.32%
I believe I am treated fairly	695	185	13	3	0	98.21%
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	589	268	32	7	0	95.65%
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	620	260	13	3	0	98.21%

3.2 Sector Data – Construction, Engineering Skills, Automotive and Science

Overall Sector Satisfaction	94%					
Application Process	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	388	252	22	3	0	96.24%
The College website was easy to use	341	285	26	3	10	95.57%
The College information on social media was helpful	248	269	53	7	88	89.60%
The College prospectus was informative	294	266	35	5	65	93.33%
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	437	205	19	4	0	96.54%
Induction/Introduction to College	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
My first day at College was welcoming and informative	486	160	15	4	0	97.14%
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	351	252	34	28	0	90.68%
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Advice and Support team	452	182	27	4	0	95.34%
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	403	198	51	13	0	90.38%
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	479	151	25	10	0	94.74%
I am clear about the expected standards of work	527	131	6	1	0	98.95%
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance, (if required) punctuality and engagement	558	102	3	2	0	99.25%
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	461	168	21	15	0	94.59%
I received an introduction to MyNESCol and Blackboard (the College's Virtual Learning Environment)	478	158	23	6	0	95.64%
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	359	208	74	24	0	85.26%
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	458	177	27	3	0	95.49%
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	472	177	12	4	0	97.59%
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	409	195	53	8	0	90.83%
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at college	414	186	48	17	0	90.23%
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at college	381	196	62	26	0	86.77%
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wi-Fi easily	267	177	62	65	94	77.76%
My Course	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	463	186	14	2	0	97.59%
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	451	195	13	6	0	97.14%
My timetable was clearly explained to me	479	149	27	10	0	94.44%
I think I have chosen the right course	504	148	11	2	0	98.05%
I believe I am treated fairly	524	128	10	3	0	98.05%
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	476	169	16	4	0	96.99%
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	486	170	5	4	0	98.65%

3.3 Sector Data - Computing and Engineering Technologies

Overall Sector Satisfaction	94%					
Application Process	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	500	339	29	5	0	96.11%
The College website was easy to use	410	416	35	4	8	95.49%
The College information on social media was helpful	296	334	53	13	177	90.52%
The College prospectus was informative	328	387	29	6	123	95.33%
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	580	270	15	8	0	97.37%
Induction/Introduction to College	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
My first day at College was welcoming and informative	571	274	22	6	0	96.79%
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	427	346	53	47	0	88.55%
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Advice and Support team	526	302	37	8	0	94.85%
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	475	311	70	17	0	90.03%
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	601	221	44	7	0	94.16%
I am clear about the expected standards of work	637	224	9	3	0	98.63%
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance, (if required) punctuality and engagement	691	171	7	4	0	98.74%
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	516	290	50	17	0	92.33%
I received an introduction to MyNESCol and Blackboard (the College's Virtual Learning Environment)	525	268	39	41	0	90.84%
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	451	284	107	31	0	84.19%
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	654	203	12	4	0	98.17%
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	598	251	20	4	0	97.25%
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	532	277	51	13	0	92.67%
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at college	513	276	60	24	0	90.38%
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at college	483	274	88	28	0	86.71%
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wi-Fi easily	376	262	60	71	104	82.96%
My Course	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	535	309	24	5	0	96.68%
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	475	321	65	12	0	91.18%
My timetable was clearly explained to me	572	237	49	15	0	92.67%
I think I have chosen the right course	617	226	23	7	0	96.56%
I believe I am treated fairly	691	172	8	2	0	98.85%
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	564	270	31	8	0	95.53%
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	572	275	24	2	0	97.02%

3.4 Sector Data - Business and Creative Professions

Overall Sector Satisfaction	94%					
Application Process	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	646	439	28	9	0	96.70%
The College website was easy to use	533	533	46	7	3	95.26%
The College information on social media was helpful	370	493	87	15	157	89.43%
The College prospectus was informative	409	521	49	10	133	94.03%
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	533	533	46	7	3	97.59%
Induction/Introduction to College	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
My first day at College was welcoming and informative	805	297	16	4	0	98.22%
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	588	438	55	41	0	91.44%
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Advice and Support team	677	377	62	6	0	93.94%
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	582	387	124	29	0	86.36%
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	780	283	49	10	0	94.74%
I am clear about the expected standards of work	835	266	17	4	0	98.13%
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance, (if required) punctuality and engagement	900	212	6	4	0	99.11%
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	636	369	87	30	0	89.57%
I received an introduction to MyNESCol and Blackboard (the College's Virtual Learning Environment)	766	296	40	20	0	94.65%
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	602	371	113	36	0	86.72%
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	866	241	11	4	0	98.66%
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	816	273	25	8	0	97.06%
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	705	343	62	12	0	93.40%
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at college	712	334	55	21	0	93.23%
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at college	612	369	109	32	0	87.43%
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wi-Fi easily	459	444	109	65	45	83.84%
My Course	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	746	344	27	5	0	97.15%
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	660	408	52	2	0	95.19%
My timetable was clearly explained to me	782	288	45	7	0	95.37%
I think I have chosen the right course	818	275	25	4	0	97.42%
I believe I am treated fairly	896	211	12	3	0	98.66%
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	761	312	35	14	0	95.63%
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	790	307	22	3	0	97.77%

3.5 Sector Data - Care, Education and Social Sciences

Overall Sector Satisfaction	96%					
Application Process	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	909	591	46	14	0	96.15%
The College website was easy to use	839	632	61	13	15	95.21%
The College information on social media was helpful	667	596	68	25	204	93.14%
The College prospectus was informative	752	618	61	11	118	95.01%
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	1136	388	28	8	0	97.69%
Induction/Introduction to College	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
My first day at College was welcoming and informative	1238	304	14	4	0	98.85%
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	1044	438	42	36	0	95.00%
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Advice and Support team	1112	397	42	9	0	96.73%
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	1021	429	91	19	0	92.95%
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	1210	296	44	10	0	96.54%
I am clear about the expected standards of work	1207	326	23	4	0	98.27%
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance, (if required) punctuality and engagement	1290	258	10	2	0	99.23%
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	1043	409	92	16	0	93.08%
I received an introduction to MyNESCol and Blackboard (the College's Virtual Learning Environment)	1178	323	43	16	0	96.22%
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	1025	408	101	26	0	91.86%
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	1251	270	29	10	0	97.50%
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	1166	358	28	8	0	97.69%
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	1143	364	47	6	0	96.60%
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at college	1106	376	65	13	0	95.00%
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at college	1009	438	90	23	0	92.76%
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wi-Fi easily	729	623	119	57	32	88.48%
My Course	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	1138	390	26	6	0	97.95%
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	1047	458	48	7	0	96.47%
My timetable was clearly explained to me	1186	327	41	6	0	96.99%
I think I have chosen the right course	1192	331	32	5	0	97.63%
I believe I am treated fairly	1305	239	12	4	0	98.97%
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	1134	356	55	15	0	95.51%
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	1212	325	17	6	0	98.53%

3.6 Sector Data – Business Development

Overall Sector Satisfaction	100%					
Application Process	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
Applying for my course was an easy and straightforward process	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
The College website was easy to use	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
The College information on social media was helpful	4	0	0	0	0	100.00%
The College prospectus was informative	4	0	0	0	0	100.00%
The College took account of my qualifications and experience when I applied for the course	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
Induction/Introduction to College	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
My first day at College was welcoming and informative	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
My online induction course was welcoming and informative	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I am aware of the range of support available to me from the Student Advice and Support team	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I know how to access advice about student funding (e.g. bursaries, childcare) if I need it	4	0	0	0	0	100.00%
I know who to contact if I am absent for face-to-face classes or unable to attend online sessions and how to complete the Absence Form when I return	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I am clear about the expected standards of work	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I am clear about the expected standards of attendance, (if required) punctuality and engagement	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I know about the College's health and safety arrangements (fire alarms, evacuation procedures, safety online etc.)	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I received an introduction to MyNESCol and Blackboard (the College's Virtual Learning Environment)	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I know how to access the online Library e-resources (ebooks, journals etc.) via MyNESCol	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I can access my Microsoft 365 account including Email and OneDrive	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I have been able to access the relevant software for my course	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I know how to access support via the Student IT Helpdesk	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I was informed about the Students' Association either at my induction or in the first few weeks at college	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I am aware of how the Students' Association can support me during my time at college	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
When on campus I have been able to connect to the College Wi-Fi easily	0	4	0	0	0	100.00%
My Course	**Completely Agree**	**Mostly Agree**	**Mostly Disagree**	**Completely Disagree**	**Not Applicable**	**Overall Satisfaction**
I have enjoyed the teaching on the course so far	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
Since starting, my course has run smoothly	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
My timetable was clearly explained to me	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I think I have chosen the right course	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I believe I am treated fairly	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
I enjoy attending College on campus and remotely	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%
Overall, I am satisfied with the College	3	1	0	0	0	100.00%

REGIONAL BOARD
Meeting of 14th December 2022

Title: Net Zero and Sustainability Framework	
Author: Scott Matthew	**Contributor(s): Gillian Forshaw**

Type of Agenda Item:

For Decision ☐

For Discussion ☐

For Information ☒

Reserved Item of Business ☐

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with information relating to how the College is working towards meeting Scottish Government net zero targets outlined in the SFC's Net Zero and Sustainability Framework for Action.

Linked to Strategic Risk(s):

These objectives can be linked to multiple risks within the College's Strategic Rick Register.

Executive Summary: The attached paper itself provides an appropriate summary of the activities being undertaken by the College in response to the SFC's framework document, a copy of which can be accessed through the following link:

https://www.sfc.ac.uk/net-zero/net-zero-reponse.aspx

Recommendation: It is recommended that Board members consider this paper for information purposes only.

Previous Committee Recommendation/Approval (if applicable)**:**
None.

Equality Impact Assessment:

Positive Impact ☐

Negative Impact ☐

No Impact ☒

Evidence:

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE

Report Title: Net Zero and Sustainability Framework for Action

1. **Introduction**
   1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with information relating to how the College is working towards meeting Scottish Government net zero targets outlined in the Net Zero and Sustainability Framework for Action.

2. **Background and context**
   2.1. The Scottish Government has set ambitious net zero targets in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019. These are for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. The interim target of 75% by 2030 reflects the climate emergency decade. The College is very mindful of these targets and is continuously working towards achieving them.

3. **College Targets**
   3.1. North East Scotland College has committed to achieving net zero by 2035, 10 years ahead of the Scottish Governments ambitious 2045 target.
   3.2. Net zero targets are considered in everything we do and we shall continue to ensure all future funding and investment decisions are based on their contribution to climate change ambitions and an inclusive, net-zero carbon economy.
   3.3. We will prioritise funding against climate outcomes.
   3.4. We will remain fully aware of all funding opportunities made available to us and will continue to submit funding applications of an extremely high standard outlining in-depth project descriptions, all project costs, carbon savings, delivery outputs and risk registers.

4. **College Action**
   4.1. The College Sustainability Committee acts as the enabler to meet the targets set in the Carbon Management Plan and provides a forum for ensuring best practice across the College.
   4.2. All projects undertaken are classed as decarbonisation projects with our net zero goal in mind.
   4.3. A lot of emphasis has been placed on decarbonising the infrastructure of our buildings giving us more control over the outcome of future projects.
   4.4. In the past year alone we have received funding for the following estate decarbonisation projects which will help us achieve our net zero goal on top of all our business as usual practices:

- Pre Capital Grant Fund Project – All campuses - £49,627 funding successfully applied for and 100% awarded
- Solar PV Project - All campuses - £1,690,270 funding successfully applied for and 100% awarded
- LED Lighting Clinterty Campus - £96,819.09 funding successfully applied for and 100% awarded
- South Block Glazing - £2,160,000 funding successfully applied for and 100% awarded
- LED Lighting Fraserburgh Campus - £576,000 funding successfully applied for and 100% awarded.

5. Carbon Management Plan

5.1. The Carbon Management Plan is the college's most up to date working document outlining our journey to net zero.

5.2. The Carbon Management Plan will allow the College to build on successes. North East Scotland College will aim to reduce the CO_2 emissions from its activities by 50% from the 2018/19 baseline by 2025.

5.3. North East Scotland College calculates its greenhouse gas emissions on an annual basis. These findings are reported as part of the Carbon Management Plan. Despite many changes within the estate having negative impacts, including the merger that occurred after the original baseline data was set, the College continues to reduce its total carbon footprint through many initiatives driven by the ISO14001 standard and the Sustainability Strategy.

6. bsi ISO 14001:2015

6.1. The Colleges Environmental Management System bsi ISO14001:2015 is the driving force behind all projects ensuring legislative requirements are being met whilst demonstrating continual improvement.

6.2. Carbon reduction targets are at the forefront of all objectives and targets to ensure the College remains on track to achieve its goals.

7. District Heating Network

7.1. North East Scotland College is providing an opportunity to tackle fuel poverty through connecting social housing whilst exploring the opportunity to link to other district heating to improve resilience and take advantage of differing heat load profiles.

7.2. District heating is one of the key strategies that will deliver a step change in carbon reduction whilst also aligning with the Scottish Governments strategy towards decarbonising the heat network. Being part of this project not only means we are one step closer to our ambitious carbon reduction targets but also forms a direct link to the city centre heating network and directly impacts on the AHP strategy to continue to alleviate fuel, poverty within the city of Aberdeen.

7.3. Aberdeen Heat and Power (AHP) supply heat tariff rates which provide a heating operating cost saving when compared to the most competitive alternative gas heating arrangement and tariff.

7.4. AHP have entered into a long term lease arrangement with NESCol to take full responsibility for the operation and maintenance, repair and replacement of the Aberdeen City Campus boiler house to be used in a heating standby/back-up role.

7.5. The reduction in carbon emissions by connection to the district heating system when compared to gas heating is estimated at 84% or approximately 674 tonnes per annum for the supply of heating.

8. Recommendation

8.1 It is recommended that the Board note the content of this report.

Gillian Forshaw
Environmental and Sustainability Manager