

BUSINESS GROWTH & EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022-2025

BORDERS



COLLEGE

Seeking collaboration
and purposeful change
for the organisation

Foreword

This strategy underpins our Strategic Ambition 2025. Building on our outstanding reputation for supporting the socio-economic sustainability of the Scottish Borders and beyond, we will proactively engage with our community and stakeholders to ensure our practice reflects their needs.

In delivering this strategy, we will continue to be an organisation that is collaborative and that shares and encourages innovative practice, and inspires our students and partners.

As a business, we endeavour to be a role model for others through our values. We are proud to be accredited as a Great Place to Work, have award-winning sustainable practices, and outstanding employer and graduate feedback and success.

We aspire to be regionally focussed but globally engaged. This means providing our graduates with the skills and attributes to be successful in a global economy, while at the same time ensuring that their learning enables our local community and businesses to be resilient in a rapidly changing world.

As the main provider of post school education in the Scottish Borders, we recognise the essential role we play in providing relevant training opportunities for our current and future workforce. We also recognise that we need to be agile in how those opportunities are delivered. We are nationally recognised for our adoption of technology to enhance our customer service and learning.

As a progressive organisation, this strategy outlines how we will build upon our excellent foundations to ensure the opportunities we offer remain relevant, appropriate and accessible.

Pete Smith, Principal and Chief Executive



Introduction

Our vision is to be an influential and collaborative partner, both regionally and nationally, working with staff, employers, industry and strategic partners on innovative projects to deliver on our ambition to grow over the next three years, and setting us on a course for continued growth. We will do this as the lead skills provider for our region; an anchor institution.

Borders College is a pivotal and inclusive organisation, delivering exceptional training both at a regional and national level. This reflects our unique geography with connections to the North of England through Borderlands, as a key partner in the Regional Economic Strategy, and our reach to Edinburgh and the southeast through the City Region Growth Deal. The Borders' sense of place and energy is reflected in a new enterprise agency, recognising the ambitious and innovative place that it is.

Strategically placed to influence and engage with industry and employers, we share that ambition and are also closely connected to the businesses in our region, shaping the provision of the skills needed to deliver on those regional and national ambitions.



Strategic Context

The Strategic Context sits within our own Strategic Ambition (2020-2025) and in response to key strategies influencing our trajectory: Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) (2022), UK Government's Levelling Up the UK (2022) & UK Innovation Strategy: leading the future by creating it (2021). Regional strategic frameworks; Delivery Plan for South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy and programmes relating to the next phases of Borderlands and City Region Growth Deals. Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) Coherence and Sustainability: A Review of Tertiary Education and Research (2021) and SCDI's Making a good Living, A 2030 Blueprint for Scotland (2021).

In addition, we continue to deliver on the asks in key sectoral strategic challenges: a once in a generation demand to deliver Net Zero as outlined in the Climate Change Plan Update (2022) and work with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to deliver the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan (2020),



drive digital transformation in response to the Logan report Scottish Technology Ecosystem Review (2020), and work to respond to the Blueprint for Scotland's Rural Economy, Rural Skills and Land Use Plans (2018-21), as well as to address the career pathway challenges for Health and Social Care, and Hospitality and Tourism.

Skills are key to delivering on these strategic frameworks, and we are ideally placed to address the recovery our employers face whilst looking to the next generation of skills we need to deliver an economy for everyone – 'greater, greener and fairer' (NSET).

“the creation of a wellbeing economy, that drives a green economic recovery to meet our climate and nature targets while ensuring we maximise the benefits as part of a just transition”

Strategic Ambition

The Business Growth & Employer Engagement Strategy will support the Borders College Strategic Ambition 2020-2025, providing 'innovative, life-changing learning opportunities that prepare our students for global citizenship', in line with our Future Skills Strategy 2020-2025, Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025 and our Asset Management Strategy.

Enterprise and Business Innovation is a cross-cutting theme at the college; working with industry groups and employers, partners and stakeholders, we will continue to drive our growth through innovative and sector-leading projects at scale, designed to provide our learners with life-changing opportunities.

Some of this will be developed through known projects: Shared Prosperity Fund, Edinburgh and City Region Deal, Regional Prosperity Framework, Big Moves, Borderlands, as it's come on stream for skills in the next 2-3 years and delivery around the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan, as well as emerging programmes from South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE).

Innovation is critical to our progress and will talk to key SFC tertiary review changes. We are extending our reach to match our strategic growth areas, connecting to universities and innovation centres to create partnership programmes that both enhance the learner journey and build on Borders College's

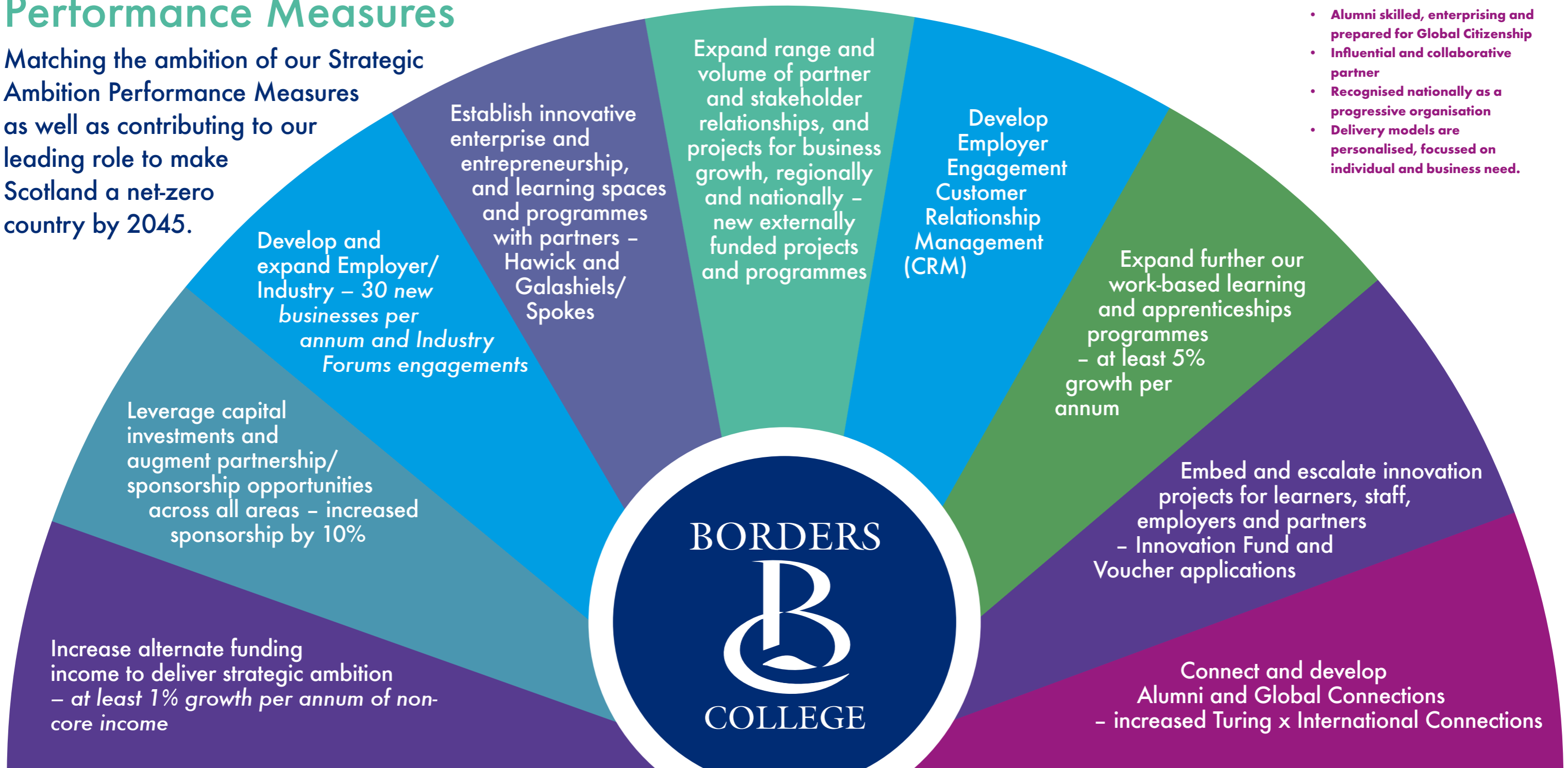


reputation as a progressive and ambitious organisation. These partnerships will expand our reach and range of projects.

Our over-delivery of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund, our sector-leading expanding apprenticeships programme and Green Skills short courses, the roll out and successful delivery of the Sustainability Academy through the Community Renewal Fund, and the bespoke training and programmes we offer to organisations, are just some of the programmes that demonstrate our ambition for growth and desire to raise the profile of Borders College further through successful delivery.

Performance Measures

Matching the ambition of our Strategic Ambition Performance Measures as well as contributing to our leading role to make Scotland a net-zero country by 2045.



Regional Skills Assessment (SDS)

Scottish Borders faces a number of challenges. Over and above post-covid recovery and the global dials creating cost of living crises, the demographic dependency ratio predicts an 80% dependency ratio by 2043 compared to a Scottish ratio of 60%, and thus a declining working-age population (Regional Skills Assessment Report Scottish Borders (SDS, 2022). We are committed to, and will continue to provide, programmes for upskilling and reskilling to meet the changing face of industry and demonstrate a talent pipeline for inward investment.

From the opportunities of automation and our Advanced Manufacturing AIMS space, to Net Zero, to the digital advances that will transform employment now and in the future: we are investing in online eLearning and digital spaces to excite, inspire and demonstrate the possible future skills pathways learners will take, and in so doing, help our employers get ready for the advances that will affect their future growth, productivity, innovation and capacity to export.

We are committed to create the space and opportunities and deliver the skills that will meet those future challenges, during this time of unprecedented challenge and change. This will mean a wholesale rewiring of our delivery around short, stackable qualifications co-designed and delivered in partnership with industry.



- **52,000** employed
- **26.2%** economically inactive of working age
- **37,000** in full-time roles
- **Part-time 3% higher for Borders**
- **Health & Social Care largest employing sector**
- **Population: 109,300**

Key Strategic Growth Sectors



Cross Cutting Strategic Growth Areas

Our developing industry forums will allow us to continue to put industry and our employers at the heart of training design and demand, informing what we do and building career paths for learners that reflect the future skills opportunities in our region; the Construction Forum building the offer around Net Zero, the Care Academy and BTECH suite and immersive learning space and VR technology showcasing the development routes for people in these sectors, the Hospitality and Tourism Academy bringing bespoke training to match the needs of industry with offers of careers at the other side, the Digital Skills Hub informing programme delivery and working with rural leadership groups and enterprise agencies on Agritech opportunities and training. Industry and innovation will sit at the heart of those developments.

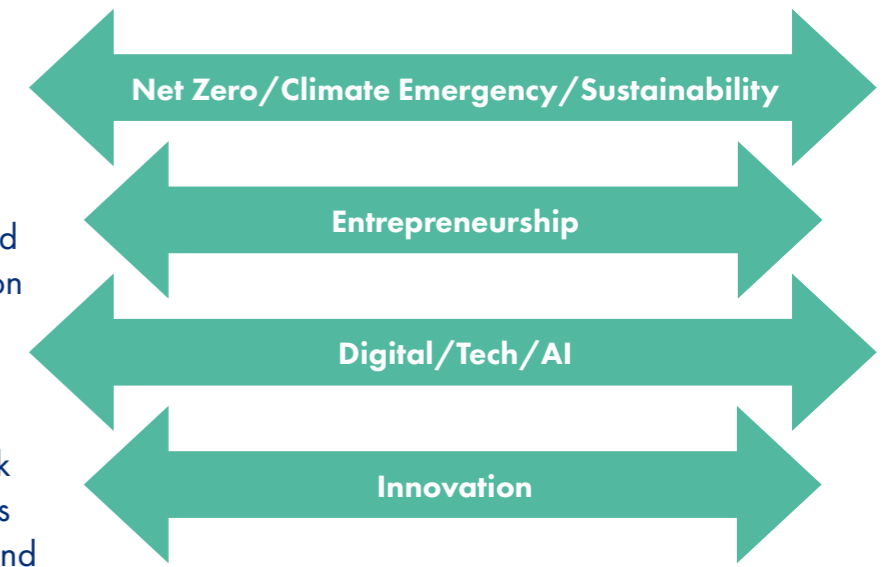
With this a continuing recognition that shorter, agile modular training programmes will map the lifelong learning that all organisations will need to adapt to in a changing economic landscape. We will also work with industry to further co-invest in people and technology, to create the best experience for our learners.



We are the key strategic anchor skills organisation in the region and as such it is really important for us to develop programmes and reach those furthest from education and training. We will continue to work with all our partners, and particularly council partners, to meet the inclusive and fair work agenda that will bring the benefits of upskilling and reskilling to all and help deliver community wealth building.

A cross cutting theme to all this is entrepreneurship and enterprise; an entrepreneurial campus. Providing globally engaged learners with an entrepreneurial mindset that they will carry into the organisations they work within and the businesses they will create. We want to extend this approach to the employers we work with, to facilitate the workforce who will meet the next challenges and innovations required for a thriving economy. We will further develop our alumni and strengthen our global connections.

This will also feed into extending our international connections through further Turing programmes and potential innovation projects that link us to international organisations. This is all part of creating learners who have a global view of their world matching our strategic stated aim around global citizenship.



Our Objectives

Business **GROWTH**
through **INNOVATIVE**
partner and employer
ENGAGEMENT

Building
PARTNERSHIPS to
deliver sector **LEADING**
programmes

Deliver **PURPOSEFUL**
projects to meet
regional and national
REQUIREMENTS

"The application of technology in agriculture is moving quicker than ever as we now record many different things to what we did in the past, and to a higher detail. For this our workforce needs to adapt and learn a different set of skills to what they would have had 20 years ago, but also have the same traditional husbandry skills that have been in farming for generations. Our partnership with Borders College has given us access to a structured course, ensuring the required documentation for their apprenticeship is completed in college or on farm, but also allowing them the freedom to work and learn the practical challenges that careers in farming have to offer."

*Sion Williams, Farms Manager,
Buccleuch Estates Ltd*

"We are engaged in a process of improving the skill levels in the marine sector in Eyemouth, where we operate. It is quite a specialist sector and the problem for many years was that there was no close training and education suitable, meaning that there is a dearth of the skills that we and others require in the area. So, we are really pleased to be working with Borders College to change this for the much, much better. It is a journey, but the good news is that we are started on it together."

Patrick Flockhart, Director, Eyemouth Marine Ltd

"Through our Memorandum of Understanding with Borders College, we have a commitment to work together on the significant areas that we have in common, such as attracting and developing talent to support business growth, the creation of high quality jobs and the delivery of inclusive economic growth. Borders College has undertaken extensive work to develop a Care Career Academy model. This is significant to Eildon as we embark on a rapid expansion in the care service business."

Deborah Taggart, HR Manager, Eildon Housing Association



"Borders College are valued partners. Their continuing flexibility and collaborative working supports NHS Borders to appropriately train and develop staff to enhance the services provided as we strive to deliver world class health care."

Kim Smith and Edwina Cameron, NHS Borders



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APR 2022-APR 2023
UK

Our Partners

