Context

Forth Valley College was established in 2005 as a merged regional College serving the needs of the three communities in Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire. In geographic and industrial terms, the Forth Valley region is very diverse, from the nationally significant oil, gas and chemical sectors in Grangemouth, to the hospitality, tourism and heritage sectors in Stirling and the rural communities. The College completed its ambitious estates programme in January 2020 with the opening of our £78m Falkirk Campus HQ, which followed the opening of campuses in Alloa and Stirling in 2011 and 2012. The College works in close partnership with the three local authorities of Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Stirling. The College has one of the largest Modern Apprentice contracts with Skills Development Scotland and delivers to over 1,100 apprentices. The College also delivers partnership (HEI) degrees with the University of Stirling, Heriot Watt University and Strathclyde University, and has extensive university articulation agreements.

The College works with a range of strategic partners across the region and further afield, having links with many industries and businesses operating in Scotland, across the UK and internationally. The College delivers an extensive range of vocational programmes. Full-time further education (FE) programmes at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Levels 2-6, are distributed across the three College campuses. The College has intentionally balanced its specialist resources, equipment, and teaching expertise for higher education (HE) programmes at SCQF levels 7-10 across individual campuses to create a regional curriculum strategy matched to the region's demographic and economic profile. Working closely with its three local authorities, the College has established a comprehensive range of school-College partnership activity.

In Session 2022-23 the College undertook our second consecutive consultation exercise to ensure financial sustainability. The College achieved the aims of the consultation by reducing our staffing by 27 FTE and reducing our curriculum volume by 8,789 credits (10%) for session 2023-24. This was achieved through the acceptance of 20 voluntary severance applications, identified redeployment and alternative employment opportunities, and no compulsory redundancies. In the previous session we removed 42 FTE from the College, removing £2.2 million from our budgets. Therefore, over a 2 year period we have reduced staffing by 69 FTE, reduced our credits volume by 15%, and have reduced expenditure by £4.4 million to ensure financial sustainability.

Although the College has reduced expenditure to ensure financial sustainability for session 2023-24, the continued need to reduce expenditure over the last few sessions has come at a cost to our students and staff. The morale and the culture of the college has been impacted by back-to-back years of restructuring and course reductions, and it is recognised that any further cuts to the College budget will have a significant impact on the College's ability to deliver on its Outcome Agreement targets going forward.

Forth Valley College is confident that it will deliver on our vision of Making Learning Work. We must demonstrate our contribution to Scottish Government priorities, our responsiveness to

key national policy drivers, our three local authority outcome agreements, and, more broadly, our contribution to communities and economies at local, regional, and national levels.

For the College to maintain and increase attainment, we enhanced our tracking and monitoring of student progress during the academic year, focusing initially on full-time students, but also now encompassing school-college partnership programmes. Systems were developed and introduced, which have been enhanced in subsequent sessions. These developments track progress and engagement of students via class registers on a daily basis, and also allow for a prediction on expected attainment to be reported on a quarterly basis, to enable a focus on where additional support may be required to help students succeed.

Evidence of success of the introduction of these measures can be seen through the latest sector attainment PIs, published for Session 2021-22. For full time FE students, the College has the highest success rate, while for full time HE students the College has second highest success rate. For part time students we have the third and fourth highest success rates for HE and FE students respectively. For all key groups reported through the SFC publication the College has success rates higher than the sector average.

The number of referrals for safeguarding, mental health and counselling has continued to increase this past year. This upward trend has been intensified by the cost of living crisis which has resulted in the need for more immediate interventions. Our Inclusion and Student Services team has coped well with these challenges and avoided waiting lists where possible for mental health and counselling referrals.

Fair access and transitions

The College strives to ensure all learners have access to College courses, evidenced by our target of maintaining the proportion of activity delivered to learners from the 10% most deprived postcodes at 10.5%, which represents a higher percentage than the 7% of the whole Forth Valley population who reside within the 10% most deprived postcodes.

The College has systematically developed Performance Indicator reports to enable all teaching teams to analyse enrolment, retention and success by all protected characteristics, and there is a requirement to report and provide analysis of any under-representation from protected characteristic groups through team self-evaluation report.

Meeting additional support needs

The College's Learning Support Advisors provide a needs-led Learning Support service for students with additional support needs. Support is tailored to individual circumstances with the student at the centre of the process to ensure their needs are met effectively. High quality needs assessments are completed with student and the College is an accredited needs assessment centre for Student Awards Agency for Scotland Disabled Student Allowance applications. All prospective, new and current students are informed of support available and how to access it – students are able to disclose support needs at any time during their time at College. In Session 2021-22, we provided learning support to over 800 students with a wide range of additional support needs including acquired brain injuries; short term memory loss; dyslexia; Autistic Spectrum Disorder; Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder and mental health difficulties, completing a range of programmes at all levels. Further detail is provided within the College's Access and Inclusion Strategy and on the College's website.

Carers and Estranged Students

The College strives to encourage disclosure from both students and staff of non-education needs such as having carer responsibilities or being estranged through awareness raising campaigns on the support and potential funding available for carers. The College has been accredited as becoming an Engaged Carer Positive Employer in Scotland to 'exemplary status'. A Carers Charter has been created that highlights how the College values the vital work done by carers and is committed to working with them to help them continue with their education. The charter was the brainchild of the Forth Valley Student Association and is supported by the College's Inclusion and Student Services Team, carers Trust Scotland and Stirling Carers Centre.

Meeting Diverse Needs

Forth Valley College strives to improve learners' life chances ensuring that learners with a disability have the opportunity to access educational provision that, where appropriate, best matches their abilities and allows them to reach their full potential and where suitable, progress on to either mainstream provision, training or employment. The majority of the College's Supported programmes build on learners' personal and social development, employability skills, health and wellbeing. College staff work with Local Authorities and other agencies to identify care leavers, disengaged young people, and learners not in a positive destination in order to put in place local interventions. Currently, provision for learners with additional support needs is delivered within our school link curriculum and some of the learners' progress onto our full time Lifestart and Workstart programmes, either on a full or part time basis, or onto our Opportunities for Young People course.

School Pupil Portal

The College has also developed a portal, which provides Council and School staff, along with SDS Careers staff, access to real-time College application information for school pupils. This provides enhanced support for school pupils in their application and enables better tracking of young learners to help ensure they secure a positive transition from school. Our schools portal was also extended to include attendance and performance information of students on school-college partnership courses, with further developments on capturing transition information being discussed with our partners.

School Provision

The College continues to sustain strong strategic partnerships with its three local authority education services. The College provides pupils in all 18 Forth Valley secondary schools (8 in Falkirk Council; 7 in the Stirling Council area; and 3 in the Clackmannanshire Council area) with the opportunity to follow vocational pathways and achieve vocational qualifications at SCQF level 5 and above as an integral part of their senior phase curriculum.

For young people entering S4, who are unclear about their choice of vocational area or future pathway and are deemed to be at risk of low achievement and a potential negative destination, we continue to offer the jointly delivered School College Opportunities to Succeed (SCOTS) programme for Falkirk and Stirling schools. Care-experienced young people are particularly encouraged to participate in SCOTS. This programme specifically sets out to challenge gender-stereotypical vocational choices, as all of the young people on the programme must agree to undertake the full range of vocational experiences, some of which are traditionally male-oriented (such as Engineering) and some female (such as Care).

In terms of senior phase vocational pathways, the College continues to offer a broad range of vocational qualifications at SCQF levels 5 and 6, primarily Skills for Work, National Progression Awards and Foundation Apprenticeships. The subject areas in which these are offered align with the College's full-time curriculum, and successful completion provides a young person with a "progression advantage" onto an appropriate full-time course. The College also offers a range of HN provision to senior phase students.

Quality learning and teaching

Project NxGEN FVC

In Session 2020-21, the College launched Project NxGEN FVC to enhance learning and the student experience at the College with bold aims of being a leading Education 4.0 organisation; having a Digital First culture; being financially resilient; being sector leading on e-assessment and validation design against all programmes, and designing and transforming our curriculum using evidence-based analytics.

The project has five key strands: to ensure an integrated whole system approach, where the learner journey is mapped out, duplication removed, and a digital-first culture adopted; transformational curriculum, with a full curriculum review aligned to Education 4.0; Inclusion and Student Support, with more targeted ASN and pastoral support aimed at improving retention and attainments; Continuous Curriculum Improvement, where College designed Course Review, and PI Tracker tools help managers ensure a healthy and financially resilient curriculum, and the Learning and Digital Skills Academy.

Continuous Curriculum review: Performance Indicator Prediction-tracking and Curriculum Review Process

The College is now entering into its sixth year of Performance Indicator (PI) prediction-tracking monitoring that splits the academic year into four Curriculum/PI review delivery periods to help curriculum teams better understand, track and improve PI performance across the College. This continuous review and improvement process is now firmly embedded within our Quality Assurance and Curriculum Planning procedures. The continued application of the PI Prediction Tool in conjunction with detailed analysis and evaluation of our student recruitment, disclosures, withdrawals and partial success data continues to support curriculum teams to drive forward improvement plans to address the continuing impact on attainment performance against the backdrop of the changing profile of our student population and the financial challenges facing the FE sector. The College continues to be sector leading in the creation of cutting edge performance support tools with the introduction of analytics tool in 2020-21 that help teaching departments analyse the effectiveness of their curriculum. These tools came into their own in terms of shaping the curriculum through 2021-22 & 2022-23 to deliver financial stability. The tools have supported senior managers working through the College's consultation process in being able to proactively identify curriculum that was under performing and that was removed from the College's portfolio to generate savings to off-set funding cuts to core grant-in-aid. This then allowed managers to identify the required staffing reductions.

As we strive to ensure our processes are rigorous and innovative, our Continuous Curriculum Improvement cycle will be enhanced for 2023-24. The meeting format will now be led by Curriculum Team improvement plans that are based upon the performance indicators, team evaluations and listening to learner feedback, primarily through our Listening to Learners processes, but also through regular Student Council meetings, feedback from Class Representatives, and surveys, with regular feedback to students. There are also regular meetings scheduled between the College's Student Association and Senior Management Team. PI Analysis and attention to student tracking will be the focus of department management meetings and action plans will be updated from these. The Director of Curriculum contribution will lead on analysis of key strategic priority areas that will impact upon curriculum planning including equalities and regional skills/labour market.

Learning and Digital Skills Academy

The dedicated team of staff of the LDSA continue to make significant impact on digital skills development throughout the entire organisation providing digital pedagogy support across all curriculum departments. The LDSA play a key role in taking the College's Learning and Digital Skills Ambitions forward. The LDSA have also continued with our flagship Learning and Teaching Enhancement programme, where mentors are deployed to work with and support lecturing staff to focus and reflect on aspects of their teaching practice to make enhancements in their delivery. The LDSA have also created a digital tool kit and designed programmes to enhance professional practice and learning theory design.

With LDSA funding coming to an end in June 2024, the team are developing a legacy plan to ensure that the work and impact of the LDSA is sustainable through college practice and processes.

Learning and Inclusion Facilitators /Learning Development Workers

Building on the success of the restructuring of the Student Support Services into the Inclusion and Student Services team, the college introduced the Learning and Inclusion Facilitator (LIF) role, developing within academic teams an additional resource that supports student.

The LIF role is an academic staff member who provides the critical link between course delivery and Inclusion and Student Support Services. LIF's work with students on an individual and group basis and play an integral role in proactively anticipating the support needs of students to enable a more systematic approach to their support.

The LIF post plays a critical role in ensuring a student receives the support they require, in the most efficient and effective manner possible, using live Student Support Data via the College Data Dashboard to provide reports to Managers regarding the forthcoming/current student cohort. Information such as; ASN disclosures, Protected Characteristics, Priority Access Groups e.g., Care Experience, Caring status, Estranged, SIMD10 etc. The LIF role is very much seen as a 'bridging' role between the relevant Curriculum Programme Teams and the Inclusion & Student Support team, to help maximise the support provided to students.

The LIF role has worked best when working cohesively with the department Learners Development Worker (LDW) role. Since the role out of LDW to HE learners, feedback from Curriculum Teams has confirmed that these roles are impacting positively on retention and attainment.

Making use of our support services, teaching staff and our systems, like Triple S, we have a team of people around our students who understand each other's roles and who can work cohesively to ensure the best outcomes for them. Students can move between these teams, depending on need, and shared systems mean that the student does not have to 'tell their story' to every staff member they interact with within Inclusion and Student Services as well as lecturing staff.

Student Journey Project

The aim of the Student Journey project is to ensure FVC continues to be the destination of choice for education and training by delivering the best student experience from application to achievement. This project covers all modes of attendance from full-time to training courses. The dedicated student portal, which allows students to complete their induction and enrolment online, was rolled out effectively for our 2022-23 full-time students, providing them with early access to their student email system, first day information and important updates from the

College to ensure the best possible start to their studies. This work will continue with school-college students and Modern Apprentices in 2023-24, and will include part-time students from 2024-25.

We have also launched a Digital Campus App for our students using Campus M. Once enrolled, this provides students with access to their timetable, digital Student ID Card and other essential information to support their studies. The app links to Moodle to support students in accessing course resource via mobile devices. Looking ahead, our plan to further enhance our student journey through real-time data supported through Power Bi will ensure we continue to make evidence-based decisions to help and support students at every stage of their journey.

Coherent learning provision

Meeting the Opportunities for All guarantee

The College is working very closely with local partners to review, in particular, access level provision to ensure our curriculum meets the needs of Forth Valley's young learners. An example of this is College staff working closely with staff in local schools to develop a detailed understanding of individual learner aspirations for Christmas Leavers and placing learners on college courses.

Developing the Young Workforce

The College continues to sustain strong strategic partnerships with its three local authority education services. The College provides pupils in all 18 Forth Valley secondary schools (8 in Falkirk Council; 7 in the Stirling Council area; and 3 in the Clackmannanshire Council area) with the opportunity to follow vocational pathways and achieve vocational qualifications at SCQF level 5 and above as an integral part of their senior phase curriculum.

The College has jointly developed its plans for Developing the Young Workforce with local authority partners and school Head Teachers and, where appropriate, with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and employers. All three of the local authority education services and the College have put in place dedicated staff at a senior level to facilitate the planning and implementation. Across all three local authorities, we have agreed that the College will prioritise sustainable partnership activity open to senior phase pupils from all Forth Valley secondary schools (rather than school-specific). The College works closely with all its partners to develop and deliver vocational pathways appropriate to the broadest range of senior-phase school pupils.

Strategic Initiatives with Key Stakeholders

As we move forward, the College continues to be at the forefront of economic planning and development within our communities, working with key partners to build the talent pipeline for all relevant sectors that our local economy requires both now and in the future. The main economic initiatives that the College are involved in include:

Falkirk and Grangemouth Investment Zone

Forth Valley College have been an active member of the Falkirk Economic Partnership since its inception in 2016. The key activity of the Partnership has been to develop the case for the Falkirk and Grangemouth Investment Zone through the Growth Deal. A formal agreement referred to as "Heads of Terms" was officially signed on 21 December 2021 between the Council, UK and Scottish Government for delivery of the £80m growth deal and £10m of associated investments. One project, agreed within the Heads of Terms and subsequently going forward in the Strategic Outline Case, is FVC's "Innovation Skills Transition Centre". This is a Project which seeks an initial £4m investment from the growth deal. The strategic proposal is to create space within the FVC Falkirk campus that is a national focus for innovation and skills as we transition to Net Zero. The draft outline business case for this proposal has now been shared with local authority partners.

City Deal for Stirling and Clackmannanshire

The deal was formally signed in February 2020 and will bring a £214m investment package across the Stirling and Clackmannanshire area. It is focused on delivering national and international sustainability through cutting edge environmental projects, innovation in the digital and tourism sectors and boosting skills across the region to create a pathway for future

success and resilience. The College has played an active role in its development and are working closely with Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils to support the skills ambitions of the City Deal. Clackmannanshire Council have a lead role in delivering the skills strategy and the College has been working closely with them to develop a strategic approach with a focus on digital skills and other learning opportunities that support the area's economic recovery. The college is a member of the Local Employability Partnership that is receiving updates on the projects and from this group the college have met with the recently appointed City Deal Skills Lead to Scope out Pre-Employability programs for Health and Social Care Sector.

College University Partnership

The College continues to work in close partnership with the University of Stirling (UoS) and offers four Partnership Degrees on a 2+2 model: Applied Biological Science; Computing with Cyber Security; Heritage and Tourism; Digital Media; the three year BA Arts Degree. The College and University have been successful in achieving GTCS accreditation to deliver two Partnership Teaching Degrees in Chemistry and Physics in a 2+2 format. These Degrees are designed to broaden access to Science teaching pathways.

Forth Valley University College NHS Partnership

In October 2022 Forth Valley College hosted the launch of the first formal regional partnership between a health board, university and college in Scotland - Forth Valley University College NHS Partnership (FVUCNHSP). The College is a key partner in this ambitious new partnership which is set to pave the way for improved patient care and treatment for communities across the region for years to come. Building on a long-standing relationship between the College, the University of Stirling and NHS Forth Valley, it will work across three priority areas: Education and Skills, Career Pathways and Research and Innovation. The partnership aims to deliver transformational change to the health and social care of the area through the delivery of new learning and development opportunities for students and staff, and become a nerve centre for world-class research and innovation developed to directly respond to the needs of local people. Since its launch, the partnership has already successfully delivered on a number of outcomes that will support young people in preparing for and progressing to sustainable employment within NHS Forth Valley. A portfolio of skills boost online flexible courses was launched in January 2023 to support school pupils and career changers in their transition to further and higher education or employment within health and social care. FVC now has an accredited learning pathway from SCQF level 4-7 that supports school pupils in engaging in health and social care education from S3. Going forward into 23/24, the partnership will establish the Alloa Campus as a Health and Social Care Centre of Excellence. The campus will deliver on learning and skills development from SCQF level 4-7 and include full-time, January Start and pre-employment programs. A proposal is being scoped out to create a Care Simulation Skills Suite which would provide a multi-purpose space to support scenario and simulation-based training.

Work-based learning and skills

Modern Apprenticeship

Forth Valley College is one of the largest College providers of Modern Apprenticeship (MA) training and contributes significantly to the achievement of Scottish Government and SDS priorities. Our MA provision directly supports key sectors of the Scottish Economy with significant activity in Engineering, Construction, Science, Management, Business Administration Hospitality and Salon Services, and IT. Our record for successful delivery of MAs has also attracted places through key sector bodies such as SECTT, SNIPEF, BEST and CITB. We continue to achieve higher than average attainment rates for learners undertaking MA provision as well as higher than average achievement rates.

Our "Employer Portal" was developed with the input of employers and is accessed by businesses over the last few years with great success. It allows employers to see their progress and attendance of their MA or employee whilst at the College in real time.

Employer Engagement

Employer engagement is right at the heart of Forth Valley College's business model and our mission of "Making Learning Work" means making learning work for employers, as well as for students. One of our four strategic themes is "Leading on the Economic Recovery" and we deliver on this through a whole-College approach to meeting employers' current and future skills needs. Every department has a responsibility to develop effective and mutually beneficial relationships with employers, ranging from partnership working to create opportunities to enhance employability skills for full-time students, through to the development of bespoke training courses and facilities for employers. We work with companies from the smallest, local, social enterprise through to multi-national corporations and pride ourselves in meeting their diverse range of needs and challenges. Forth Valley College has very strong links with industry across our courses in all teaching Departments, with employers having significant input into course designs, and in many cases, courses developed specifically for employers.

Fair Work

At Forth Valley College we demonstrate our commitment to supporting personal growth and enhancing the contribution of our staff through our People Strategy and in our investment in their development. This includes access to professional qualifications, management development, career progression and personal growth opportunities such as secondments and project work. The college recognises two unions and meets regularly with them at formal consultative meetings for both general business and Health and Safety discussions. There is also a specific Listening to Employees meeting where any staff member can attend and can raise points of interest to them and contribute to the development of projects. Unions and staff alike are part of various working groups which enhances their contribution to college goals, and managers at the college operate an open office approach.

Zero hour contracts are limited to very specific roles where this is beneficial to both employee and the college such as with Exam Invigilators or Life Models. We have a Job Evaluation scheme in place and a set grading system to ensure each role is paid fairly on its merits, with an independent Equal Pay Audit undertaken every two years. This is published on our website and has demonstrated our inclusive and fair practices in its results. We are also members of the Real Living Wage foundation and ensure all staff, including apprentices employed directly with the college, are paid this rate.

Net zero and environmental sustainability response

In response to meeting the target of achieving Net Zero by 2040, the College joined with Borders College and West Lothian College to form the Central & South Scotland College Partnership (CSSCP), supported by EAUC Scotland (The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education). Being without staff dedicated exclusively to sustainability, the three colleges developed a new approach to secure additional support. In 2022 the partnership secured a dedicated sustainability resource by hiring a Sustainability Project Manager, whose time and costs are shared by the colleges. By providing additional resource and knowledge, the Sustainability Project Manager has helped guide sustainability practice and policy at the colleges and to expand this in scope and ambition. This has included securing funding for campus decarbonisation projects through the Scottish Green Public Sector Estate Decarbonisation Scheme and developing updated strategies such as Net Zero Plans.

The College has written, and will publish in October 2023, its first Net Zero Action Plan covering 2023-27. This plan covers all areas of college activity, led by the College SMT through dedicated working groups covering the following topics:

- Leadership: Governance, Finance & Procurement
- Development: Data Collection, Adaptation & Offsetting
- Engagement: Partnerships, Teaching & Knowledge
- Operations: Estates, Transport, Biodiversity & Waste

Our Principal has signed the SDG Accord which is a commitment to do more to achieve the UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) and to embed sustainability into every aspect of the college's work. To this end we have mapped actions in our Net Zero plan, and elsewhere, against the SDGs and we will complete the SDG Accord's annual reporting to monitor our progress. To track progress and to identify opportunities for emissions reduction FVC has adopted the UK HE/FE Climate Commission's Climate Action Roadmap for FE Colleges which outlines a pathway of actions for colleges to follow towards net zero.

Delivery of our Net Zero Plan will be reviewed quarterly by the College's Leadership Team, and annually by the Board of Management. The plan aims to eliminate direct emissions from buildings by 2038 and all direct emission by 2045. We will continue to send no waste to landfill, in advance of the public sector 2030 target. We also aim to maintain a 20% reduction in business travel from 2018-19 pre-pandemic levels, and will also promote SDGs within learning and teaching.

From Session 2013-14 to Session 2021-22 the College has reduced its carbon emissions by over 50%, and we are committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2040 or earlier in line with Scottish College's Climate Commitment. The College has completed Public Bodies Climate Change Duties since 2014-15, which includes supply chain and commuting emission from 2021-22, and through our Net Zero Plan we aim to reduce emissions to 42% of our baseline by 2027, and will publish our progress through the College website.

The College embeds sustainability in procurement activity through our Procurement Policy. We use the Cost of Net Zero Calculator Tool produced through EAUC to help plan alignment of resources and the funding required to meet net zero. The College has a fleet of electric pool cars available for staff use, and aim to phase out petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030. The College is refreshing our Travel Plan to promote the use of the sustainable hierarchy. The College is represented on Adaptation Scotland's Benchmarking Working Group and has a Strategic Climate Change Risk Assessment and action plan, and is working with EAUC to produce adaptation guidance for the tertiary education sector.

The College has successfully used pre-capital funding from the Scottish Green Public Sector Estates Decarbonisation Scheme (GPSEDS) to undertake detailed studies to identify and design energy efficiency and renewable energy projects on campus, and we have applied to GPSEDS to install solar PV, LED lighting, and energy conservation measures across each campus, and we will continue to apply to fund further projects.

Outcome Agreement between Forth Valley College and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2023-24

On behalf of Forth Valley College:

Signed:

Print name: Kenny MacInnes

Position: Principal and Chief Executive

Date: 29/11/23

Signed:

Print name: Trudi Craggs

Position: Interim Chair

Date: 30/11/23

On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed:

Print name: Karen Watt

Position: Chief Executive

Date: **15 January 2024**