

Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire Region



Outcome Agreement 2017-18

Version Date: March 2017

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Funding, Outcomes and Outputs

College region: Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire

College regional grouping: North East Scotland College

Funding

College region Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire will receive £40,828,710 from the Scottish Funding Council for academic year 2017-18 to plan and deliver further and higher education in the region.

This funding is on the condition that the College Board signs and commits to deliver the outcomes detailed below.

Priority Outcomes to be delivered by end of AY 2017-18

- To create personal and business growth through learning
- To provide accessible programmes of study that lead to positive outcomes for students
- To achieve maximum impact from the available resources.

Priority Outputs to be delivered in AY 2017-18

- A highly effective regional college providing high quality education
- An embedded regional College culture
- Achievement of credits target
- Increases in student retention and attainment

- An increase in the number of students entering positive destinations
- Effective and efficient teaching and support staff structures
- A regional curriculum for AY 2017-8 which meets the needs of the region
- An increase in non-SFC income as a % of total income
- Progression of the regional Estates Development Strategy.

Introduction

Outcome agreements were first introduced in AY 2012-13 and are intended to enable colleges and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to demonstrate the impact of the sector and its contribution to meeting Scottish Government priorities.

This Outcome Agreement is for AY 2017-18 and will be adjusted on an annual basis for the period AY 2017-18 to AY 2019-20.

It should be noted that this Outcome Agreement is supported by the North East Scotland College Strategic Plan and a number of key College Strategies.

North East Scotland College

Aberdeen College and Banff & Buchan College merged on 01 November 2013 to form North East Scotland College. North East Scotland College 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 (three sites), Fraserburgh and Peterhead with a number of leased community based learning centres across the region.

Prior to the merger, both Colleges had individual track-records of success and commitment to high standards of service delivery. The new College is committed to maintaining this and to improving opportunities for the people of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, to helping the region's young people progress to work or higher

education and to supporting businesses through professional updating and workforce development.

Our Vision is:

A College that transforms lives and supports regional development.

Values

Our Values are the foundation of all that we do and state what is really important to us. They apply to everyone who comes to the College to learn or work.

Our Values are:

Commitment and Excellence

- Understanding and responding to the needs of our students, staff, key stakeholders and customers;
- Being business-like and professional;
- Maintaining a clear focus on our goals and ensuring that these are achieved through effective planning and organisation;
- Achieving excellence by continually evaluating and improving our services;
- Ensuring our processes are consistent, accessible, effective and efficient.

Empowerment and Engagement

- Creating an environment where innovation and creativity are encouraged and can flourish;
- Providing clear direction, information and communication;

- Providing development opportunities to ensure that we have the skills, knowledge and confidence to perform to the best of our ability;
- Giving recognition and praise;
- Encouraging and supporting collaboration.

Respect and Diversity

- Valuing the experience and talent of all;
- Treating others with dignity and respect;
- Creating an accessible, inclusive learning and working environment;
- Being fair, open and transparent to ensure a culture of mutual trust and integrity.

Further information on the College's aspirations and goals can be found in the College's Strategic Plan for AY 2015-18 – <http://www.nescol.ac.uk/about/strategic-planning>

Reporting

Despite our continued confidence in our vision, it is essential that we are able to demonstrate its relevance and contribution to the achievement of Scottish Government priorities, its responsiveness to key national policy drivers and, more broadly, our contribution to communities and economies at local, regional, and national levels.

The College's commitment to continuous quality improvement is integral to its Vision and Values and the delivery of the outcomes set out in this agreement. The management of quality is the shared responsibility of every member of staff and quality improvement is

achieved through the collaborative working of cross-College teams.

In line with the requirements of the new quality framework for colleges in Scotland, 'How good is our college?', the College will submit its first Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan to the SFC by the end of October 2017. The introduction of this framework integrates the evaluation and reporting on outcome agreements with reporting on the quality of provision and services. The Evaluative Report will provide high level statements reflecting upon the College's performance, including the identification of good practice and areas for development. The Enhancement Plan details SMART actions, and their intended impact on College performance, to address the areas for development identified in the Evaluative Report.

To support the production of the Evaluative Report and Enhancement Plan, the College has reviewed its internal self-evaluation processes and has created new self-evaluation templates against the key quality indicators and challenge questions of the new framework. These templates will be used for the AY2016-17 self-evaluation process and will be completed for the following levels in relation to the curriculum – programme, faculty and school. Self-evaluations will also be undertaken by each of the College's Support Teams. In addition, the Students' Association will also conduct a self-evaluation in conjunction with the College and in line with 'The Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Associations in Scotland'. At the time of writing, CPD activities to support staff with the adoption of the new process are being discussed.

Part 1 – The Regional Context

The following section provides the regional context for the ambitions set out in our agreement.

1. Regional Demographic and Economic Overview

Catchment Area Profile

North East Scotland College serves an extensive geographical area (Aberdeen City: 186 sq km, Aberdeenshire: 6,313 sq km), with its two 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 outwith Aberdeen City: Ellon, Inverurie and Peterhead.

The origin of students who attend North East Scotland College is relatively even with 2015-16 figures showing that 42% reside in Aberdeen City and 37% in Aberdeenshire with the remainder coming from outside the area, relatively evenly spread from 16 other Scottish local authority areas. The majority of the region’s residents that attend colleges are enrolled at North East Scotland College – in 2013-14 this accounted for 91% of those attending a college.

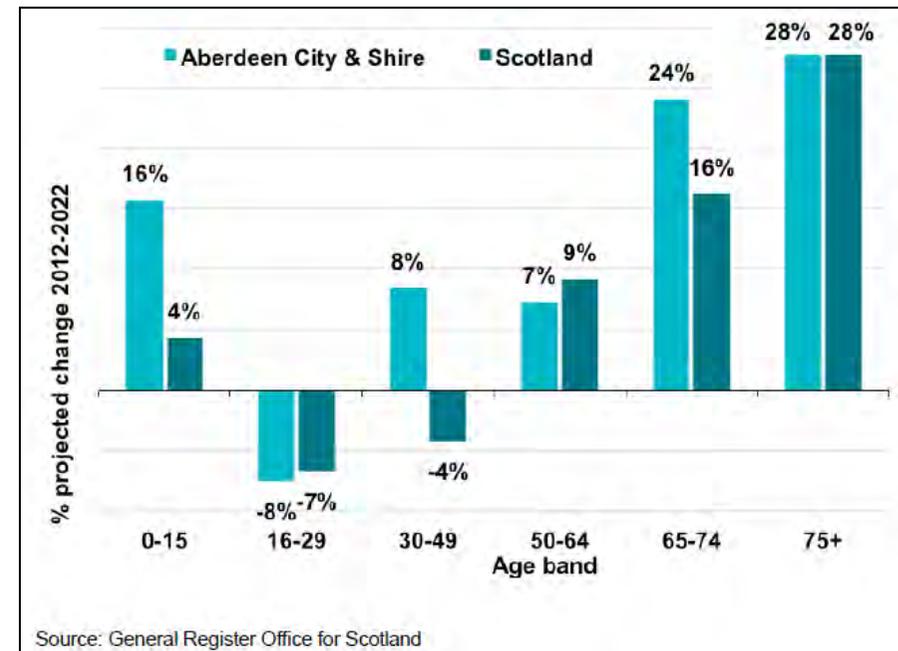
Population and Demographics

The North East of Scotland has a population of approximately 492,400 (230,400 in Aberdeen City, 262,000 in Aberdeenshire), which is approximately 9% of the Scottish total. The population continues to grow, at over double the Scottish rate of growth over the last decade. Important changes in the age profile of the region’s residents over the past decade have been recorded. The Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Aberdeen City & Shire Skills Assessment, published in January 2016, notes the region has experienced:

- An increase in school roll numbers in the next five years when they are falling across Scotland
- An increase in the number of adults aged 20 – 34 years old
- Mixed movements in some ‘prime’ working age groups
- A marked ageing of the population.

The population of the region is forecast to continue to grow over the coming decade at a similar rate as the past decade, 9%, with most growth expected in the population of Aberdeen City. This contrasted with the past decade where most growth was experienced in Aberdeenshire. Again, this rate of expected growth is higher than the rate of growth predicted for Scotland as a whole.

The SDS Aberdeen City & Shire Regional Skills Assessment forecasts that the “prime working age population of the region is expected to continue to grow, and the recent ageing of the population is expected to accelerate over the coming decade.” The Assessment also predicts that the greatest population increases will be amongst those over the age of 50, especially those over the age of 65. An increase in the number of young people under the age of 16, a decline in the 16-29 age group and an increase in the ‘prime’ working age group is expected:



Education

Qualifications

Labour market participation in the region in 2014-15 accounted for 80% of the working age population compared to 73% for both Scotland and the UK. FE/HE leavers in the region are deemed more work-ready by employers than the national average although this is the reverse for school leavers. The qualification profile of the working age population is as follows:

	SCQF 7-12	SCQF 6	SCQF 5	SCQF 1-4	Other Qualifications	No Qualifications
Aberdeen City & Shire	45%	21%	14%	8%	7%	6%
Scotland	41%	19%	15%	10%	6%	9%

Source: SDS Aberdeen City & Shire Skills Assessment: January 2016 – Data Matrix

School leaver destinations 2014-15

	Positive Destination	Higher Education	Further Education	Training	Employment	Activity Agreement	Unemployed Seeking	Unemployed Non-seeking	Unknown
Aberdeen City & Shire	94%	38%	30%	1%	23%	0%	5%	1%	1%
Scotland	93%	38%	28%	4%	22%	1%	5%	1%	1%

Source: SDS Aberdeen City & Shire Skills Assessment: January 2016 – Data Matrix

The SDS Report “School Leaver Destinations Initial Follow Up 2013/14”, December 2014 shows:

	Number of School Leavers
Aberdeen City	1,633
Aberdeenshire	2,619
Total	4,252

	Number of School Leavers
Those who came to NESC to study HE course	584
Those who came to NESC to study FE course	1,062
Total	1,646

% of Region’s School Leavers who came to study at NESC	38.7
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Partnership working

One unique characteristic of the region is the highly effective partnership between the College and university institutions based in the area. The level of 2+2 articulation from HND programmes into year 3 of degree programmes is much higher in this region than in any other part of Scotland. That success has been rooted in a shared approach to curriculum planning and development that has streamlined curriculum pathways and allowed wider participation in degree level study and more efficient use of resources by avoiding duplication and unnecessary competition. The inter-institutional collaboration has also covered: Developing the Young Workforce; the Regional Skills Assessment and Regional Skills Strategy; and Apprenticeship routes (up to and including Advanced Apprenticeships). The same Outcome Agreement Manager from the SFC oversees the Outcome Agreements of the College and Robert Gordon University (RGU) and the two institutions will increasingly be encouraged to work together to share services and to develop shared approaches to addressing the region’s economic needs. Both institutions have recently invested in the same Labour Market Intelligence software to facilitate the development of shared approaches to meeting the region’s skills needs in the context of the City Region Deal and the volatility of the oil and gas sector.

The institutions are also committed to working together to address key issues related to gender imbalance and widening access including enrolments from areas of multiple deprivation. The College and RGU have developed links in terms of governance, through the holding of joint Board and Committee events and joint training sessions. Effective relationships between staff of the institutions are also maintained through a regional approach to curriculum planning and

CPD. Further information on the College's partnership with RGU can be found in the Curriculum Planning, Articulation and Modern Apprenticeships and Employability Fund sections of this document.

At the time of writing, the College is leading discussions relating to the creation and development of a Learning and Skills Partnership for the region. The proposed aims of the Partnership are to provide a strategic overview of the region's activities and to develop a coherent approach to key policy areas and imperatives such as:

- Developing the Young Workforce – to ensure a region wide approach to all 39 recommendations
- Early Years – to ensure that the region is well placed to respond to the workforce development aspects of policy change in relation to early years provision
- The Learner Journey – to enable the region to build on existing strengths in relation to seamless transition for learners in the North East between institutions and to continue to build creative models of collaboration
- Regional Skills Strategy – to enable a coherent response to be developed in support of the Regional Economic Strategy
- Professional Development – to build on and extend the professional development work of the Northern Alliance
- Opportunity North East (ONE) – to develop a coherent response to the challenges laid down for the region by the ONE Board.

Employment and Economy

The employment rate remains far higher in the region than in Scotland - 78% in Aberdeen City and 80% in Aberdeenshire. Both rates are higher than the Scottish average of 74%, indicating that despite the economic downturn the region's labour market remains buoyant and is close to full employment. The region accounts for 12% of the Scottish workforce but only 9% of the Scottish population.

In January 2017 the Scottish rate of unemployment stood at 4.9% compared to a UK rate of 4.3%. This compares to 5.1% in Aberdeen City and 3.5% in Aberdeenshire. Three areas in North East Scotland

(Aberdeen Donside, Aberdeenshire East and Aberdeen Central) are listed in the top five areas of lowest unemployment in the country, with unemployment in the region remaining lower than the Scottish average. However Aberdeen and the surrounding area have borne the brunt of UK oil and gas job losses, projected to be at 120,000 by the end of 2016. Six North East Scotland constituencies are now at the top of the table of UK areas with the largest annual percentage change in claimants in the year to June 2016- Aberdeen City's claimant count in October 2016 had increased by 50% in comparison to the same time last year, whilst Aberdeenshire experienced a 54% increase during the same time period. For those aged 18-24 years old, the number of claimants in Aberdeen has increased by 65% compared to the same time last year, with claimant numbers in this age group also increasing in Aberdeenshire – 56%.

The North East of Scotland generates a disproportionate share of Gross Value Added (GVA) of Scotland's economy – 15% of GVA to Scotland with 9% of the population. Productivity levels (at £68K GVA per worker) are significantly higher than the Scottish average (£47K) and UK average (£51K), with 33 of Scotland's top 100 companies based in Aberdeen. It should be noted that due to the way data is collected the impact of the downturn in the oil and gas industry is not yet fully evident in economic reporting, however of the five Scottish local authority areas to experience a fall in registered business count from 2015-16, Aberdeen City topped the list with a decrease of 155 businesses – considerably more than the next biggest drop (a decrease of 65 businesses in Dumfries and Galloway).

In terms of GDP, the North East of Scotland growth rate was consistently higher than the Scottish rate over the last few years however the last 12 months have seen the region fall below the Scottish average. Latest forecasts show a continuing downturn with just 0.7% growth in 2016, 0.6% in 2017 and 1.1% in 2018 compared to 1.1%, 1.2% and 1.5% for Scottish growth rates. The key reason for the change in forecasts is the collapses of the oil price and the adverse impact this has had on the local economy.

The Aberdeen City and Shire economy is dominated by the production sector (covering oil and gas extraction and related activities), which accounts for a third of all output from the region. The region's GVA by sector in 2012 was as follows:

Sector	Aberdeen City & Shire (%)	Scotland (%)
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	1	1
Business services	15	11
Construction	5	6
Distribution, transport, accommodation & food	16	19
Financial & insurance activities	1	7
Information & communication	2	3
Other services & household activities	3	2
Production	40	18
Public administration, education & health	12	22
Real estate activities	6	10

Source: SDS Aberdeen City & Shire Skills Assessment: January 2016 – Data Matrix

The region, especially Aberdeen City, is viewed by many as being prosperous with a high standard of living. This was highlighted in the 2015 PwC Good Growth for Cities Index when Aberdeen was ranked as the fifth best UK city. The index considers measures such as jobs, health, income, skills, work-life balance, house prices, travel-to-work times and pollution. Many aspects of the economy are now witnessing considerable change, however. 2016 mid-year figures highlighted that the use of food banks in Aberdeen has risen by almost 30% in the space of a year. Economic Indicators from September 2016 also show that the housing market has seen a considerable decline in both Aberdeen (down 16.9%) and Aberdeenshire (down 10%), whilst airport traffic has fallen by 21% and the hotel industry has seen a 33% drop in the revenue available per room.

It should also be noted that across the region, communities and neighbourhoods can differ greatly in terms of their social and economic advantages, with unemployment rates in some areas being three times the city average, and some areas of rural deprivation. Average household earnings throughout the region are higher than those

nationally, however there are still some 20,000 workless households in the region. Even so, the region has a relatively low number of most deprived datazones - in the 2016 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), 9 of Aberdeen City's 283 datazones were identified as being in the 15% most deprived datazones in Scotland and 6 of Aberdeenshire's 340 datazones were identified as being in the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland. Median wages declined by 5% in Aberdeen and 4% in Aberdeenshire between 2015 and 2016.

The City Region Deal is an ambitious investment and development programme, developed between partnerships within the public sector, industry and academic institutions in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The region will receive a package of £504 million in funding over the next 5-10 years - £250 million joint Westminster and Holyrood funding, and an additional £254 million of Scottish Government funding. It is estimated that the value of the Deal could be as much as £826m when private sector and other investments are factored in. It aims to release around £2.9 billion in infrastructure improvements over the next 20 years, and is strongly supported by an economic strategy that focuses on innovation, skills and internationalisation. The Deal has been devised to act as a powerful tool for growth and diversification, both in new and existing industries. It aims to positively impact regional competitiveness, connectivity, infrastructure, housing, employment and lifestyle – elements which are key in attracting and retaining those who can power and support the region's valuable economy – whilst also addressing emerging challenges that face the North-East.

As part of the City Region Deal, the College plays a pivotal role in developing the skills of people across the region and working to integrate the Developing the Young Workforce initiative, as well as actively addressing skills shortages. Key elements of this work involve the continued strengthening of partnerships with the two local universities, the two local authorities, and a wide range of employers across the area.

A new economic leadership body, Opportunity North East (ONE), was established by the private sector in December 2015 to broaden and boost the economy of the North East of Scotland. The organisation has secured significant funds for innovation in the region, spanning the

priority industry sectors of oil and gas, agri-food, biopharmaceuticals and including big data and internationalisation. The College Principal serves on the Oil and Gas Sector Board, and ONE has taken over the role previously undertaken by ACSEF. ONE works closely with both industry and the public sector to maximise collaboration and joint developments to further the interests of the key sectors of the region's economy, including include life sciences, food and drink, tourism and hospitality. The College plans to engage with ONE as appropriate in order to generate action which stimulates economic growth.

Key Sectors

The collapse in global oil prices has resulted in oil revenues tumbling from £1.8bn in the 2014-15 financial year to just £60m in 2015-16, according to Government figures. At its peak in 2008, the industry brought in £11.5bn in revenue.

Aberdeen has been the operational base of the North Sea oil and gas industry for the last 35 years, and is recognised as the energy capital of Europe. Amidst a significant period of downturn in the last two years however, Oil and Gas UK have estimated that the industry is now supporting 120,000 fewer jobs across the extended supply chain than it did in late 2014. It is estimated that 65,000 jobs were lost in 2015 alone across the UK, with approximately 10% of these from within the North East of Scotland. The oil price rout has run deeper and longer than any oil market downturn in history, and comes at a time when the aging North Sea basin is losing its economic edge against cheaper exploration areas.

The oil and gas sector is still said to account for a third of all output from the region, however the falling price of oil has not yet fed through to the regional GVA data available. Similarly, levels of productivity in the region are well above the Scottish and UK averages, and have increased in recent years – largely due to output in the oil and gas sector.

The production sector dominates the region's employment base, with over 62,000 jobs, many of which are in oil and gas (although data does not yet reflect recent changes in the sector and associated job losses).

To aid recovery, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire have established a £12 million Transition Training fund to help oil and gas workers apply their skills to other parts of energy industry. The UK Government has also announced a £20 million package for the Oil & Gas Sector. Some in the sector are now diversifying and meeting the demand for growing and emerging industries, by capitalising on infrastructure and transferrable skills – renewables and decommissioning.

The downturn has not only affected oil and gas companies however – it has also negatively impacted on a range of other sectors that relied heavily on the business generated by oil workers and their companies. Taxi firms, hotels, restaurants and the property market are amongst other areas currently experiencing a decline in business and customer numbers.

Other key sectors, such as food and drink, life sciences, tourism and creative industries have been identified by ONE as being of great importance to the region, contributing to the wealth of the area in terms of jobs and GDP and having positive effects on other sectors, including retail, transport, and property.

Traditional industries still also make a significant contribution to the region's economy, however they have seen a decline in recent years.

The North East remains Scotland's most prominent fishing area - Peterhead is the largest UK fishing port and among the largest in Europe and Fraserburgh is the largest UK shellfish port. The North East accounts for over half of all landings into Scotland and 45% into the UK, but the total volume of fish being landed is decreasing.

Aberdeenshire accounts for 9% of Scotland's agricultural land area, 26% of Scotland's total arable farm land, and is the location of Europe's largest agricultural mart. Agriculture accounts for 2% of local employment in Aberdeenshire. Recent forecasts project a fall of up to 15% in agricultural employment however, which could have a significant impact on the region.

In summary, the context within which the College operates is an area:

- experiencing demographic changes
- of high participation in post-16 education
- of low unemployment
- with an economy dominated by the oil and gas sector
- with a relatively low number of most deprived datazones.

At the time of writing the Aberdeen City & Shire Regional Skills Strategy and Action Plan is yet to be finalised. The document sets out a plan for public sector partners to collectively respond to skills issues in the region. The College will participate in the delivery of the Strategy as appropriate.

In order to meet the needs of the region, the College will ensure that it continues to provide vocational opportunities for young people whilst also providing upskilling opportunities for those already in employment, especially from the oil and gas sector. The College will also seek to respond to the changing demographics of the region and continue to engage with those from areas of deprivation.

2. Meeting the Needs of Learners: Right Learning in the Right Place and High Quality Learning

The Curriculum

North East Scotland College is committed to the provision of a regional curriculum for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire through a network of opportunities across the region that delivers high quality and efficient learning in the right place. The College will continue to seek and adopt flexible, engaging delivery methods that promote accessibility and flexibility.

The priority is to ensure that the College delivers high quality education and training opportunities for students across the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire region to, “transform lives and support regional development”. However, it should be noted that in light of the extremely difficult financial position of the College, a review of where it delivers its programmes will be carried out.

Curriculum planning in this regional college is a continuous process which ensures that the curriculum is constantly refreshed and up-dated and meets the needs of learners, potential learners, employers and the local economy. The range of College provision in the region results from detailed planning informed by engagement with external stakeholders, government priorities and curriculum analysis.

The College offers a range of post-school education and training opportunities up to SCQF level 8 (i.e. HND level). The portfolio of training offered can be categorised into the following broad subject areas:

- Engineering, Science and Technology
- Creative Industries, Computing and Business Enterprise
- Service Industries.

Each of these subject areas is contained within a separate ‘School’ of the College which contains a number of specialised ‘Faculties’.

The College offers a significant amount of training in line with the areas identified by ONE as the priorities for the economy of the North East:

- Energy
- Food and Drink
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Life Sciences
- Creative Industries.

The College also operates Centres for Excellence in relations to the region’s national specialisms – Maritime, Oil and Gas, and Creative Industries.

Positioned at the centre, between schools and universities and employers, the College is also uniquely placed to play a key role in the implementation of the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) to the benefit of students and the local economy. The College has taken the lead regionally for the implementation of CfE through its well established links with local schools and universities. The College’s approach to the implementation of CfE is summarised in its Essential Skills for Employability: Core and Soft Skills Strategy – a copy can be accessed at <http://www.nescol.ac.uk/about/strategic-planning>

A Memorandum of Understanding to provide a framework for developing and providing vocational provision for school pupils in the region has been agreed with the two local authorities.

Opportunities for All

The College is committed to addressing, together with other partners, the Government's policy for 'Opportunities for All'. Its curriculum is primarily focused on learners from the 16-19 year old age group.

In AY 2013-14 53.8% of the College's credits were generated by learners aged 16-19 years old. The College aims to increase this proportion to % by AY 2017-18. The College's activity relating to learners aged 16-19 years old is already above the national average. In the context of schools aiming to increase the number of pupils who stay on in 5th and 6th year, the College does not anticipate that its activity for this age group can increase much further.

The College is committed to developing new partnerships with schools, university partners and employers to deliver a still broader range of vocational opportunities, further enriching the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence, and building strong partnerships to deliver more STEM employability programmes and Modern Apprenticeships. The College also works with SDS to offer programmes which are specifically targeted at groups identified as hard to reach.

In September 2014, North East Scotland College became a partner of the 'Aberdeen Guarantees' initiative, which aims to bring together the efforts of the public, private and third sectors to assist and enable young people to progress towards employment. The new partnership seeks to ensure that all 14 to 25-year-olds in Aberdeen City have access to quality opportunities in learning, training and work, and is set to build upon work undertaken as part of the Opportunities for All agenda.

The initiative will bring together a range of approaches for youngsters who are still at school, those approaching the end of their school days, and those who have already left. It will help support these young people to move into further education, training, and employment,

building on the work already done to reduce the number of unemployed young people in Aberdeen City. It will also advertise new training and work opportunities for young people and promote youth-employment related activity to young people, parents, carers, professionals and employers.

School-College Links

The College will, in relation to the wider Learning and Skills Journey, continue to ensure that school pupil pathways across the educational landscape are well-aligned, accessible, flexible and easily navigated. In turn, leading to greater cost-efficiencies, lack of duplication and learner journeys that move at a pace consistent with learner capacity.

Through the School-College Links Programme, the College offers a range of courses to school pupils across the region. Included within the programme offered are SQA Skills for Work Awards, City and Guilds Awards, National Progression Awards, National Certificate courses, a Professional Development Award and a Higher National Certificate course. Acknowledging that increased numbers of pupils seem to be staying at school to complete 5th year, some programmes have been designed to allow pupils to complete an NC Award over their 4th and 5th year, allowing, where applicable, direct progression to HNC/D programmes. This route has the potential to increase the access to Higher Education opportunities for pupils who would not follow the traditional 5 Higher route, and also allows for entry direct to the workplace at a higher level than a school leaver without an NC qualification.

The opening of the College's Learning Centre at Ellon Academy Community Campus in August 2015 has provided a further venue to offer vocational education opportunities to school pupils from across the region. Provision currently being offered at the Centre includes Skills for Work Engineering, Higher Computing and Higher Photography.

It is clear through the College's partnerships with Local Authorities that the profile of pupils in the senior phase is changing in that pupils who

would previously left school at the end of S4 are now staying at school to increase their portfolio of National 5 and Higher qualifications.

The primary objective of the School-College Links Programme for the current year and for moving forward is to offer accredited learning opportunities that support pupils from across the region in developing transferable skills for employment and industry relevant knowledge at the level most appropriate to them individually within a curriculum informed by local labour market intelligence. There is a focus on providing opportunities that support progression direct to local employment or to further or higher education. School-College Links courses are mapped to regional pathways identifying access and exit points suitable to learners of all abilities and ambitions.

In AY 2016-17 a wide offer of vocational courses has been made to both Local Authorities at a range of levels to encourage pupils of all abilities to participate in career pathway education opportunities. Examples of new additions to the regional offer in the current year include: Foundation Apprenticeships in Engineering, Children and Young People and Health and Social Care, NC Units in the Built Environment, Skills for Work (SfW) Health Sector, Higher Computing Science, SfW Hospitality and SfW Laboratory Skills. The number of School-College Links courses available to both Local Authorities has increased by a further 44% from the previous year, with 1,340 places offered on 72 courses to pupils in S4 – S6 across the region. A total of 990 enrolments has been generated with representation from all 29 secondary schools across the region. The number of vocational courses being offered across the region to school pupils has increased from 46 in AY 2015-16 to 62 in AY 2016-17.

A further increase in activity is expected in AY 2017-18, with over 90 courses included in the offer currently being promoted. New additions to this programme include Foundation Apprenticeships in Creative Media, Business, ICT Hardware and Laboratory Science. Working in partnership with both Local Authorities, all Secondary Schools in the region, SDS and business partners, the School-College Links programme offers extensive opportunities for a wide range of learners to add meaningful depth and breadth to their Senior Phase school curriculum.

In addition to the developments related to provision, an online application system for school pupils was introduced for School-College Links Programme applications for AY 2016-17. The new system has considerably improved the application process. Detailed School Links pages - <http://www.nescol.ac.uk/courses/school-links> - have been developed for the new College website and the Programme and the achievements of those enrolled on it are being publicised on Twitter and Facebook to increase awareness of School College Links activity.

The College's School Liaison Manager currently sits on the Programme Management Group for the local SHEP, Aspire North (this covers the North East, Moray, Highlands and Islands and Shetland and Orkney.), and also chairs the Regional Sub-Group for the North East activity. These roles require involvement in the governance of the SHEP programme and provision of support/assistance to the Aspire North team as required on any relevant issues, ensuring that the College's remains at the forefront of developments.

Developing the Young Workforce

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) focuses on:

- Ensuring a work relevant educational experience for our young people
- All of us valuing and understanding what a rich blend of learning, including vocational education, can offer
- Employers playing an active role shaping Scotland's education system
- Employers playing an active role benefiting from Scotland's education system
- Employers helping education create a talent pool they need and recruiting young people
- Young people making informed and ambitious choices about jobs and careers.

There are multiple stakeholders involved in the delivery of the above. The College has well-established partnerships with each of its local authority partners and university partners. These links exist to provide a meaningful vocational training and skills development for young people as part of their school curriculum, while facilitating seamless

transition throughout the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence on to meaningful post-school and post-college destinations.

In AY 2013-14 the College was identified as an early adopter of the recommendations of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce. During AY2014-15 the College participated in the two early adopter projects which resulted in identification of a method of engaging with the school maths curriculum in a way that prepares young people for the use of Maths within Science, Technology and Engineering careers, and a method of delivering elements of vocational learning to geographically remote school pupils, reducing the need for continuous investment in transportation costs. The College has representation on the Scottish Government led Early Adopters Reference Group which will be reviewing and considering dissemination of the findings of the national Early Adopter activity.

In AY 2015-16 the Developing the Young Workforce Steering Group, established to oversee the development of the 'early adopter projects' funded by SFC, was re-established as the DYW Regional Collaborative Group. The Group is chaired by the College's Vice Principal Learning & Quality and is comprised of senior officials from the College, both local Universities, the two Local Authorities, SFC, SDS, SQA and Developing the Young Workforce. The remit of the Group is as follows:

1. To ensure all 39 recommendations of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce are being given the appropriate focus in the region
2. To ensure organisations are not duplicating activity
3. To create consensus amongst stakeholders on where activity is best placed / led
4. To provide collaborative leadership by identifying game-changing ways of delivering benefits to young people. This will be focused on more effective engagement between
 - a. Employers and education / young people
 - b. Between education providers
 - c. Between education providers and SDS
 - d. All stakeholders not mentioned above.

The Group cannot be 'decision making' as any decisions will have to be referred via individual organisations governance structures. However, the Group will play a leadership role in making compelling cases (where required) for change.

The Group is continuing to encourage partnership working for the planning and delivery of vocational pathways from school to College and on to University and employment in line with the recommendations of the Commission. Consideration is to be given to labour market intelligence to identify alternative routes to employment within the region and consideration to be given to how to build capacity for young people entering employment in potential growth areas including Hospitality, Events Management, Travel and Tourism, Business and Administration and Creative Industries.

Also in AY 2015-16, the College received additional funding from the SFC to support the ongoing implementation of DYW. This includes the creation of three posts that will help drive forward a strategic and regional approach in supporting the development of high quality senior phase vocational pathways while engaging with employers. These posts are: Project Manager, Employer Engagement Manager, and DYW Administrator. The funding will also be used to:

- Increase the levels of young people undertaking Foundation Apprenticeships in key subject areas as identified in the Regional Skills Assessment, by working in partnership with AGCC, key employers and the local authorities to secure high quality work-based learning experiences and work-placement opportunities that will enhance their learning experience.
- Invest in CPD for College staff as well as school teachers in curriculum areas where there are skills gap e.g. IT has been identified within the region where there is insufficient capacity in the delivery of a full IT curriculum in schools. A mutually arranged CPD provision will allow for development in both sectors to increase capacity for curriculum delivery.

- Actively promote opportunities to employers and young people which will address gender imbalances existing within certain occupational areas and will capitalise on the existing successes of the College in developing, in partnership with companies such as Shell, SCORE Europe and Schlumberger, initiatives designed to get 'Girls into Engineering'. In addition, the College will seek to create a greater awareness for employers and young people of careers that have traditionally seen an under-representation of specific genders i.e. care and auto-motive.
- Build on its already strong and well-established relationships with partner local authorities, schools and young people to develop and create greater awareness of the variety vocational pathways to employment available via the Senior Phase, Foundation Apprenticeships through to Modern Apprenticeships and Graduate/Advanced Apprenticeships.
- Actively engage with local employers in order to promote Foundation Apprenticeships more widely along with other College-based vocational opportunities.
- Develop further the College's External Engagement Strategy and curriculum offer through consultation with local employers, AGCC, partner local authorities, partner universities and College staff.

At the time of writing, the College is preparing a bid for SDS funding as part of their Pathfinder Delivery Project 2016-18. The funding is part of a five year SDS project to develop a framework for work based learning pathways in Scotland as part of a response to the Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy. The objective is to introduce Foundation Apprenticeships at Level 6 across a range of frameworks to pupils in the senior phase of secondary schools, with delivery taking place through a number of pathfinder partnerships (colleges, local authorities, schools and employers).

In considering ways to support Developing the Young Workforce through School-College links there are opportunities to link in with younger years in schools to build aspiration and motivation to consider future employment opportunities. To this end the College has had initial discussions with RGU to identify ways of linking in with their Northern Stars programme which engages with S1 and S2 pupils at Northfield Academy. Opportunities also exist for College staff to engage with pupils in Primary 7 and S1 and S2 across the region to start the process of thinking about employment opportunities and the value in developing the key employability skills to support progression to the workplace.

Curriculum Priorities

The following curriculum priorities have been identified for North East Scotland College:

- To provide high quality inclusive learning and teaching experiences in the right place across the region
- To provide a skills-based curriculum leading to positive destinations, with the focus on 16–24 year olds, while providing a relevant range of provision for other learners, including women returners and people with disabilities
- To deliver high quality education and training through inspirational teaching in order that lives can be transformed and ambitions realised
- To provide clear pathways to education and training for pupils in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence in ways that develop the young workforce
- To provide clear articulation routes to further and higher education for all learners who seek to progress to further study
- To work with employers to ensure that the skills being developed provide students with the vocational skills and wider core and essential skills which prepare them for seamless progression to employment
- To deliver a flexible, accessible and efficient curriculum that is needs led and delivers high quality outcomes for learners
- To contribute to the local and national economy by contributing to the local and national skills base.

Curriculum Planning

The College undertakes an annual Curriculum Area Development Planning exercise which is completed at Team level and provides an opportunity for curriculum staff to:

- Gather the expertise of the subject team in relation to ongoing and forthcoming changes to the external environment which will affect the nature of the curriculum being offered in particular subject areas – this could affect both the way in which it is offered (e.g. a need to switch from College based to work based programmes) and the content (e.g. new technology, new legislation, government initiatives)
- Review the existing curriculum to assess its strengths and weaknesses and to identify programmes for amendment and deletion
- Identify new courses to be introduced having considered the external factors, reviewed the existing offering and considered the College's strategic aims and objectives and curriculum priorities.

Curriculum plans take full account of the strategic priorities of the external bodies who influence the curriculum, including the Scottish Government, the SFC, Industry Bodies, (such as Sector Skills Councils, OPITO, ECITB, Construction Skills, HABIA etc), SQA and other Awarding Bodies, SDS and local industry.

The curriculum planning process is also informed by environmental scanning to ensure that the impact of other external factors such as demographics, the local economy and regional infrastructure developments (e.g. Energetica, Aberdeen Harbour expansion, Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, Chapelton of Elsick) are considered when refreshing the curriculum offer. Key Skills Development Scotland documents referred to as part of the Curriculum Area Development Planning Exercise are the Regional Skills Assessment for Aberdeen City and Shire and Skills Investment Plans. Labour market intelligence and employer engagement activities also play a crucial role in the process. The College is currently considered engaging a market research consultancy to undertake work to further

support alignment of the College's curriculum with the local labour market.

In planning the College's provision, full account is also taken of student satisfaction with learning and teaching. This includes a full analysis of recruitment trends by course, retention, attainment and wider achievement together with learner progression to positive destinations. In this way quality improvement is an integral and vital part of curriculum planning and review.

The curriculum planning arrangements for AY 2017-18 will continue to ensure that the College maintains a fully integrated regional curriculum and continues to identify opportunities for increasing subject choice and progression for students.

During the planning period, the College will:

- Ensure that the right learning is available and accessible in the right place and that it is being delivered efficiently to the highest possible standards
- Undertake a review of the College's portfolio in relation to programme design
- Ensure that the College's Curriculum Planning Group, comprising senior staff and chaired by the Vice Principal Learning and Quality, meets regularly to plan, develop and evaluate the curriculum and to take steps to ensure it is as future proof as possible
- Embed its commitment to the dissemination of good practice approaches to curriculum delivery, designed to maximise participation of promoted and unpromoted teaching staff, support staff and students, across all College campuses
- Enhance existing key regional curriculum strategies and policies to support high quality delivery and current and emerging skills shortages
- Continue to offer a range of part-time SFC-funded vocational courses, while seeking additional opportunities to increase income for the new College by offering more part-time courses at full cost

- Maintain effective Schools/College links and continue to play a key role in the implementation of the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence and in addressing the recommendations of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce
- Continue to equip learners with essential skills for learning, life and work, with increasing emphasis on entrepreneurship, enterprise and sustainability, and to develop those aptitudes that lead to successful learners, effective contributors, confident individuals and responsible citizens
- Consider further opportunities to meet demand for upskilling for those already in employment through the offering of advanced part time provision
- In relation to specific curriculum areas, the College will:
 - consider new opportunities to expand and grow provision in areas where growth in the labour market has been predicted e.g. health care (2.6%), social care (1.5%), social sciences (1.4%), Computing (2%), business (1.8%) and performing arts, music and media (4.2%) in response to demand and in line with available funding
 - consider predicted declines in the labour market e.g. hairdressing (5.3%) and beauty therapy (3.1%)
 - seek to increase participation in STEM subjects
 - provide training in areas of growing employer demand, for example, tourism.

In addition to improving existing provision, the College will continue to explore opportunities to introduce new provision through partnership working. Discussions are currently being held with NHS Grampian regarding the College supporting its workforce development in both medical and non-medical disciplines.

During the planning period the College will continue to use targeted publicity and marketing activities in curriculum areas where recruitment has been falling slightly but progressively over the last few years, such as hairdressing.

Further information on the provision offered can be found in the North East Scotland College Prospectus 2017-18 – <http://www.nescol.ac.uk/downloads>

In order to help young people and their families, school staff, careers advisers, employers and staff of colleges and universities better to understand the variety of curriculum pathways that these links offer, a series of Curriculum Maps is being developed which show in different vocational areas the pathways from school through college and/or university into work. As well as sharing routes through full-time study, the maps record the “apprenticeship” routes – including the developing Foundation Apprenticeships and Graduate/Advanced Apprenticeships, as well as the long-established Modern Apprenticeships. A copy of the College publication North East Scotland Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire Pathways – a guide to education progression can be accessed on the College website - <http://www.nescol.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/course-listings/north-east-scotland-aberdeen-and-aberdeenshire-pathways.pdf>

Curriculum Delivery

After the considerable challenges immediately after merger involved in integrating two very different IT environments the College now has a very robust IT infrastructure that provides reliable, high quality connectivity and functionality, both for the delivery of the curriculum and student support, and for the ancillary business processes. The College's Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard) is used across all areas of the curriculum to support the learning process.

As the potential of technology to enrich the delivery of the curriculum is harnessed, the role of staff will inevitably be affected – as it is in any area of the economy where technology has been deployed. Alongside the work being undertaken nationally on the Workforce of the Future, the College will undertake its own internal discussions to ensure that we have the right combination of staff roles and skills to deliver the curriculum and to support students.

The work of the College now is to conduct a more fundamental review of the way we deliver each area of the curriculum and to implement

approaches that capitalise on the many computer-based tools and approaches that can enrich the curriculum and promote student attainment, and provide the possibility of efficiency gains.

The College's approach to curriculum delivery must evolve to meet the changing needs of student and employers and in light of increasing challenging financial circumstances. Consideration will be given to the use of a number of teaching methodologies, including, collaborative learning, flexible modes of delivery, individualised/personalised learning, and the use of digital portfolios and virtualisation.

Beyond the Region

North East Scotland College is committed to providing a curriculum which supports the development of the local economy and meets the needs of learners in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The College, however, also provides some training for clients outwith the region:

- The Scottish Maritime Academy provides courses unique to the nautical sector in the UK, and is seen as one of Scotland's premier maritime education and training providers
- Oil and gas training is provided to learners outwith the region, mainly through provision delivered by The Oil and Gas Academy for Scotland (OGAS) and ASET (the College's wholly owned subsidiary company)
- The College's Business and Community Development Team deliver distance learning programmes to students from within and out with the region. At the time of writing, the College has committed to reviewing the volume of activity delivered out with the region.

Articulation

North East Scotland College and the Robert Gordon University (RGU) benefit from highly effective partnership working in a number of key areas which enable the institutions to deliver the right learning in the right place, develop the region's workforce and contribute to the region's economic needs.

In recent years the Boards of the two institutions have held a number of joint events to discuss curriculum links and future developments and opportunities for the partnership.

Both institutions remain committed to developing further the longstanding strong partnership which was strengthened with the signing of the Associate College Agreement in October 2007 and which is regularly highlighted throughout Scotland as a model of good practice.

The Associate College Agreement aims to:

- Maximise the lifelong learning opportunities for learners in the region by enabling better and deeper collaboration to support articulation from schools and communities to College and then to degree courses at the University
- Raise aspirations of learners at all levels by the creation of flexible and innovative learning pathways linked to employment
- Promote access and inclusion for potential learners by developing a shared vision and strategy to increase articulation and progression opportunities for all, specifically targeting under-represented groups
- Ensure that national priorities for skills development are realised at all stages of the learning journey by developing articulation and progression opportunities that meet local and national skill needs
- Promote the sharing of good practice through effective joint planning as appropriate, to improve the quality and range of articulation opportunities for learners in ways which improve learner outcomes
- Explore opportunities for shared services and economies of delivery to maximise the utilisation of resources to engage and support learners.

An integral part of the agreement is the 2+2 Degree-Link Programme, which offers North East Scotland College students the opportunity to gain two awards from four years of higher education – an HND and an Honours degree. Offered on a 2+2 basis (two years at College followed by two years at RGU), students successfully completing a relevant College HND qualification can obtain entry to the third year of

a four year degree. In some cases 1+3 Degree Links area available where students who complete an HNC can enter into second year of the appropriate degree course.

Over 400 students progress annually to RGU from the College through these arrangements. Over 1,000 students have articulated from HNC/Ds at North East Scotland College to the second (HNC) or third (HND) year of degree programmes at RGU in the past three years.

As noted in the 'Additional Needs and Disabilities' section of this document, the comprehensive articulation arrangements with RGU play a key role in widening access to higher education in the region, especially for those who lack the qualifications to enter university straight after school or who are more suited to vocational study/the College environment.. During the planning period, opportunities to increase the number of Degree Links across the regional curriculum will continue to be sought.

For further information, please see the Degree Links leaflet - <http://www.nescol.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/course-listings/degree-link-college-university-why-not-both.pdf>

The College has also established articulation agreements with a number of universities across Scotland (including University of Aberdeen, Abertay University, Edinburgh Napier University, Glasgow Caledonian University, Queens Margaret University, The Open University, and the University of the Highlands and Islands) with agreed articulation routes in place for the majority of its HNDs. The College is working to establish future articulation agreements with Heriot-Watt University and the University of the West of Scotland. The College currently has 167 Subject Level Agreements in place with the universities representing true articulation and 32 agreed pathways. The College also has a range of formal Subject Level Agreements with The Open University. The College will continue to maximise articulations opportunities for students ensuring articulation is considered when new programmes are introduced.

In AY 2013-14, 379 students articulated with advanced standing. In AY 2014-15, 430 and in AT 2015-16 this number had increased to 452.
Draft NESCol Outcome Agreement 2017-18

In the past three years 261 students have also articulated with The Open University. The College aims to maintain and if possible increase the number of students articulating during the planning period. The College remains committed to increase opportunities for articulation where possible however it should be noted that significant increases in the planning period are not expected as this is dependent on the number of available places at universities.

Further information on university progression pathways can be found in the North East Scotland Prospectus 2017-18 - <http://www.nescol.ac.uk/downloads>

During the planning period the College will seek opportunities to develop additional progression routes for its learners. At the time of writing discussions were being held in relation to childcare.

The Scottish Government has made a commitment to increasing the entitlement for free childcare for each child. To meet this commitment it is estimated that across Scotland some 14,000 additional childcare workers will need to be trained – in addition to the numbers that need to be trained to maintain the existing workforce. This includes managers (trained to SCQF 9 NPA or SCQF 10 Honours Degree level) as well as practitioners (trained to, say, HND level).

It is not known exactly what proportion of those will be needed in the North East Scotland region – but assuming that it is 8%, some 1,100 additional childcare workers will be need to be trained (in addition to the numbers currently being trained) in the region over relatively short period of time.

Following discussions with the University of Aberdeen's School of Education, an articulation route has been agreed between the College's HNC and HND in Childhood Practice and the University's BEd Primary Education. The arrangement is such that someone who completes the HND can at some point join year 3 of the BEd programme and thereby qualify as a primary school teacher.

This arrangement sits alongside the existing articulation into the University's BA Childhood Practice degree (which is the qualification

required for managers of childcare facilities) and the College's own NPA in Childhood Practice which is available as part-time study for those who have completed the HND and have taken up employment as childcare workers.

It means that there is a clear progression pathway from provision available to pupils at school – such as the Foundation Apprenticeship in Children & Young People – into College and University provision.

It has been suggested to Scottish Government officials that the HN provision – and indeed the degrees – could be delivered in such a way that the individual could be employed by an authority and undertake study on day-release basis – an HNC qualification can typically be delivered on a “full-time” basis over two days a week for one year, and the qualification already requires a substantial element of work-placement so this would not mean a major change except in the status of the student. This change of status could make progressing into this area of work more attractive. Scottish Government officials believe that the arrangements developed in this region provide a model that could be adopted throughout Scotland.

Access and Inclusion

North East Scotland College is an inclusive college which is committed to offering a curriculum that provides opportunities for those who can benefit from education and progress onto further education and/or employment.

The College is committed to providing opportunities that are accessible to people irrespective of socio-economic status and the various protected characteristics. Providing access includes the provision of dedicated courses where appropriate (e.g. learners with additional needs) and/or providing additional tailored guidance and other support (e.g. care leavers).

Consideration is given to meeting the needs of specific groups of learners (e.g. hard to reach, additional needs, care experience) when planning the curriculum offer. The College also has in place a number of strategies and policies in relation to access and inclusion.

During AY 2016-17 the College developed an Access and Inclusion Strategy. The Strategy identifies the following policy priorities are highlighted as being integral to the College's strategy for widening access and promoting inclusiveness and progression:

- Increased participation in education and training, particularly for 16 – 19 and 19 – 24 year olds
- Wider access to education and training
- Lifelong learning
- Digital inclusiveness
- Inclusive approaches to meeting the needs of those with additional learning requirements
- Using flexible and responsive teaching and learning styles
- Upskilling the workforce
- Promoting excellence
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Development of the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence in learners
- Contributing to Developing the Young Workforce
 - Providing articulation and progression opportunities for learners to progress to degree link programmes or to employment
 - Providing positive destinations for school leavers, in liaison with key partners
 - Safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of learners.

The Strategy details key aspects of the College's commitment to Access and Inclusion, including:

- Providing a flexible and accessible curriculum, including entry-level courses in each area of provision wherever possible, and clear and coherent progression pathways, that meets the needs of students and employers in their local area
- Providing clear pre-entry guidance, on-going specific and general academic guidance, pre-exit guidance, and a range of other forms of support
- Maximising learners Skills for Life and Skills for Work through implementation of Curriculum for Excellence
- Making reasonable adjustments where appropriate

- Maintaining close liaison with external partners/agencies involved in provision for, or representation of, students with additional learning requirements
- Ensuring the rights and wellbeing of care experienced students are promoted
- Promoting digital technologies as a means to broaden and enable equitable access to learning for all.

The document also acknowledges that a number of specialised teams from across the College are needed to support and implement the Access and Inclusion Strategy. The importance of staff development is also noted with all College staff being offered relevant development opportunities around inclusiveness, and where these necessarily underpin particular roles this development will be mandatory. The Strategy also highlights the effective partnership arrangements the College has in place with a range of partners to ensure successful transitions, support and positive destinations are provided across the region.

A copy of the Strategy can be accessed on the College website - <http://www.nescol.ac.uk/about/strategic-planning>

Further information on the College’s approach to meeting the needs of individuals who wish to access its courses or services can be found in its Information, Advice, Guidance and Support Policy - <http://www.nescol.ac.uk/about/policies> .

Equality and Diversity

The Board of North East Scotland College is committed to fostering a culture of equality and diversity. Board Members are aware of their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

To ensure that there is understanding and awareness of the Board’s duty, Members receive presentations on equality and diversity issues and are provided with opportunities to attend training on key issues. In June 2016 Board Members attended a training session - Promoting equality in a new landscape: the role of the governing body – provided

by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU). At the time of writing discussions are taking place with the ECU to arrange a further session on ‘Unconscious Bias’. Attendance at both internal and external training and development opportunities continues to be encouraged. The Board is also kept up to date with any new developments in equality and diversity relevant to its work.

The Board participates in the consultation process for the College’s Equality Outcomes with full discussion as part of Board agendas. The Board and its Human Recourses, and Learning & Teaching and Student Services Committees also regularly monitor progress against the Equality Outcomes. Information on protected characteristics of both staff and students is also considered at relevant Committee Meetings as well as key policy issues such as the College’s Equal Pay Statement, Gender Pay Gap Report and Occupational Segregation Reports.

To demonstrate its commitment to equality and diversity the Board appointed its first Equality and Diversity Champion in June 2016. The key objectives of the role are to:

- To help ensure that the Board observes good practice in regard to equality and diversity;
- To further embed equality and diversity in the Board’s strategic and decision-making processes
- To help ensure that the Board complies with its legal obligations in regard to equality and diversity and meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Board’s current gender balance is

Board of Management					
Non Executive Board Members		Staff Board Members (including Principal)		Student Board Members	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
8	4	1	1	1	1

(At the time of writing the Board has one Non-executive Board Member vacancy and one Staff Board Member vacancy)

The Board's Governance Steering Group is currently reviewing its selection and appointment process and approach to succession planning to ensure that Members' ambition for a diverse governing body is fulfilled.

Discussions at the Governance Steering Group have involved reaffirming a commitment to take positive action in recruitment. Actions to support this include communicating the intention of the Board to increase its diversity to key stakeholders in the region, especially to organisations with a focus relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. Work will also be undertaken to demystify the role of a Board Member and to publicise the benefits of being a Member. This will include engaging with local and regional employers to emphasise the professional development benefits of Board positions and engaging with communities to raise awareness of the regional role and impact of the College. Consideration is also being given to inviting external observers to Board and Committee Meetings to encourage interest in future Board Member vacancies, and through the use of targeted invitations, to help encourage greater diversity in the Board's future membership. The Board will also engage with relevant equalities organisations to seek their advice on outreach and addressing potential barriers to participation.

During the planning period, the College will continue to promote equality and diversity and an awareness of the needs of different groups. Applications will continue to be welcomed from all sectors of the community, and support will be offered to all students in a manner that acknowledges, respects and celebrates a diverse student and staff population.

The College will continue to seek to ensure that as an organisation it creates - year-on-year - a more equal, diverse and inclusive learning and working environment for students and staff alike. The College's strategy is to:

- Ensure equality and diversity is embedded in all areas of College activity
- Implement a set of Equality Outcomes based on evidence gathered through consultation, monitoring and analysis of key performance indicator data

- Use data gathered to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality
- Undertake equality impact assessments as required
- Ensure that all College staff undertake mandatory equality and diversity training to raise awareness of the need to promote equality within their work areas.

A copy of the College's Equality and Diversity Policy can be accessed at <http://www.nescol.ac.uk/about/policies>

The College has identified four Equality Outcomes for the period 2017-21:

Equality Outcome 1: The College's gender pay gap will be reduced by addressing the causes of gender inequality to create a more equal and balanced workforce with men and women being more equally represented at all levels in the organisation. Ultimately, the College aspires to reduce the gender pay to zero.

Equality Outcome 2: The attainment gap for students with disabilities will be reduced by ensuring an inclusive and accessible learning environment which will enable them to maximise their chances of attaining the skills, knowledge and qualifications needed to achieve their full potential and progress to further/higher education or employment.

Equality Outcome 3: Opportunities will be created in targeted curriculum areas to address gender imbalance and stereotyping. The College will aim to eliminate the barriers to subject choice and thereby enable all students to maximise their education and employment opportunities.

Equality Outcome 4: The College and its regional partners will work together to reduce inequality and remove barriers to attainment and employment across all protected characteristics to meet the aspirations of community planning regionally.

A high level action plan has been developed to indicate key actions the College will implement for each of the Outcomes has been developed. At the time of writing more detailed action plans are under development.

Commitment to access, equality and diversity is also demonstrated by the College's Value of "Respect and Diversity" and one of its Strategic Aims – "To provide accessible programmes of study that lead to positive outcomes for students". These aspirations will continue to be reflected in the College's activities throughout the planning period. Key Strategic Objectives detailed in the College's Strategic Plan for 2015-18 include:

- "To work with partners in the public and voluntary sectors to provide appropriately targeted learning opportunities for educationally disadvantaged groups, (including those furthest from the labour market, those with disabilities, those with additional support needs, and care experience young people)."
- "To maintain a range of College courses, suited to differing levels of prior experience and learning, in order to provide appropriate progression opportunities within the College, to university or to work-based qualifications."

The College has initiated, developed and established several high level strategic and operational groups which aim to implement and embed effective equality-related approaches that will enable increasingly positive outcomes and experiences for those who learn and work at the College. These groups include:

- Equality and Diversity Strategy Group – This group has overall responsibility for the developing and implementing the College's Equality and Diversity Strategy. Chaired by the Vice Principal Human Resources it brings together key managers with responsibility for ensuring the College remains an equal, diverse and inclusive environment for both students and staff. The Group is supported by the Staff Equality Group in meeting Public Sector Equality Duties. The Group plays a key role in developing and monitoring progress of the College's set of Equality Outcomes and related Action Plan.

- Quality Improvement and Assurance Committee (QIAC) – The QIAC is a committee of the College's Academic Board and is chaired by the Vice Principal Learning and Quality. Since its inception its work has predominantly focused on quality improvement matters and the implementation of the sectors new quality arrangements. In seeking to mainstream equality approaches, and build capacity for improvement on equality-related issues, the QIAC has sought to align its quality and equality approaches. . This allows College Managers from both support and curriculum teams to focus more consistently on ensuring the student experiences remain positive, fair and inclusive.

- Data Management Group (DMG) – This Group has been established following an increasing demand for accurate data and effective data management and reporting. The Group is chaired by the College's Head of Organisational Services and is comprised of key College managers. The Group recognises the need to improve the collation, analysis and reporting of data for all protected characteristics. In addition, the College, through its participation in the SFC's Action Learning Project and its Self-evaluation Report for 2015-16 identified the following as a key action point:

"NESCol will look to improve the collection, reporting and use of data across all protected characteristics for both staff and students, taking the relevant actions identified, to advance equality of opportunity and meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty."

In response to the above the College has developed a suite of diversity reports on Launchpad - a Capita/Unit-e product. These reports enable key College staff, including Heads of School, Faculty Managers and Curriculum & Quality Managers, and members of the Equality & Diversity Strategy Group, to access, monitor and analyse information relating to applications, enrolments and applications converting to enrolments by age; gender; disability; religious belief, and sexual orientation. The reports can be produced at College,

School, Team and Course level enabling general College-wide observations to be made alongside the exploration of specific areas to address any areas of potential concern or those which demonstrate good practice.

This is the first time the College has had access to such detailed information on the protected characteristics of students and as such consideration of how best to use the data needs to be undertaken.

Curriculum teams now also have access to Performance Indicator data such as early withdrawal, further withdrawal, partial success and success by protected characteristic which will be able to be targeted to be identified and implemented.

In addition to the above groups, the College acknowledges the importance of student feedback in relation to the equality and diversity agenda – two key approaches are student surveys and student focus groups.

The College's First Impressions Survey in 2015-16 included the question 'All students are treated fairly'. The positive response rate for this question was 97%, an increase of 3% on the previous year. The positive response rate was then maintained at 97% in 2016-17. The College's Satisfaction Survey in 2015-16 included the question 'I believe all students at the College are treated equally and fairly by staff'. Amongst full-time students, the positive response rate was 80%. At the time of writing the Satisfaction Survey for 2016-17 was being conducted.

Equality monitoring data is requested along with survey responses. This allows the College to monitor satisfaction levels by protected characteristic. This has provided a rich source of evidence which has the potential to be used to feed into Equality Impact Assessment and to identify service improvements.

During each academic year, the College facilitates a number of student focus groups based on agreed themes. During 2016-17, one theme is equality and diversity. The holding of these focus groups is enabling the College to explore both students' views on equality and

diversity and the College's approach to promoting a diverse and inclusive learning environment.

To date positive feedback from these focus groups has highlighted that the majority of students feel that the College is inclusive with a diverse range of students and that staff treat students with dignity and respect. The discussions have also demonstrated that there is good general awareness amongst students of the meaning of equality and diversity. A number of students were also aware of the protected characteristics and that the College has a duty to address equality and diversity issues under legislation.

Some mixed feedback has been received in relation to the imagery used by the College around the Campuses and in its publication – many students agreed that the images used reflect a diverse range of students in terms of race and age however some noted that images of disabled people were lacking and in some curriculum areas images seemed to follow gender stereotypes.

Discussions at the focus groups have also helped to increase student awareness of their own behaviours, for example, one group acknowledged that some of their classroom 'banter' could be perceived as offensive by those from some protected characteristic groups.

Actions which have been identified to date from the focus groups include a review of the images currently on display across the Campuses to further promote inclusiveness; consideration of how employability skills could be improved to include an awareness of appropriate communication methods to avoid unintentional offence e.g. to address inappropriate classroom 'banter'; and a review of learning materials to ensure that opportunities are taken to promote inclusiveness wherever possible.

North East Scotland College has been accepted as one of up to six colleges to take part in a two and a half year Equalities Challenge Unit (ECU) project - Attracting Diversity: Equality in Student Recruitment in Scottish Colleges. The purpose of the project is to increase the

participation of underrepresented equality groups within the student body.

The project will focus on ensuring that the College's student recruitment is inclusive of groups sharing a protected characteristic, identifying improvements for the targeting of underrepresented groups; and improving outcomes for underrepresented groups.

Participation in the project will require the College to:

- Review and benchmark data to appropriately assess underrepresentation
- Set specific and achievable targets in relation to improving participation of underrepresented equality groups
- Develop a regional approach with relevant partners, including the two local universities
- Develop an understanding of local barriers to access
- Develop, deliver and evaluate positive initiatives to improve participation for target equality groups.

This project will also link into the College's work in relation to its Equality Outcomes and with a review of admissions and enrolment processes to ensure that it provides a fully inclusive and accessible service for all.

In March 2017 the College was confirmed as one of the participants for a further ECU project "Supporting workforce diversity: progressing staff equality in Scottish colleges" which is scheduled to last 1.5 years. The project aims to support colleges in identifying underrepresentation and developing positive action activities using existing college processes, specifically to:

- review and benchmark college data to appropriately assess underrepresentation
- set specific and achievable targets in relation to improving participation of underrepresented equality groups
- develop an understanding of barriers to development and progression (for instance by undertaking qualitative research)

- develop, deliver and evaluate positive action initiatives to improve development and progression opportunities for target equality groups.

The College's participation in this project will help to support the delivery of its current equality outcomes and its commitments in relation to equality detailed in this document. The project will also support the College in developing further robust evidence to inform and progress outcomes and activity for the next set of Equality Outcomes.

The College has in place an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Policy which details its commitment to ensuring that EIAs are to be conducted at all levels across the College. Responsibility for ensuring that an EIA takes place lies with the policy/procedure/strategy owner or staff with functional responsibility for taking and implementing decisions which may change adopted practices. EIAs for policies and strategies are published on the College's website.

Care Experienced

The Student Services Department at the College has in place a comprehensive policy detailing roles and responsibilities of staff and the processes involved in supporting this specific client group. In AY 2016-17 Student Services was aware of 101 care experienced learners on courses within the College.

The College has devised a detailed procedure that outlines key responsibilities and roles in supporting care experienced applicants and students, and a range of e-information and guidance for this client group has also been developed. A copy of the Promoting and Supporting Learning for the Care Experienced Policy can be accessed at <http://www.nescol.ac.uk/about/policies>

The College currently relies on self-disclosure by carers prior to and throughout the year or disclosure from an external agency. In terms of support for carers, the College has a named person at both the City and Fraserburgh Campuses ensuring that there is a visible main point of contact available for all care experienced applicants/students. Designated Student Services staff have also been identified to manage

the monitoring of attendance, progression and achievement of the care experienced students, in conjunction with Guidance Tutors and curriculum staff.

In AY 2017-18 the College will continue to work closely with the two local authorities and RGU in terms of information sharing protocol which will help in identifying those from a care experienced background and joint working in other LAC related issues. Members of the Student Support Team will also continue to participate in the Successful Transitions Post-16 Partnership Planning Group facilitated by Aberdeen City Council.

In AY 2015-16 a Transition Day was held to introduce potential care experienced students and their supporters to Student Support Services in the College. The event raised awareness of what support is on offer and included tours of College facilities; and information on study skills and available learning and pastoral support. Feedback from the event was been very positive. At the time of writing, the College's Student Services Team were conducting targeted focus groups to established the preferred approach to providing transition information to this client group.

Currently 4% of young individuals in a care experienced background go from school to university compared to 36% of young people not brought up in a care experienced background. It is the ambition of the College, in partnership with the University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University to try to bridge this gap with meaningful transitions from college to university through its regional framework identified in Corporate Parenting Action Plans. This regional approach to support the educational opportunities for the care experienced is the first to be formally developed between college and university institutions in Scotland and has been commended by the Centre of excellence for Looked after Children in Scotland (CELCIS).

In April 2015, under The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the College became a 'Corporate Parent'. The College has established a Corporate Parenting Plan, which will be led and monitored through the College's Inclusiveness and Guidance Committee which will then feed in to the Academic Board. Senior

Management will assist in the dissemination and updating of information across the College using a range of committee and leadership meetings to facilitate this process. The current staff induction programme has also been augmented to include a training session on the role of a corporate parent.

The Plan confirms the College's commitment to care experienced students. During the planning period the College intends to work with appropriate partners to support the transition for care experienced young people into FE and/or HE. This will involve collaboration with the two local universities to improve the positive destinations for the care experienced, including the development of a meaningful partnership with the new Virtual Head Teacher, responsible for overseeing all care experienced young people in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. This link will prove invaluable in the management of data sharing and transition from school to further and higher education.

The College recognises that effective and accurate pre-entry guidance as well as effective transitions is important for all students but is perhaps even more crucial for those from a LAC/CL background.

The Students' Association also has strong links with the Student Services Department, promoting events to celebrate the success of care experienced students. During the planning period, the Association will also work with curriculum areas to promote events in new ways that engage and educate more students on the support available for the care experienced.

The management and support of young carers is an identified area for improvement and with the College intent to build upon current practice.

Additional Needs and Disabilities

North East Scotland College is committed to ensuring that people with additional needs and disabilities are treated fairly. The College, therefore, makes reasonable adjustments to ensure that students with additional needs and disabilities are not substantially disadvantaged. In relation to access, the College is committed to:

- Providing a flexible and accessible curriculum that enables learners at all levels who can benefit from the vocational courses offered, to access provision that provides clear pathways to sustainable employment or further study
- Ensuring that there are entry-level courses, including those suited to the abilities and aspirations of those with additional learning requirements, in each area of provision wherever possible
- Developing new courses in, and converting existing courses into, formats that promote flexible access to learning in order to increase participation
- Ensuring that teaching approaches and materials do not create unnecessary barriers to learning, and wherever possible recognise the variety of learning styles, and anticipate the range of common learning difficulties.

The College is committed to providing access level programmes for those learners with additional needs who can benefit from them. The College is also committed to supporting transition between the region's educational institutions for those with additional needs. To that end, North East Scotland College is a key member of the region's Partnership Matters Agreement. This local agreement is implemented by a group comprised of representatives from the College, Aberdeen City Education and Children's Services, Aberdeen City Adult Social Care, Aberdeenshire Education and Children's Services, Aberdeenshire Housing and Social Work Services, Health and Social Care Partnership, Skills Development Scotland, Lead Scotland, Job Centre Plus, Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations, Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action, RGU and the University of Aberdeen.

The purpose of the agreement is to ensure: all partners recognise, understand and respect the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies that provide support; on-going discussion about the provision of support; and commitment to working in partnership to ensure provision of that support.

The overall ambition of the local partnership is to ensure children, young people and adults have the opportunity to access learning opportunities within further and higher education as appropriate within

the context of career progression pathways. During the planning period the local partners will continue to work together to identify and develop strategic solutions in ensuring the provision of appropriate support for children, young people and adults to access further and higher education. The local partnership will also further develop processes and protocols for considering individual cases where required.

At the time of writing the College is preparing a reference document on post-16 transitions policy and practice for those with additional support needs as a guide to assist with preparation for transitioning to the College. The College will continue to help strengthen transition arrangements in the region through involvement with similar improvements as appropriate.

In March 2016, the Scottish Government's Commission for Widening Access published its final report – A Blueprint for Fairness. The College is aware that the report makes a number of recommendations designed to address the issue of the relatively low participation in higher education of those from less privileged backgrounds and those who are care experienced. These recommendations will be considered by the College as it plans provision for the future. However, work already undertaken in this region in terms of establishing comprehensive articulation routes and in mapping the regional curriculum by subject area provide a very good starting point for further work in this area.

During the planning period the College will also continue to provide dedicated one to one support to individuals with additional needs across all areas of the curriculum in order to ensure that they maximise their attainment.

Gender Imbalance

In AY 2015-16 continuing actions taken to address gender imbalance in School Link programmes resulted in a number of female learners enrolling on Construction programmes, and a number of male learners enrolling on Hair and Care programmes. A range of private sector

sponsored Girls Into Energy courses, where groups of undertake the SQA Skills for Work National 5 Energy course also operated.

In AY 2017-18 the College will continue to promote all programme choices to both genders and to dispel perceptions of stereotypical career choices influenced by gender, as much as possible, through avenues such as career guidance, school visits, and the promotion of role models in College publications. Key curriculum areas of focus will be hairdressing, care, engineering and IT. The Directors of Curriculum and Head of Student Services will work in partnership in addressing gender imbalance in terms of recruitment for AY 2017-18.

At the time of writing the College is participating in an Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) project to advance equality of opportunity. As part of the initiative, the College has chosen to address issues in advancing gender equality in two specific subject areas: Women into Computing and Men into Care. The College is also aware that RGU are undertaking research into gender imbalance in education across the region and the University's findings will help inform partnership working between the two institutions to improving the gender balance in key areas.

Areas where progress has been made in addressing gender imbalance include engineering where the proportion of credits generated by female enrolments has increased from 6% in AY 2009-10 to 10.3% in AY 2014-15, and Care where the proportion of credits generated by male enrolments has increased from 10% in AY 2011-12 to 12% in AY 2013-14.

During the planning period, the College will continue to seek to address gender imbalances in participation of courses where there is a significant gender imbalance, and seek to implement recommendations from the SFC Gender Action Plan. The College will also implement its detailed Gender Action Plan developed as part of the ECU Project noted above. The College will also continue to collate and promote examples of equality and diversity good practice.

The Languages of Scotland

During the planning period consideration will be given to exploring a demand for short courses on Doric, the local dialect, for example, one day courses for NHS Grampian staff who are new to the area. The College is also planning to host an annual Doric festival. Scottish Government statistics indicate that there are 1,628 Gaelic speakers in Aberdeen City and 1,397 in Aberdeenshire. This represents 0.6% of the regional population (and 5.2% of the total Gaelic speakers in Scotland). During 2015-16, the College carried out a survey of its staff to determine a baseline of fluent Gaelic speakers. 45% of College staff responded to the survey with two self-identifying as fluent Gaelic speakers and a further six as having basic Gaelic language skills. The College will continue to promote local Gaelic activities to staff and students to contribute to the aims of the National Gaelic Language Plan (NGLP). An informal agreement has been established with the University of Aberdeen where members of College staff will be able to participate in Gaelic activities held at the University.

British Sign Language (BSL)

The College is aware that the SFC is committed to supporting the implementation of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015. As such NESCol will support where possible the outcomes of the BSL National Plan for Scotland to increase awareness of BSL and improve access to services available for Scotland's deaf and deafblind population. The College has identified the following ambitions in relation to BSL:

- To help address the national shortage of BSL communicators/interpreters by expanding existing provision and offering training to a higher level (the College currently offers BSL at SCQF levels, 3, 4 and 5) and by offering provision to other public sector bodies.
- To encourage key College front line undertake certified programmes (not as fully trained interpreters but to a competent level).
- To offer additional literacy support to BSL users in the right context.
- To produce a wider variety of College information in BSL

- To make further use of assistive technologies
- To provide support workers.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

ESOL programmes continue to be an area of high demand in the region. In 2014-15, there were 7,525 National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations to overseas migrants in North East Scotland, up from 6,250 in the previous year, 75% of the NINo registrations being in Aberdeen City and to overseas migrants in the 18-34 age range. Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire accounted for 17% of all NINo registrations to overseas migrants in Scotland during 2014-15.

However, according to the data published by the Department of Work and Pensions in August 2016, there was a drop in NINos in the year to June 2016. This may partly be attributed to a wait-and-see approach in the run up to the EU referendum. Despite this fall and the following levelling of the NINos and the continuing effects of the global economic crisis and low oil and gas prices, which have affected the oil and gas industry and the supporting industries, the high demand for ESOL continued in the region throughout 2016. This may be explained in part due to Aberdeen continuing to be one of the areas of the UK where NINo registration levels remain high.

The College experienced a 15% increase in the applications for full-time ESOL provision at Aberdeen City Campus in AY 2015-16 and this level of demand was again experienced for AY 2016-17. The College is anticipating demand for full-time ESOL provision to remain the same in AY 2017-18, however the College is aware that the Brexit process and Government policies on Syrian refugees may impact on future levels immigration to the UK and in turn the demand for the ESOL courses from AY 2018-19.

Comprehensive ESOL provision is crucial for progression to employment, further studies and integration for many of the region's migrants. The number of learners completed ESOL courses at the College and progressing to College courses and higher education has been consistently high for the last 3 years. The College predicts that nearly 70% of its ESOL students will to progress to courses in Creative

Industries, Computing and Business Enterprise in the coming academic years.

Business Plus ESOL and Travel & Tourism Plus ESOL courses continue to be popular, and at the time of writing the College's ESOL Team are exploring opportunities to introduce new Plus ESOL courses in areas where there is an increased interest.

The College continues to provide comprehensive information and support to potential ESOL students through targeted sessions providing information on progression routes and career options. These information sessions play a key role in helping the College to determine regional needs and levels of demand for ESOL provision.

Student Engagement

The College has developed a Student Engagement Strategy and is committed to providing students with a range of meaningful involvement and enhancement opportunities that can be recognised as impacting upon, influencing and enriching their overall College experience. The College's Student Engagement Strategy can be accessed at - <http://www.nescol.ac.uk/about/strategic-planning>.

Following the implementation of the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013, two students (Regional President and one Area President) serve on the College's Board of Management and its various Committees, and as such participate in key processes relating to the development and monitoring of the Outcome Agreement and other key College planning processes.

The College is committed to ensuring that there is strong and effective student representation at both a regional and local level, and as such, in AY 2014-15 a new College post to support the Students' Association was created – Student Association Manager.

The College is committed to working with its students to understand their needs and preferences better and to shape the current and future direction of the College in collaboration with them. Alongside the various actions taken by College staff – as part of curriculum planning

and curriculum management and through various strands of the quality system (focus groups, surveys, lesson observations etc), the College recognises the value of having an active and effective Students' Association and to that end will work to support the elected officers of the Association.

In AY 2016-17 the College continued to develop links with the Students' Association and to provide appropriate support to ensure that the Association's regional structure is sustainable for the future. A new Learner Engagement Group was established comprised Vice Principal Learning & Quality, Vice Principal Human Resources the three Directors of Curriculum, Head of Student Services, Head of Planning & Corporate Governance, Student Association Manager, Students' Association President and Students' Association Depute President. The Group has developed an annual learner engagement timeline which it will monitor and develop as required to ensure key engagement activities are undertaken across the College. The Group has also played a key role in the establishment of a new Joint Learner Engagement Committee which involves students and College and Students' Association staff. This Committee will meet twice during each academic year to:

- support the continued development of the Students' Association in line with the "Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Associations in Scotland"
- improve communication between the Association and the College on key strategic and operational issues and to encourage the sharing of information between the two organisations.
- support the management of the Class Rep structure and the Peer-led Review process.
- increase awareness and understanding of the role and activities of the Association.

In August 2016 a short working life group - Joint Students' Association Review Group – was established with the following desired outcome "To ensure that the SA is sustainable going forward and has the appropriate structures and resources in place to create an association that adds value, is valued by the College's students and staff and

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enables positive student engagement year on year." In February 2017 the Group reported back to the Board of Management with a key recommendation that the status of the Students' Association be dissolved. The recommendation was adopted, with acknowledgement that the removal of the Association from the Scottish Charities Register would provide significant advantages with enabling the Association to use its resources effectively to fulfil its primary function of being the representative and democratically elected voice of the College's students. The Board also acknowledged that proposed structural and operational changes would also support it to fully fulfil its legal obligations and the College, the Association and ultimately the students will be able to reap the benefits of true partnership working.

At the time of writing the Association is preparing a new Strategic Plan and Partnership Agreement which will be in place for the commencement of AY2017-18. The College will also continue to work with the Students' Association to implement the "Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Associations in Scotland" in accordance with the Framework's key principles. The College will continue to utilise support from an Education Scotland Student Member who will work with the Students' Association in relation to key aspects of the Framework.

In addition, a programme of Board visits will operate across College campuses and to various curriculum areas to enable Board Members to experience at first hand the services offered by the College and to interact with staff and students in a structured way that nevertheless allows staff and students to give their views to Board members without mediation of senior managers.

Meeting the Needs of Learners: Outcome

The outcome which the College will deliver by the end of AY 2017-18 is "to provide accessible programmes of study that lead to positive outcomes for students".

Meeting the Needs of Learners: Indicators of Effectiveness

In order better to evidence its effectiveness in providing the Right Learning in the Right Place and High Quality Learning across the

region, taking into account the local demographic and social circumstances and imperatives, the College has articulated a number of aspirations which are itemised in the relevant sections of the tables in Part 2.

3. Meeting the Needs of Employers: A Developed Workforce

North East Scotland College is keen to be regarded as a major partner in the development of the North East of Scotland, and such recognises the crucial role of effective employer engagement.

The College has partnerships with a wide range of employers in a number of industry sectors. These include one-to-one relationships with individual employers including large multi-nationals such as Shell and BP, and small enterprises, such as privately-owned hairdressers.

Employer Engagement

The College's External Engagement Strategy currently defines the framework within which the College works in partnership with employers to ascertain training needs, aspirations and requirements for skills development. This Strategy seeks to promote College relationships with several employer membership bodies including the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC), the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) and the Fraserburgh Development Trust. The AGCC is an active member of the College's Quality Validation Panel. Accordingly, it provides valuable advice and quality assurance on the approaches and the outcomes relevant to College employer engagement.

The College continues to work closely with other bodies, including ESP; OPITO; ECITB; CITB; HABIA; SMTA; SNIPEF and MCA to support the emerging training and skills needs of a wide range of industries both regionally and nationally. Further, and in response to employer demand, the College has also developed and introduced an Employer Portal which allows partner employers to access 'live' attendance and attainment data for their respective employees.

The Scottish Maritime Academy (SMA) is the College's nautical centre of excellence serving the needs of the fishing, merchant navy and energy sectors. It operates from Peterhead as a distinct business unit of the College. Typically, students can enrol on a mix of short full-time, part-time and blended learning programmes whose delivery is designed with employer needs in mind. Over the last 3 years, staff at SMA have worked with various employers to develop company specific provision in bridge resource management and ship handling, using its bridge simulator. Excellent relationships exist with the main shipping companies in Aberdeen. In particular, Vroon Offshore, who have made considerable investment in the SMA simulator hardware and software to replicate their vessels and shipping lanes. The Academy is an approved centre for MCA, AMERC, RYA and Seafish courses. Maritime activity is of significant and critical importance to the regional economy and significant investment in the local ports is planned over the next few years, increasing further the harbour capacities at Aberdeen, Peterhead and Fraserburgh.

Despite the adverse economic climate, the energy giant Shell continues to support College activity with its sponsorship of the Shell Engineering Scheme (a 2 year technician training programme). The College has also worked successfully with Shell in addressing aspects of the equality and diversity within the oil, gas and energy industry. Currently Shell sponsors 5 'Girls into Energy' programmes, run by the College, for regional schools. This initiative has, over the last year, been further supported by additional sponsorship from local employer Score Group, who are supporting a 'Girls into Energy' programme at Fraserburgh Academy.

In February 2016 the College appointed an Employer Engagement Manager (EEM) to support the College's Employer Engagement Strategy by actively engaging with employers in the promotion of Modern Apprenticeships, Sponsored and Employability Fund programmes. As well as ensuring the smooth and effective running of SDS contracts the EEM was also tasked with ensuring that employers and their staff experienced the highest levels of satisfaction. Since commencing his job in February 2016, the EEM has – despite the challenging economic climate - been instrumental in securing these

additional MA places. As a consequence the College is likely to be requesting additional engineering places and funding from SDS to meet demand identified through the interactions of the EEM with employers. SDS has welcomed this position; a position that is apparently somewhat unique in the region and has, accordingly, granted the required additional MA places and funding. Whilst the College generates significant income from SDS contracts it, as a consequence of what has been achieved this year, has the potential to generate more.

At the time of writing the Outcome Agreement (2017-18) the College is about to review and revise its External Engagement Strategy (EES). The College's SMT believe, in light of regional and national developments, that circumstances have now changed since the current EES's inception and as such the relevance and appropriateness of the current strategy needs to be reconsidered. At its most recent annual Planning event, the College's Board of Management discussed existing and potential College approaches to income generation, commerciality and employer engagement. Accordingly, it is likely that further developments will take place in the forthcoming year to initiate and implement a new Employer Engagement Strategy and related College approaches in line with employer and stakeholder needs and expectations. Specifically, future College employer engagement approaches will consider how best the College can respond to the implementation of the Apprenticeship Levy and how the College can support employers locally, regionally and nationally to ensure that their financial contribution to the Levy is optimised for workforce planning purposes. College staff have already held early discussions with two large local employers who are keen to maximise the impact of their respective contributions to the Levy within their own workforce planning arrangements.

The College is also committed to expanding its SDS-related work and work with employers generally through its support of, and involvement in, Apprenticeship Family-related activities. As well as seeking to grow its MA portfolio, the College is committed to providing local school pupils with opportunities to develop skills for work and connections to employers through a variety of Foundation Apprenticeships. The College also continues its collaborative work with RGU in supporting

how best to meet employer need regionally through Graduate-Level Apprenticeships. It is also anticipated that the College will, as a consequence of its recent Board Planning Event, discuss and explore more fully a shared interest with RGU in collaborating further on developments relating to income-generation, commerciality and employer engagement.

Currently work, led by the Regional Economic Strategy Group and including the College, is on-going to develop a revised Regional Skills Strategy for the North East of Scotland. At the point of writing this paper no final strategic document has been published. However, it is likely that the Strategy, once complete, will lead to more coherent approaches evolving between partners in order to ensure that there is, regionally, greater and more targeted employer engagement; improved development of partnership working; targeted approaches for meeting the workforce planning requirements of regional employers; the identification and support of potential employment growth areas for the North East economy including care, health and energy and support for the eventual upturn in the oil and gas sector.

Work Experience

The College recognises that employers increasingly look for "job ready" employees, people who have had work experience or who have worked in a realistic work environment.

In AY 2014-15 the majority of work placements involved students for which it was a mandatory course requirement. In AY 2015-16, in liaison with employer partners, the College continued to secure further work experience opportunities for learners for whom this was not a mandatory element of their course e.g. visual communication and business and IT students undertook live project work in partnership with employers as part of their course. At the time of writing the College has agreed to review its approach to work placements and work experience in line with the new Work Placement Standard for Colleges.

The College will also continue to ensure that opportunities for the development of learners' employability and enterprise skills are

included in programmes of study irrespective of curriculum area. Other desirable preparatory skills for employment will also be encouraged through the promotion of volunteering opportunities.

At the time of writing the College is planning to undertake a review of its work placement provision in line with the SFC's new 'Work Placement Standard for Colleges'. The review will also consider how the College records data in relation to the students who undertake work placements as the SFC has highlighted that the College may be not currently be capturing this in its entirety.

Modern Apprenticeships and Employability Fund

The College aspires to grow its Modern Apprenticeship (MA) and Employability Fund (EF) programmes, and will align activity to areas of regional employer demand. Labour market intelligence, regional skills assessments and ongoing employer engagement activities will enable the College to identify areas of unmet demand and will inform the College's tendering process for MA places. In AY 2014-15 SDS awarded the College with 132 MA places and 125 in AY 2015-16. The College was offered 115 MA places for AY 2016-17 – 70 engineering, 8 administration, 15 automotive, 14 hairdressing and 8 non-clinical care. All areas have surpassed expectations with the exception of non-clinical care where NHS has held off the recruitment which was initially discussed. Nevertheless, the unused places have been transferred into other occupational groups and allocated to other MAs.

Through the newly created role of Employer Engagement Manager, all 115 places have been used in 2016-17 and additional funding from SDS has been secured to deliver the MA programme to year end. This is despite the challenging economic circumstances and the local trend which has seen many training providers return unused places to SDS.

Delivery of the MA programme has matured from a NESCol perspective since merger and we will look for opportunities to grow this part of the College in 2017-18 in existing and new industry areas – thereby supporting the College's requirement to increase non-SFC income. A target of 130 places will be set for 2017-18 representing

13% growth against 2015-16 figures (this is subject to the award of places which are requested).

In relation to the Employability Fund (EF), the College continues to respond to requests from DWP and SDS for training programmes to take unemployed candidates and school leavers with no immediately identifiable positive destinations, into new employment opportunities. Places in 2016-17 were weighted towards the Stage 4 end of the employability pipeline with training for construction and security (in response to redundancies from the oil and gas industry). In addition, a Stage 2 programme was offered following a specific request from SDS for school leavers in Construction and Engineering.

The referral process is still a barrier with only limited numbers of candidates being put forward for programmes by DWP and this is an area that NESCol will have to address in the coming year to be able to grow this area.

During AY 2015-16 the College trained 1,527 apprentices (includes SDS funded MAs, Sponsored students on an MA programme not administered through NESCol and MAs funded through other industry bodies) on a variety of full and part-time programmes. Relationships with employers generally remain positive and effectively managing customer relationships remains a primary focus in terms of growing non-SFC funded activities.

NESCol's Foundation Apprenticeship portfolio will grow in AY 2017-18 with a number of new frameworks added. These include:

- Engineering
- Laboratory Skills
- Social Services & Healthcare
- Social Services – Children and Young People
- Creative Digital Media

In partnership with RGU, the College will continue to support the development of graduate level apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship Levy

The College recognises that with the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, the national environment for workforce development will change,

and the College will take steps to adapt its services in such a way that they accommodate to the demands and expectations of the new environment.

One possible impact of the Levy is that large employers who operate across the UK may increasingly be looking for a single provider for their training needs, rather than having to source separate arrangements with different providers in different areas. To that end the College will seek to work as part of a consortium where it is appropriate to provide an employer with a nation-wide training service.

Oil and Gas Employers

Oil and gas remains the dominant employing sector in the north east region. The UK oil and gas sector is now in its third year of the current low oil price although recent OPEC agreements have seen prices creep up to around \$57 per barrel and there are more signs of increased optimism in the market. Nevertheless the jobs situation remains suppressed with around 120,000 less jobs across the supply chain than there were 2 years ago. NESCol maintains relationships (mainly through the Employer Engagement Manager) with its employer portfolio promoting the skills agenda through Modern Apprenticeships and other programmes so that any upturn in the industry can be supported from an early stage.

Strong links continue with Shell UK who have renewed their Technicians' Scheme for 2016-2018 with another 11 technicians joining the programme and 5 local secondary schools taking up the opportunity to participate in Shell's Girls in Energy programme. In the year ahead, it is hoped to extend this programme further into Aberdeen City and to continue with the Score Europe sponsored Young Women into Energy programme at Fraserburgh Academy.

In the meantime the College continues to work closely with the two local Universities and has developed a series of detailed pathways showing how students can progress from Secondary school, through College and into University. These maps will be highly informative for parents and careers advisers and help to inform career choices in the future. The combined capacity of the three institutions will help to drive

economic growth through the Aberdeen City Region Deal and the aspirations and priorities of Opportunity North East (ONE). NESCol continues to work closely with agency partners including the two Local Authorities and Skills Development Scotland In response to the current downturn in the oil and gas sector, the College will seek to support the region's economy by providing re-training opportunities for those made redundant or those choosing to move away from the sector.

Maritime

North East Scotland College is the main UK provider of fishing related qualifications and as such has strong links with the industry locally through representative organisations such as Scottish Fishermen's Federation, Seafish Industry Authority and the Maritime Coastguard Agency. This provision is offered at the College's Scottish Maritime Academy in Peterhead which is seen as one of Scotland's premier maritime education and training providers.

The low oil price continues to impact the demand for merchant navy training, however to some extent fishermen's training is bucking the trend as former fishermen from oil & gas industry return to commercial fishing boats.

The Scottish Maritime Academy works closely with key local stakeholders including Peterhead Port Authority, ASCO (logistics) and Vroon Offshore and has developed a series of bespoke training programmes tailored to meet specific skills shortages.

Future Developments

During the planning period, it is thought that the College's commercial (i.e. non-government-funded) activity will be particularly important in meeting the needs of employers as the limitations and constraints of funding rules do not apply.

The College will also explore further opportunities to develop partnerships combining traditional education with work-based training, for example, through developments in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence or technical and professional apprenticeships. The recommendations of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young

Workforce provide an important context within which to discuss these matters with employers.

The College will also continue to help employers address areas of identified skills shortages by ensuring that training offered meets industry requirements, and by promoting, in partnership with employers, progression and career opportunities in these areas.

The College is represented in various skills forums chaired by AGCC e.g. food and drink, travel and tourism, and as such will continue to refresh and develop the curriculum to meet the skills needs of the region's key sectors in addition to oil and gas.

Beyond 2017 the College will seek to benefit from the next tranche of European Structural Fund monies and a national project targeted at "Developing Scotland's Workforce". The specific use of this money will be determined by regional need and the delivery will be the outcome of on-going community planning.

Regional Alignment

The College ensures that strategic developments and planning processes are informed by relevant national and local information sources, including National Skills Investment Plans, Regional Skills Assessments, the Skills Strategy and Action Plan for Aberdeen City and Shire, and up-to-date labour market information, effective engagement with the two local Community Planning Partnerships, and engagement with local and regional economic fora. The College continues to liaise with SDS and other appropriate partners to ensure that its Outcome Agreement is informed by the most up-to-date evidence base.

The College is a key partner on the Regional Economic Strategy Group, a group whose membership also represents Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, SDS, Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Nestrans, ONE and Scottish Enterprise. The Group is also responsible for the development of a Regional Skills Strategy (RSS) which, at the time of writing, is being reviewed and revised. It is likely that the new RSS will contain an actions plan that will seek to address key regional themes including responding to the oil and gas downturn;

supporting economic transition; the repositioning of the skills system and school to work transitions. The College will participate in the delivery of the Strategy as appropriate.

Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs)

The Vice Principal Business Services has overall responsibility for engaging with both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs). As a statutory partner the College will be, in the forthcoming year, represented on the Board, Management Executive and various thematic groups within the structures of the respective CPPs.

For the past year the College's Vice Principal has been a member of Community Planning Aberdeen Management Group and has helped, with other partner's representatives, shape the draft Local Outcome Improvement (LOIP) and Locality Plans for Aberdeen City. The Community Planning Aberdeen LOIP focuses on 4 key themes:

- Prosperous Economy - Ensuring that Aberdeen has a flourishing, thriving and successful local economy
- Prosperous People – Ensuring that people in Aberdeen are happy and healthy and enjoy positive life outcomes.
- Prosperous Place - Ensuring people experience Aberdeen as the best place to invest, live and visit
- Enabling Technology – Enabling innovative, integrated and transformed public services.

Whilst the College is involved to varying degrees with all of these themes it is a lead partner for the first, Prosperous Economy. Within this, the College will play a lead role in ensuring that key impacts are realised along the lines of four primary drivers identified, namely ensuring that there is:

- i. appropriate investment in local infrastructure projects,
- ii. inclusive economic growth,
- iii. innovation within the local economy, and
- iv. opportunities for internationalisation.

The work of the Aberdeenshire CPP, and the College's involvement here, is less advanced. That said, the College has now received an invitation from the Local Authority to participate as a statutory partner on the recently revised CPP Board, Executive and Thematic Group structures.

A review, led by Aberdeenshire Council officials, of the Aberdeenshire Community Planning priorities and approaches is on-going and is likely to conclude with a launch of new arrangements and structures in March 2017. The intended key priorities of the Aberdeenshire CPP include the reduction of both child poverty and alcohol misuse. The College sees the potential to contribute to both these priorities but feels that it could act as a lead partner for the former. Tackling child poverty through targeted educational interventions and partnerships (involving NESCol) may well lead to Aberdeenshire CPP successfully achieving its primary CPP objectives. A third priority, loosely defined as 'transport and accessibility', is currently under consideration.

Meeting the Needs of Employers: Outcome

The outcome which the College will deliver by the end of AY 2017-18 is "to create personal and business growth through learning".

Meeting the Needs of Employers: Indicators of Effectiveness

In order better to evidence its effectiveness in meeting the needs of the regional economy its employers the College has articulated a number of aspirations which are itemised in the relevant sections of the tables in Part 2.

4. An Efficient and Sustainable Institution

Financial Sustainability and Business Efficiency

In order to fulfil its regional role, the College must ensure that it is a sustainable institution. Careful financial management and a commitment to efficiency of service delivery and corporate functions are required in the context of constrained public funding and the

consequences of the reclassification of Colleges in Scotland as public bodies.

The North East Scotland region that the College serves covers Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, and is one of the largest and geographically most diverse regions in Scotland. The College recognises its responsibility to provide opportunities for people across the region, but also recognises the fact that the same level of immediacy and ease of access to learning opportunities cannot be provided in every location – as is the case with other public services.

The College has in the past operated not only on the main campuses in Aberdeen and Fraserburgh which it owns, but also out of leased premises – for example in Macduff and Inverurie. It is recognised that that model is no longer sustainable, and the College is actively seeking agreement with Aberdeenshire local authority and other partners to be able to access premises funded from the public purse at no cost to the College -- particularly where the College is delivering provision for pupils of local authority schools.

In the context of continuing pressure on the unit of resource for colleges, and the Scottish Government expectation that colleges will restructure their operations to be able to deliver their services more efficiently, the College will review what it offers in different locations. Some aspects of College provision are already unique to one campus – for example Creative HND Industries Television is only available at the Aberdeen City Campus. Many other programmes however are available on more than one campus – for example Hairdressing is available at both the Fraserburgh Campus and Aberdeen City Campus, and Motor Vehicle Engineering is available both at the Fraserburgh Campus and at the Aberdeen Altens Campus. Inevitably in some cases there is a difference in the group sizes on different campuses, and in some cases the group size on one or other campus may be below a threshold of sustainability. As such the College will review its curriculum offer across different locations to see whether some courses which are currently offered in two locations should in future be concentrated only on one campus. An alternative approach may be to link the student cohort on different campuses together electronically as a single "virtual class" so that the duplication of delivery costs is eliminated or at least minimised. It is recognised that

this may have the potential to reduce choice and ease of access for some individuals and the College will take steps to minimise that – but in the current financial constraints the current pattern of delivery cannot be maintained.

In order to balance income and expenditure in the context of declining funding from the Scottish Funding Council and the prospect of the ending of funding from the European Union, the College understands the desirability of diversifying its sources of income. This includes both seeking to maximise income from other government sources – Skills Development Scotland and Department for Work and Pensions, for example – but also from purely commercial activity where opportunities can be identified that have the potential to generate a real profit in terms of the margin between income and the total direct, indirect and opportunity costs of delivery. In doing so, the College will ensure that it does not in any way impinge upon the current or future activities of the College company, ASET.

In relation to staffing costs, all employees of the College receive as a minimum the Living Wage rates of pay. The College's Board of Management is committed to attaining Living Wage Employer Accreditation when it can be achieved without affecting the quality of service delivered or the College's financial sustainability.

The College expects to face increasing levels of deficit due to emerging cost pressures and inflationary effects. Continued effective strategic financial planning, budgeting and financial management is therefore imperative for the continued success of the College.

The College's Senior Management Team is working to establish a range of actions that might be taken to address the financial position and to bring the College's financial position back into a sustainable equilibrium. However, the scale of the financial challenge facing the College is such that the current cost base and service delivery models are not likely to be sustainable without a significant alternative approach being taken.

Towards Excellence

Following the appointment of a new Principal in December 2016, work has commenced on implementing a model for positive change, a model which is being developed to enable the College to move from being a good college to a great college.

At the time of writing, four internal reviews have been scheduled, with a completion date of the end of June 2017, to provide opportunities for the College to review the way in which services are delivered. These reviews will have a strong focus on providing the best possible experience for learners, and will be undertaken in the following areas:

- Applications, Admissions and Student Funding
- Induction
- Timetabling
- Administration.

Work has also commenced on a review of the College's planning cycles – strategic, curriculum, quality assurance and enhancement, business – to improve clarity and integration. The implementation of the new quality arrangements for the College sector during AY 2016-17 will also provide opportunities for a more integrated approach to action planning for quality enhancement linked to key strategic objectives and priorities.

Further areas of focus to help shape a vision for the future of the College include employee engagement, employer engagement and strategic marketing. All of the work highlighted above will be undertaken with two core principles in mind – successful learners, and a sustainable institution. In starting to define the vision for the future, the College will seek to have a range of programmes on offer which are relevant, responsive and ensure success for learners. Staff will be supported towards success for all and partnership working maintained to ensure the best possible service. Work will also continue to ensure the financial sustainability of the College, allowing further investments in buildings, infrastructure and services.

Estates

A new Estates Development Strategy was adopted by the College's Board of Management in April 2016, with the following identified as the preferred option:

- Aberdeen City Campus – remain and refurbish
- Aberdeen Altens Campus – remain, refurbish and new build
- Aberdeen Clinterty Campus – vacate
- Fraserburgh Campus – remain and maintain
- SMA Peterhead – remain and maintain.

A significant part of the College's ambitious Strategy will concentrate on the redevelopment of the Aberdeen City Campus and will involve the altering of existing buildings to meet curriculum challenges and create a heart for the student population and surrounding community. The refurbishment of interiors will create a variety of spaces throughout the Campus, from intimate to group, flexible to specialist, private to collaborative. The College is a further education establishment and the requirement for traditional teaching methods will be respected and included, whilst allowing for new teaching methods.

At a meeting in March 2017 the Board of Management considered an alternative proposal for the redevelopment of the Aberdeen City Campus involving the demolition of the South Block and the construction of a new build to provide a new learning hub and improved public realm. At the time of writing the outline business case for the proposal was being finalised for submission to the SFC by mid-April 2017.

Currently the total cost of the Estates Development Strategy is an estimated £65 million. If funding were available, the project could be completed in four years with work on campuses carried out simultaneously. However, as funding to complete the project has not been secured, timescales have still to be agreed and will be dependent on available finance.

The Strategy will in part be funded by the proceeds of property sales. However the completion of the Strategy will require significant support from central authorities. Further information on the College's Estates Vision can be found on the College's website -

<http://www.nescol.ac.uk/why-nescol/estates-vision>

Environmental Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

Equally the College recognises its responsibility to address its own environmental impact. The College is a signatory of the Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland and an active member of the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges evidencing the College's strong commitment in this regard.

Prior to merger, Aberdeen College was accredited with the Environmental Management System ISO 14001. Following the creation of North East Scotland College it was agreed that work would be undertaken to extend the accreditation to the Fraserburgh Campus. After an external audit in July 2014 it was confirmed that the Fraserburgh Campus met accreditation requirements.

During the planning period work will be ongoing to meet the requirements of ISO 14001's continual improvement aspect. The College will also continue to monitor performance against targets in the areas of energy and water use, waste and transport using its Environmental Dashboard, a system of monthly recordings and readings.

The College has developed a Carbon Management Plan, using guidelines set by Resource Efficient Scotland in partnership with the SFC and the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges. The Plan compliments the College's existing strategies and policies whilst focusing on the management of the opportunities associated with the reduction of carbon emissions. The College is committed to reducing carbon emissions whilst continuously improving the learning experience for students and the working environment for staff and this is demonstrated by its aim to reduce the CO2 emissions from its activities by 15% from a 2010-11 baseline of 4,677 tonnes by July

2020. This reduction will be achieved through a number of projects, centered on changes to the College's estates and by raising the awareness of staff and students.

During the planning period sustainability projects will be focused on overall reductions. Examples include:

- Improving the monitoring of energy consumption
- Increasing efficient lighting throughout all campuses
- Reducing business mileage, and reducing fleet vehicle emissions by 15%
- Increasing the overall amount of waste diverted from landfill to 80%
- Reducing electricity, gas, oil and water use by 15%
- Achieving BREEAM 'Very Good' status for the Fraserburgh Masterplan Project
- Participating in the Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme (LCITP)
- Participating in a Sustainability Partnerships Initiative led by the Robert Gordon University Student Association's which will involve working with students from both institutions to cut carbon emissions caused by home energy use, food consumption and transport. Project activities will include home energy advice, a zero waste cafe, waste reduction workshops, fuel efficient driver training and cycle training and hire.

North East Scotland College is committed, through its environmental policy, to encourage and enforce efficient, effective and sustainable transport associated with its operations. In July 2016, a new Travel Plan for the College was finalised detailing the various means by which transportation associated with the College's operations will be managed effectively. The Plan covers the various transport options available to staff, students and visitors and the development of those options with the aim of reducing car usage and increasing the use of healthier and more environmentally sustainable options including walking, cycling and public transport, both now and as the College's implements its new Estates Development Strategy.

North East Scotland College is scheduled to be assessed for full certification for the BSI Standard ISO 50001 in May 2017. If achieved,

the College will become the first higher education establishment in Scotland to hold the Standard.

The main College objectives through implementing the Standard are to:

- Proactively respond to government and sector led carbon reduction programmes
- Minimise the risk to future operations
- Adopt a formal structure to better manage energy consumption and achieve greater energy savings.

Other expected benefits include:

- Achievement of carbon targets
- Mitigation of climate change and environmental management
- Reduced impacts of energy supply
- Enhanced reputation.

Workforce for the Future

The College's vision for the future is to secure staffing resources that will have the capacity and flexibility to deliver the required level, efficiency and variety of service.

In order to achieve this the College, at the time of writing, is considering key questions including:

- How might changes to the way the curriculum is delivered impact on the way staff are employed?
- How might the continued need for efficiency impact?
- How might the need to drive commercial income require flexible employment practices?
- What are the greatest risks to NESCol from national collective bargaining?
- Which aspects of the current NESCol terms and conditions are vital to retain?

Organisational Development

The College's approach to organisational development is designed to develop the skills and competencies required for its staff to ensure that

the College's activities align with and meet the needs of the region. All staff training and CPD is linked into College Performance Review processes and as such is also linked to the delivery of the College's Strategic Plan and Outcome Agreement.

Given the continuing financial pressures, managing an effective service with a limited budget is challenging. Whilst mandatory external programmes such as the TQFE will continue during the planning period, and staff will need to attend short courses externally to keep up to date with developments in their vocational area and in teaching and learning, the College's approach will focus on internal facilitation.

The College has adopted a coaching approach for leadership development which involves training leaders in coaching skills. At the time of writing, the profile of Performance Review is also being raised to encourage more line managers to meet with and provide feedback to their staff to encourage and inform continuing professional development.

Training in project management, budget management and other leadership management skills will be implemented with these programmes being internally facilitated where practicable. In addition, a series of short skills development sessions will be implemented to assist lecturers with issues such as lesson planning and questioning techniques.

The College will also continue to operate its mentoring programme with new staff identified and trained to support new colleagues.

The College will continue to hold designated annual Development Days to enable all members of staff to undertake both individual and team training activities.

An Efficient and Sustainable Institution: Outcome

The outcome which the College will deliver by the end of AY 2017-18 is "to achieve maximum impact from the available resources".

5. Glossary

ACSEF	Aberdeen City and Economic Future
CDN	College Development Network
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence
CL	Care Leavers
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPP	Community Planning Partnership
ECITB	The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board
EF	Employability Fund
HABIA	Hair and Beauty Industry Authority
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
LAC	Looked After Children
MA	Modern Apprenticeship
NC	National Certificate
OGAS	The Oil and Gas Academy for Scotland
ONE	Opportunity North East
PDA	Personal Development Award
PwC	Price Waterhouse Coopers
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SMTA	Scottish Motor Trade Association
SNIEPF	Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
UKCS	UK Continental Shelf

Part 2 - Outcomes and Targets

It should be noted that the complexity of the context within which these aspirations have been recorded has been explained to the SFC - for example, some uncertainty as to funded levels of activity and income; the impact of demographic changes on enrolments; the impact of Curriculum for Excellence on the extent to which schools will retain pupils into the fifth and sixth year. As such, the aspirations recorded here are caveated and represent an honest attempt to predict patterns of activity amongst the uncertainty and unpredictability. They are, in effect, a numerical manifestation of the policy intentions of North East Scotland College, rather than representing a matrix of definitive prediction of the outcome of the implementation of those policy intentions.

National Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20	Notes
1(a)* The volume of Credits delivered							
The volume of Credits delivered (core)	132,327	137,509	134,118	134,118	134,118	134,118	
info. Core Credits target (region)	See Note 1						
info. % towards core Credits target (region)	See Note 1						
The volume of Credits delivered (ESF)	TBC	4,287	3,035	3,035	3,035	3,035	
The volume of Credits delivered (core + ESF)	TBC						
info. The volume of wSUMs delivered	179,813	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
info. % towards core wSUMs target	100.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
1(b) Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners aged 16-19 and 20-24							
Volume of Credits delivered to learners aged 16-19	70,045	73,851	73,720				
Proportion of Credits delivered to learners aged 16-19	52.9%	52.1%	53.8%	52.1%	52.1%	52.1%	The College aims to maintain this outcome which is significantly above the national average in 2015-16 of 46.9%
Volume of Credits delivered to learners aged 20-24	28,921	30,179	30,174				
Proportion of Credits delivered to learners aged 20-24	21.9%	21.3%	22%	22%	22%	22%	The College aims to maintain this measure in line with the national average
Volume of Credits delivered to full-time learners	96,696	111,500					
Volume of Credits delivered to full-time learners aged 16-19	56,156	63,495					
Proportion of Credits delivered to full-time learners aged 16-19	58.1%	57.8%	60%	60%	60%	60%	The College aims to maintain this outcome which is significantly above the national average in 2015-16 of 51.7%
Volume of Credits delivered to full-time learners aged 20-24	20,709	23,646					
Proportion of Credits delivered to full-time learners aged 20-24	21.4%	21.2%	22%	22.5%	23%	23.5%	The College aims to increase this measure in line with the national average

National Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20	Notes
1(c)* Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners in the most deprived 10% postcode areas							
Volume of Credits delivered to learners in the most deprived 10% postcode areas	6,257	6,587	7,132	7,818	8,503	9,189	These targets for the planning period remain below the Scottish average due to the small proportion of the region's population which reside in MD10 areas
Proportion of Credits delivered to learners in the most deprived 10% postcode areas	4.7%	4.6%	5.2%	5.7%	6.2%	6.7%	
1(d) The volume and proportion of Credits relating to learners from different protected characteristic groups and care leavers			<p>The SFC has advised that these figures will be used as markers rather than targets e.g. to identify any significant changes, under- represented groups. It is not anticipated that the population of students from different ethnic backgrounds will change substantively change during the planning period as it is broadly reflective of the population of the North East - unless there are significant unforeseeable immigrations and emigrations of people</p>				
Gender -							
Volume of Credits delivered to Male learners	65,715	68,585					
Proportion of Credits delivered to Male learners	49.7%	48.4%					
Volume of Credits delivered to Female learners	66,611	73,211					
Proportion of Credits delivered to Female learners	50.3%	51.6%					
Volume of Credits delivered to Other learners	0	0					
Proportion of Credits delivered to Other learners	0.00%	0%					
Ethnicity -							
Volume of Credits delivered to BME learners	4,935	5,828					
Proportion of Credits delivered to BME learners	3.7%	4.1%					
Disability -							
Volume of Credits delivered to students with a known disability	18,229	20,826					
Proportion of Credits delivered to students with a known disability	13.8%	14.7%					
Care Experience -							
Volume of Credits delivered to students with Care Experience	16	982					
Proportion of Credits delivered to students with Care Experience	0.01%	0.69%					
2(a)* The number of senior phase pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges	154	277	750*	325	350	375	*Target set in 2016-17 Outcome Agreement was set using different criteria and is unrealistic upon reflection of 2015-16 actual, a realistic target is 300.
2(b) Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges							
Volume of Credits delivered to senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges	629	1,079	1,200	1,300	1,400	1,500	
Proportion of Credits delivered to senior phase age pupils studying vocational qualifications delivered by colleges	0.5%	0.8%	0.87%	0.95%	1.02%	1.09%	

National Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20	Notes
2(c) Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners at S3 and above as part of 'school-college' provision							
The volume of Credits delivered to learners at S3 and above as part of 'school-college' provision	3,511	4,006	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500	
The proportion of Credits delivered to learners at S3 and above as part of 'school-college' provision	2.7%	2.8%	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%	
2(d) Volume and proportion of Credits delivered at HE level to learners from SHEP schools (i.e. Secondary schools with consistently low rates of progression to higher education)							
Volume of Credits delivered at HE level	See Note 2	48,028					
Volume of Credits delivered at HE level to learners from SHEP schools	See Note 2	2,351	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400	
Proportion of Credits delivered at HE level to learners from SHEP schools	See Note 2	4.9%	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%	
3. Volume and proportion of Credits delivered to learners enrolled on STEM courses							
Volume of Credits delivered to learners enrolled on STEM courses	47,864	45,294					Due to the current downturn in the oil and gas industry the College does not expect this provision to increase significantly in the short-term. It should however be noted that the College delivers significantly above the national average for this area of activity – 2015-16 Scotland figure of 24.5%
Proportion of Credits delivered to learners enrolled on STEM courses	36.2%	31.9%	35%	35%	35%	35%	
4(a)* Proportion of enrolled students successfully achieving a recognised qualification							
The number of FT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	2,459	2,800					
The total number of FT FE enrolled students	3,973	4,152					
The percentage of FT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	61.9%	67.4%	69%	69.5%	70%	70.5%	The College aims to maintain this outcome which is significantly above the national average in 2015-16 of 65.5%.
The number of PT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	5,481	4,142					
The total number of PT FE enrolled students	8,809	5,827					
The percentage of PT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	62.2%	71.1%	84%**	74%	75%	76%	**Target set in 2016-17 Outcome Agreement is unrealistic upon reflection of 2015-16 actual, a realistic target is 73%. The targets demonstrate the College's ambition to meet and exceed the national average for this measure in 2015-16 of 74.3%.

National Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20	Notes
The number of FT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	1,884	2,101					
The total number of FT HE enrolled students	2,616	2,724					
The percentage of FT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	72.0%	77.1%	73%	77%	77%	77%	The College aims to maintain this outcome which is significantly above the national average in 2015-16 of 72%.
The number of PT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	1,293	1,245					
The total number of PT HE enrolled students	1,561	1,554					
The percentage of PT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	82.8%	80.1%	83%	83%	83%	83%	The College aims to maintain this outcome which is above the national average in 2015-16 of 78.8%.
4(b)* Proportion of enrolled MD10 students successfully achieving a recognised qualification							
The number of MD10 FT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	135	154	New measure for 2017-18 - no targets set in 2016-17 Outcome Agreement	174	179	183	The College has set the percentage targets of MD10 students achieving a recognised qualification in line with those detailed in 4(a) above – the College does not believe that there should be differentiation in terms of achievement for these specific student groups.
The total number of MD10 FT FE enrolled students	232	244		250	255	260	
The percentage of MD10 FT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	58.2%	63.1%		69.5%	70%	70.5%	
The number of MD10 PT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	259	175		215	207	228	
The total number of MD10 PT FE enrolled students	470	286		290	295	300	
The percentage of MD10 PT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	55.1%	61.2%		74%	75%	76%	
The number of MD10 FT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	59	58		59	63	71	
The total number of MD10 FT HE enrolled students	82	78		80	82	84	
The percentage of MD10 FT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	72.0%	74.4%		77%	77%	77%	
The number of MD10 PT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	28	26		31	32	34	
The total number of MD10 PT HE enrolled students	34	35		37	39	41	
The percentage of MD10 PT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	82.4%	74.3%		83%	83%	83%	

National Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20	Notes	
4(c)* Proportion of senior phase age pupils successfully completing a vocational qualification delivered by colleges			New measure for 2017-18- no targets set in 2016-17 Outcome Agreement					
The number of Senior Phase FT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	0	0						
The total number of Senior Phase FT FE enrolled students	0	0						
The percentage of Senior Phase FT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	-	-						
The number of Senior Phase PT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	119	199						
The total number of Senior Phase PT FE enrolled students	143	274						
The percentage of Senior Phase PT FE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	83.2%	72.6%			72.6%	72.6%	72.6%	The College aims to maintain this outcome which is significantly above the national average in 2015-16 of 64.2%.
The number of Senior Phase FT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	0	0						
The total number of Senior Phase FT HE enrolled students	0	0						
The percentage of Senior Phase FT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	-	-						
The number of Senior Phase PT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	6	2						
The total number of Senior Phase PT HE enrolled students	8	3						
The percentage of Senior Phase PT HE enrolled students achieving a recognised qualification	75.0%	66.7%			67%	67.5%	68%	The College aims to exceed the current national average of 65.5% over the planning period.
5. The number of starts for direct contracted apprenticeships (including industry bodies such as CITB and SECTT)	See Note 3	1,527	1,211 actual as at 31/03/17	The College intends to expand this provision where possible. In relation to MA activity, the College will seek to increase this by 10% each year if this is supported by SDS.			These figures include all enrolments for years 1,2,3 & 4 for the following activity - MAs, Shell, Hospitality training, OPITO, SECTT, ITCA, SNIPEF, SMTA/REMIT, Construction Skills and East Coast Training.	

National Measure	Actual 2014-15	Actual 2015-16	Target 2016-17	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20	Notes
6. Number of full-time learners with substantial 'work placement experience' as part of their programme of study	See Note 4	789	To follow				At the time of writing the College is reviewing its approach to work placement in line with the new Work Placement Standard for Colleges to ensure that data recording in relation to this measure is accurate. It is therefore not possible to set targets at this time.
7.* The number and proportion of successful students who have achieved HNC or HND qualifications articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing							
The total number of students who have achieved HNC or HND qualifications progressing to degree level courses	735	National Articulation Database TBC					Actual figures expected to be available March/April 2017
The number of successful students who have achieved HNC or HND qualifications articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing	465		484	484	484	484	
The proportion of successful students who have achieved HNC or HND qualifications articulating to degree level courses with advanced standing	63.3%						
8.* The number and proportion of full-time college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying		Return to SFC submitted February 2017 – figures not available until September 2017	The College will continue to seek to increase both the number of students entering positive destinations and the number of respondents to the First Destination Survey				
The total number of full-time FE college qualifiers (confirmed destinations)	2,268						
The number of full-time FE college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	2,042						
The proportion of full-time FE college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	90.0%						
The total number of full-time HE college qualifiers (confirmed destinations)	1,030						
The number of full-time HE college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	850						
The proportion of full-time HE college qualifiers in work, training and/or further study 3-6 months after qualifying	82.5%						
9. The percentage of students overall, satisfied with their college experience (SSES survey)	See Note 5	91.6%	The College will continue to seek to increase both the level of student satisfaction and the number of respondents to the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey				
10 Gross carbon footprint	See Note 6	5,192	4,328	4,238	4,149	4,000	

Note 1 - Credits targets introduced in 2015-16.

Note 2 - SHEP data currently not available. Previous institution field being added to FES from 2016-17.

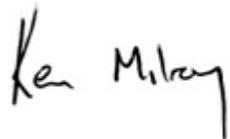
Note 3 - Data not available. Colleges to provide.

Note 4 - Data available from 2015-16.

Note 5 - Data available from 2015-16.

Note 6 - The SG passed legislation in 2015 to make reporting mandatory. Data will be available in early 2017. A trial run was held in 2015 and most institutions submitted reports which can be viewed on the Keep Scotland Beautiful website.

Signed by College



Ken Milroy

Chair, North East Scotland College Board of Management

Date: 31/03/17



Liz McIntyre

Principal and Chief Executive, North East Scotland College

Date: 31/03/17

Signed by SFC

John Kemp

Interim Chief Executive, Scottish Funding Council

Date:

Funding

College region **Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire (North East Scotland College)** will receive **£30,198,183** core teaching funding, and **£1,665,571** capital maintenance funding from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for academic year 2017/18 to plan and deliver **135,126** credits worth of further and higher education.

This includes **1,008** additional HE credits for childcare activity announced by SFC in their final allocations for AY 2017/18.

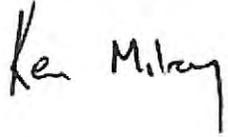
Core Student Support funding for 2017/18 is **£8,203,641**.

In addition, the college region will receive **£761,315** in European Social Fund (ESF) grant through the SFC to deliver **3,035** further Higher Education credits to eligible learners (inclusive of **£44,468** student support funding).

The total credit target for 2017/18 is therefore **138,161**.

The funding is on the condition that the Regional Board signs and commits to deliver the outcomes detailed below.

Signed by College



Ken Milroy

Chair, North East Scotland College Board of Management

Date: 31/03/17



Liz McIntyre

Principal and Chief Executive, North East Scotland College

Date: 31/03/17

Signed by SFC



John Kemp

Interim Chief Executive, Scottish Funding Council

Date: 10TH FEB 2017