

**Shetland College Board****Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick****Monday 4 March 2019 at 11.30am****Present:**

P Campbell	E Macdonald
A Priest	G Smith
T Smith	B Wishart

**Apologies:**

None

**In attendance (Officers):**

N Grant, Director – Development Services  
W Shannon, Interim Joint Principal  
S Berry, Depute Principal  
A Pottinger, Manager – Train Shetland (Short Courses)  
J Thomason, Management Accountant  
L Geddes, Committee Officer

**Also:**

J Bowditch, Education Scotland  
M Sheridan, Centre for Rural Creativity

**Chair**

Mr Campbell, Chair of the Board, presided.

**Circular**

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

**Declarations of Interest**

None

**Minutes**

The Board approved the minutes of the meetings held on 6 February 2019 on the motion of Mr T Smith, seconded by Ms Wishart.

04/19     **Development Services Directorate Performance Report - Nine Month/Third Quarter 2018/19**

The Board considered a report by the Director of Development Services (DV-04-F) summarising the activity and performance of the Development Directorate for the third quarter of 2018/19.

The Director of Development Services summarised the main terms of the report, highlighting in particular that the merger project was moving ahead. He had been in

contact with UHI and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) over the last few weeks regarding recruitment of the shadow board, and an interim project manager had been appointed. A funding request was currently being put together and discussions were taking place around how core funding would work. With regard to the Developing the Young Workforce project, he advised that good progress was being made with partners and stakeholders. There was still work to be done, and the College had an important role in this project.

He went on to advise that financial performance information was now contained within this report, rather than being reported separately as was the case previously. More funding than anticipated had been received in respect of the funding grant and the lecturers' salary agreement, but additional funding was required in respect of building maintenance. The total contribution from the Council was expected to be £913,000. He said that there were some concerns in relation to Train Shetland's resources with the increase in the number of Modern Apprentices they were supporting, and it may be necessary to put in some temporary arrangements.

Responding to questions, he advised that from discussions that had taken place with UHI and SFC, he understood the shadow board members would be put in place first before direct recruitment of staff and students to the board. With regard to the funding of Modern Apprentices in the future, the financial model made assumptions that would align Shetland more closely with the national framework for Modern Apprentice funding. In the meantime, Train Shetland required more resources to support them with the increasing number of Modern Apprentices they were taking on, and it was important that this was supported as there were significant opportunities for the Council.

It was commented that this was an issue that would need to be monitored, as it was important for the Council to support the development of apprentices in order to grow its own workforce.

Responding to a question relating to the lecturers' pay claim, the Depute Principal advised that the employers' association was keeping the College up to date regarding negotiations. These had currently come to a standstill following rejection of the latest offer on the table and lecturers would be striking on 6 March, and possibly again on 21 March.

**Decision:**

The Shetland College Board NOTED the contents of the report.

05/19

**Shetland College Principal's Update**

The Board considered a report by the Interim Joint Principal (SCB-145-F) informing Board members of the SFC and Education Scotland's endorsement of the Shetland College Evaluation Report and Enhancement Plan, and updating the Board on the activities of the Centre for Rural Creativity (CRC).

The Chair welcomed Dr Sheridan and Dr Bowditch to the meeting.

Dr Sheridan gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Board, summarising the activity since the adoption of a new revised and focused strategic plan in June 2018. The revised strategy concentrated on four areas – Postgraduate Curriculum, Research, Knowledge Exchange Hub with University Innovation Fund, and Collaboration.

There were good assets already in place and a good relationship with the creative industries team. However the CRC required two things – to start making money and to have greater integration with the College/NAFC Marine Centre. The revised strategy particularly focused on increasing income and developing the CRC's reach and reputation. It was important to get the curriculum right, as this would provide sustainable income. Establishing new courses at postgraduate level would lead to continuous growth and income delivery, and two had been fast-tracked so that they could be delivered locally from September. New music courses were being delivered through working in collaboration with Shetland Arts Development Agency (SADA), and this collaboration meant that there were opportunities to develop new practices and reach wider markets. The CRC was also focusing on attracting external funding for research activities and had submitted a number of successful applications, and was working on others that could provide substantial funding. The CRC, working in collaboration with the UHI network, Shetland College and SADA, would also be holding a multi-disciplinary international conference later in 2019 to showcase the work of the creative economy of Shetland, as well as celebrating the forthcoming merger. He concluded by saying that the CRC was an emerging strong department with good staff and a good knowledge and research base. One of the challenges for the future would be the continuity of staff contracts to sustain delivery.

Responding to questions, regarding the Islands Deal, he advised that young people and the creative economy featured in all three island groups, and the key message was being put across that the creative economy was very important. It was recognised that there was a need for capital expenditure, but strong revenue funding would also be required. It was a slow process, but he did feel that the message was getting across and representations continued to be made.

With regard to staffing, he advised that close work with other network staff did take place. PhD numbers were small, and teaching was shared with Orkney and Moray in respect of Masters courses. Masters courses tended to be less demanding and more integrated, so there could be a greater return from smaller numbers of staff. It was not predicted that there would be a need for a bigger investment in staff, but there could be a staffing element in some of the bids that went forward.

The Director of Development Services said that the five-year CRC project had been slow to gain momentum, but things were now looking far more positive.

The Interim Joint Principal added that potential was now being realised, and that there was a positive platform to build on in the future. It was important that creative industries were fully integrated, and that there was a close relationship between each island area and the UHI in order to get the best out of the Islands Deal.

It was noted that at a recent meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board, there had been positive comments about the 'Home and Belonging' project, and the value it would bring.

The Chair said that he was heartened to hear that staffing resources across the network were being utilised, and that there had been success in attracting grant funding and that significant funding was projected for the future. He thanked Dr Sheridan for the positive update on activity.

The Interim Joint Principal then went on to speak about the revised Shetland College Evaluation Report and Enhancement Plan, which built on the work

undertaken the previous year. He commended the staff involved, in particular the Depute Principal who had taken the lead on this.

The Depute Principal advised that this was the second time the Plan had been presented to the Board. Following its first presentation, the Plan had been revised to take account of feedback received that it should contain more information in relation to Developing the Young Workforces and the support work in relation to care-experienced people.

Dr Bowditch advised that the report reflected that it had been a very positive year for the College, in spite of everything going on in relation to the tertiary sector in Shetland that had taken up staff time. The Plan had been revised as it had been noted that the College had not been promoting its strengths as well as it could, particularly in relation to the Developing the Young Workforce agenda. It also identified areas that the College wished to improve on, and it had now been endorsed by the SFC and Education Scotland. He highlighted in particular the success rates and high performing outcomes illustrating that Shetland College was 11% above the sector average in terms of FT FE success and withdrawal rates - the best performing in Scotland. The College recognised that there was still some work to do around the FE curriculum, and the grades that it had given itself in the Plan were realistic. It would be monitored to see what progress was made over a period of time, and it may require some amendment to ensure that the milestones were realistic.

Responding to a question, he advised that the current set of quality arrangements were still a work in progress, and a monitoring visit would be made to check that progress was being made in respect of targets. The Plan was seen as a three-year plan, and the longer-term vision was not yet as clear.

The Chair commented that it was recognised that the timeline was ambitious. He thanked staff involved in the production of the report, advising that despite all the uncertainty in the tertiary sector, a positive report had been received and the College had succeeded in delivering what it was required to do.

**Decision:**

The Shetland College Board:

- NOTED the content of the Report from Dr Mark Sheridan, Centre for Rural Creativity on the activities of the Centre.
- NOTED the contents of the letter received from Education Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council relating to the revised Shetland College Evaluation Report and Enhancement Plan

The meeting concluded at 12.50pm.

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Chair

