

MINUTES

A&B - Public

Special Shetland College Board
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Monday 1 July 2019 at 10.00am

Present:

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

Apologies:

None

In attendance (Officers):

N Grant, Director – Development Services
K Adam, Solicitor
S Berry, Depute Principal
R Gillies, Operations Manager
J Thomason, Management Accountant
L Geddes, Committee Officer

Also:

R Campbell, UHI Project Manager

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 meeting held on 1 May 2019 on the motion of Ms Wishart, seconded by Ms Macdonald.

07/19 **Shetland College Principal's Update**

The Board considered a report by the Interim Joint Principal (SCB-147-F) which provided an update on activity across the tertiary sector in Shetland.

UHI Programme Board

The Chair noted that the Board was being asked to approve a request for support from the UHI Programme Board with regard to the Colleges merger. He was hopeful that staff could be released as appropriate, with a caveat that they should not be put under pressure in terms of the creation of the new entity at a local level.

The Depute Principal advised that staff had been asked if they would like to participate, and their participation would depend on capacity. It was important that their voice was heard, so they would participate where they could, and no additional pressure would be put on them to do so.

In response to a question, the UHI Project Manager advised that staff had indicated to her that they felt they needed to be informed and involved in the process, and this would be reflected in the work going forward. The approach so far had been to ask every staff group for a small amount of time so that they could share ideas about what would be sustainable, scope for growth in the future, and also scope for increasing income. It was important to note that staff time and Council time was currently spent on a range of functions – such as finance, human resources, marketing, administration, engagement – which would require to be done in an independent college. How this would be done in a new entity would require a lot of consideration, but the current time pressure for staff in these areas was where most change was anticipated.

It was commented that staff should be supported to be as involved as they could in terms of moving the UHI agenda forward, but it was important to take cognisance of other pressures on them. The governance and relationship between partners was an issue that had been discussed for some time over the years in UHI and never been resolved. Attempts were being made to establish a definitive position, and all partners would be involved.

The Board agreed to the Chair's suggestion with regard to the release of staff.

Scotland's Colleges 2019

The Board noted that Shetland had the highest attainment and retention rates and, by far, the highest rate for positive destinations, and congratulated staff and students in achieving this position.

HISA Awards 2019

The Board congratulated the Students Green Team – Shetland College UHI and NAFC Marine Centre UHI for being awarded HISA Society of the Year.

The UHI Project Manager then gave an update on the merger, advising that there had been two Shadow Board meetings since she had come into post. With regard to governance, there had now been a significant development as a number of non-executive members with a wide range of experience had now joined the Shadow Board. A lot of work had been done to engage with staff, and they had shared their vision for the future in terms of sustainability and growth. This had been a very useful piece of work, particularly as there were a number of specialist areas of work.

She went on to say that the next steps for her would be to focus on areas of the business case for Council and NAFC approval – particularly in relation to finance, growth and efficiencies. This would be done in a staged approach so that stakeholders could see how things were shaping up. A final business case would need to be submitted to Scottish Ministers by September/October, and the target vesting date was early 2020.

In response to a question, she advised that she understood that the business case would require to be agreed by all major stakeholders before it could be submitted.

The Chair added that while the Shadow Board was in place, it was his understanding that all major decisions would have to be approved by the College Board and the NAFC Trustees.

Before the meeting concluded, the Chair advised that shortlisting had now taken place for a new Principal Designate, and interviews would take place later this week. He also advised that this would have been the last meeting for the Interim Joint Principal – Mr Shannon. He had been unable to attend today's meeting, but on behalf of the Board, he expressed thanks to Mr Shannon for his work since taking up the role of Interim Joint Principal.

Decision:

The Shetland College Board:

- NOTED the content of the report and commented, in relation to the request for support for the UHI Programme Board, that staff should be released but with the caveat that they should not be put under pressure in terms of the creation of a new entity at local level.

The meeting concluded at 10.30am.

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Chair