

## Programme Board – Shetland Merger Project

<b>Committee</b>	Programme Board
<b>Subject</b>	Draft Communications Policy and Outline Plan
<b>Action requested</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> For information only <input type="checkbox"/> For discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For recommendation
<b>Brief summary of the paper</b>	The Board identified the need for a communications strategy at its last meeting. A draft policy is offered for approval and outline communications plan is attached at Annex 3 for consideration
<b>Resource implications</b> [if yes, please provide detail]	Yes There are budget implications re plans to hold engagement events and meetings etc. Costings will be developed and subject to finance being secured.
<b>Risk implications</b> [if yes, please provide detail]	Yes Effectively communicating with stakeholders is key to the success of the merger. This strategy sets out an agreed approach to communications
<b>Date paper prepared</b>	21-May-19
<b>Date of committee meeting</b>	30-May-19
<b>Author</b>	Max Brown
<b>Equality and diversity</b>	No
<b>Status</b>	Non-confidential
<b>Freedom of Information</b> Can this paper be included in	Yes

**Approval requested: Items 5**

**Agreement in principle requested: Appendix 3**

1. Aim
2. Background
3. Phase 1 information
4. Managing communications (see also PB2019-11)
5. Communications policy (**draft of working policy for the Shadow Board**)

#### Appendices

1. Internal and external stakeholder needs assessment - communications
2. External communications
3. Outline plan (see also PB2019-11)

## 1. Aim

To coordinate consistent communication with staff, students and stakeholders during the Shetland Colleges Merger Project.

## 2. Background

The Tertiary Education, Research and Training (TERT) sector in Shetland includes three main publicly funded bodies, Shetland College UHI, Train Shetland and NAFC Marine Centre UHI.

A new college entity will bring together these three important resources, to help develop and grow learning opportunities in Shetland in a resilient and sustainable body. The engagement of the community, students, staff and wider stakeholders is essential to its future success.

This communications strategy will support this work during this period development towards the vesting of the new College.

## 3. Phase 1 information

An online resource making accessible reports, minutes and papers from the process to date is being reviewed and developed in conjunction with the new project manager.

## 4. Managing communications

The Project Manager will have an overview of activity on behalf of the Shadow Board. She will ensure a programme of work which keeps all stakeholders informed and listens to their views as the merger progresses (**see PB2019-11**).

## 5. Communications policy

Period to be covered by policy	May 2019 to Vesting date, or if sooner, full harmonisation with other Board policies
Scope of policy	Shadow Board and observers only. Project Manager, project team, any personnel actively engaged in project tasks.
Harmonisation	No. Comms policies of SCB and Trust have not been reviewed for harmonisation.
Review date	December 2019
Reporting / lead	Minimum quarterly to Shadow Board / Project Manager

### 5.1 Introduction

Successful communications relies on transparency, openness and a willingness to engage.

The Board will:

- Make it's commitment to open and timely two-way communication with all staff, learners and wider stakeholders clear;
- Use a combination of mechanisms to reach our audience
- Adhere to the principles of openness, transparency and accessibility.

“The Board” indicates the Shadow Board working for a single merged college comprising NAFC, Shetland College and Train Shetland. This policy will guide the work of the Shadow Board, and will be reviewed before forming part of the Ministerial Merger Business Case and adoption following Vesting.

### 5.2 Communications Policy Objectives

To support the development of a thriving, resilient and exciting tertiary education college we will:

- Communicate regularly, allowing time for two-way communication as much as possible
- Produce accurate and high quality communications
- Use multiple channels suiting a range of personal preferences, encouraging engagement, development of productive relationships and commitment to the vision
- Deliver key messages consistently
- Harmonise approaches across the three entities coming together
- Ensure appropriate internal and external communication, locally and nationally.

### 5.3 Communications outcomes

The desired outcome of communications strategies will be to ensure:

- Current and prospective students are aware of academic, social and pastoral care opportunities provided by the college and recognise these as being of a high standard, responsive to their needs, and comparable with the best opportunities elsewhere in Scotland;
- Parents, employers and wider stakeholders are aware of these opportunities, the quality standards assessed and student outcomes achieved, along with the colleges' contribution to Shetland and Scotland;
- Staff at all levels, across all sites, and in every role helping to make our college successful, feel consulted, supported and engaged in our work to build a strong, resilient and exciting college; and in their own internal and external communications, represent a positive ethos;

- Current and potential funders and investors are aware of the strengths and promise of tertiary education delivery and our capacity to innovate, deliver to high standards, and contribute to Shetland's quality of life and prosperity.

Performance measures for these outcomes will be developed and reviewed at regular intervals, as part of the Board's annual programme of self-assessment.

## 5.4 Mechanisms

There are multiple resources and mechanisms available to communicate with our stakeholders and we will tailor these to suit different audiences (see **Appendix 1** for stakeholder needs assessment):

- College website
- Regular email bulletins
- Staff meetings
- Cross-sectoral working groups
- Public meetings and proactive representation of the college at public events or stakeholder fora
- Submissions to external newsletters (e.g. UHI)
- Regular student meetings and support to HISA and college support staff to engage students
- Media engagements

Communications exercises should be faithfully recorded, reflecting the range of views expressed. The Board will be made aware of findings, and views shared by other means such as via the colleges' complaints procedures and open communications channels.

## 5.6 Communications Planning

In line with Scottish Funding Council recommendations, we will further develop a detailed communication strategy to include:

- Staff and student contribution to the development of communication strategies;
- Regular and consistent opportunities for staff and students to speak to the Principal and senior staff about proposed developments and their impacts;

It should be noted that during the development of the merger of the three learning providers to form one college, and in the early years of its implementation, all communication activity should be regular, thorough, transparent and timely, giving all stakeholders appropriate opportunities to share their views and contribute their knowledge and experience (see **PB2019-11** and **Appendix 3**).

## 5.7 External communications

Representation of the Board on external bodies, local, regional or national networks, and liaison with the media, should be carefully managed to ensure consistency of message and conveyance of the most up to date and accurate information.

The Board will designate spokespersons with clear lines of authority for their representation of the Board's position, and responsibility for feeding back information to the Board (see **Appendix 2**)

## 5.8 Evaluation

A quarterly (minimum) communications report prepared for the Board monitoring progress towards the communications outcomes (7) and activity, including:

- a) Face to face engagement opportunities
- b) Web, social media and hard copy information produced, circulated and evaluated for impact
- c) Feedback, correspondence and findings from engagement exercises
- d) Resources used (financial, staff time)

## 5.9 Resources

The Board will give consideration to the college's annual marketing budget and designated staff time to co-ordinate communications in line with annual communications planning.

*Note that during the merger process, significant communications activity is essential and must therefore be resourced to ensure success.*

# APPENDIX 1

## Stakeholder needs assessment - internal communications

Group	Stakeholder	Main issues/concerns	Communications lead *
Staff	Shetland College Train Shetland NAFC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain job security and terms and conditions</li> <li>To feel included in plans and decisions</li> <li>To contribute specialist knowledge, and in depth understanding of day to day delivery in tertiary education; research; operations and pastoral care, to help design the merged college and contribute to growth and development.</li> </ul>	Project Manager / Principal Designate  All line managers and senior management team
Visiting Professors / UHI Partner staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand and mitigate potential impact on current arrangements</li> <li>To be kept informed, in order to prepare for and secure potential opportunities contributing to the long term success of the college</li> </ul>	Project Manager / Principal Designate  Senior Managers
Students	Shetland College Train Shetland NAFC UHI HISA NUS NAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To have continuity of service</li> <li>To develop a positive and attractive student experience</li> <li>To be supported to engage and represent student voice in as many ways as possible</li> <li>To be supported to find solutions to the challenges of representing students across courses with different attendance modes</li> </ul>	Project Manager / Principal Designate  HISA  Student support team
	University of the Highlands and Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support the merger and help the new college succeed</li> </ul>	Project Manager / Principal Designate
	Scottish Funding Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support the merger and help the new college succeed</li> </ul>	Project Manager / Principal Designate
Union and professional association members	UNISON EIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure appropriate, fair and timely consultation</li> <li>To reflect national bargaining and agreements</li> <li>To maintain job and pension security for staff</li> <li>To maintain Trades Union recognition</li> <li>To protect commitment to further and higher education</li> </ul>	Project Manager / Principal Designate  SIC / NAFC - HR leads

\*a sustainable communications lead role may be developed to lead ongoing work in the new college.

## Stakeholder needs assessment - external communications

Group	Stakeholder	Main issues/concerns	Communications lead
Parents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To have continuity of service</li> <li>To develop a positive and attractive student experience</li> <li>To know a high quality of educational/vocational/pastoral opportunities are available to young people</li> </ul>	
Business and community	Local businesses, community planning partnership, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand and mitigate any potential change in the relationships or services</li> <li>To contribute understanding of local community and economic needs to future planning</li> </ul>	
Other Government agencies	Quality Assurance Agency Scottish Qualifications Authority Education Scotland Colleges Scotland Sector skills councils eg CITB Skills Development Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain academic/vocational standards</li> <li>To ensure adherence to codes of guidance</li> <li>To sustain positive relationships facilitating finance, accreditation, inspection and networking</li> <li>To maintain contracts and agreements in a smooth transition</li> <li>To ensure designated person as college contact throughout process</li> </ul>	SMT
Other Government agencies	UCAS, Student Awards Agency for Scotland, Student Loans Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be kept informed and maintain smooth transition via UHI</li> </ul>	SMT
Suppliers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand and mitigate effect of integration on current contracts</li> <li>To be informed of process for retendering/resupplying following integration</li> </ul>	SMT
NHS, HIE, local authorities	NHS Shetland, HIE Shetland, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interested in potential opportunities and changes</li> </ul>	SMT
Elected Members	SIC Shetland parliamentary constituencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular briefings on project progress</li> <li>Seminar - Ministerial Business Case</li> </ul>	Project Manager / Board reps
Trustees and Board members	Shetland Fisheries Training Centre Trust Shetland College Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular briefings on project progress</li> <li>Seminar - Ministerial Business Case</li> </ul>	Project Manager / Board reps

Appendix 2

External communications

<b>Board representation to be designated to a Board member as required, with clear delegated authority and communications channels</b>			
UHI University court & FERB; Local, regional and national networks			
<b>Media representation - media spokesperson on behalf of the Board identified and provided with media training if required</b>			
Broadcast media	Senior Board member and/or delegated representative	Full briefing on “lines to take” agreed with Chair of Board or designated media spokesperson	Project Manager / Principal Designate
Print media	Senior Board member and/or delegated representative	Press releases and responses to request for comment provided in writing, drafted and approved by Chair of Board or designated media spokesperson	Project Communications

### Appendix 3

### Outline communications plan - to be revised and updated throughout merger project period

PM = Project Manager / PMT = PM+ Team / P/CEO = Principal Designate		Internal /staff - PM					Board			All in		
		Student/external - PMT					Public/open PMT					
		Union reps – P/CEO					UHI PM					
		June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
1	Joint staff engagement / consultation events (MMBC section)							& Social				
2	SMT Info + Q&A all centres											
3	College Board and Trust Board											
4	Student engagement / consultation events (MMBC section)							& Social				
5	Parent engagement / consultation events (overview & key issues)											
6	Local stakeholder meetings (overview & key issues)											
7	Name/brand/identity working group Note 1											
8	Email bulletins											
9	Drop in sessions all centres Note 2											
10	External newsletters											
11	Merger website updates											
12	New college website preparation for 20-21 applicants (UHI) Note 1											
13	Board development sessions											
14	Board/staff/student events											
15	Union consultation (subject to Principal/CEO Designate workforce planning)											
16	Celebration/launch (Vesting, subject to change)											
17	New college Comms Strategy and Plan for 2020-2023 in place											

Note 1: a working group of stakeholders - info TBC re timescale to support process of opening for student applications for 20-21  
 Note 2: PM will have a weekly open door but designated drop-ins also advertised. Board participation on some of these helpful