

## PB2019-15

### Shadow Board – Shetland Merger Project

<b>Committee</b>	Shadow Board
<b>Subject</b>	Report from Senior Management Team outlining options for resolving student accommodation needs.
<b>Action requested</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> For information only <input type="checkbox"/> For discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For recommendation
<b>Brief summary of the paper</b>	An outline of the current situation concerning lack of usable student accommodation for the next student intakes; rapid options appraisal; risk assessment; recommendations for short /long term actions.
<b>Resource implications</b> [if yes, please provide detail]	Yes See options appraisal
<b>Risk implications</b> [if yes, please provide detail]	Yes See risk assessment
<b>Date paper prepared</b>	18-Jun-19
<b>Date of committee meeting</b>	26-Jun-19
<b>Author</b>	Joint paper SMT Shetland College & NAFC
<b>Equality and diversity</b>	No
<b>Status</b>	Non-confidential
<b>Freedom of Information</b> Can this paper be included in 'open' business?*	Yes
<b>Status following the meeting</b>	

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1. Background	
1.1	<p>The merged Shetland College needs to offer all students on all courses, and across both sites, affordable accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students attracted to the college from outwith Shetland (it is estimated there are around 14 offers made annually to non-Shetland students for whom availability of accommodation is a deciding factor when accepting offers)</li> <li>• Cadets on maritime programmes (average 40 per year)</li> <li>• Apprentices and students from outer islands and rural areas (estimated 10 per year)</li> </ul>
1.2	<p>Availability of accommodation is a key factor in the college's competitiveness – the ability to attract students (and therefore fee income).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On maritime courses where cadets are sponsored, sponsoring companies appreciate the reputation of NAFC but regard the accommodation problems as a potential deciding factor in sending cadets to alternative centres on the mainland.</li> <li>• It should be noted that many cadets, but not all cadets, are under 18 when commencing their course</li> <li>• On academic courses and apprenticeships the majority of colleges outside of Shetland do offer dedicated student accommodation. Limited affordable Shetland accommodation, combined with the cost of travelling to and from Shetland, is clearly discouraging to potential students.</li> </ul>
1.3	<p>Student accommodation at Port Arthur House has not been provided since summer 2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A structural defect will require significant investment to assess before recommendations can be made on the future of the building. For this reason, this is regarded as a medium-term option, that may move to long term.</li> <li>• This building is owned by NAFC and is on land owned by Shetland Islands Council. Post-merger, responsibility for the building will transfer to the new college; the status of the lease on the land will need to be confirmed and transferred to the new college.</li> </ul>
2. Report authors	
2.1	<p>Senior staff from NAFC and Shetland College conducted a detailed business plan. This paper brings forward the key deliberations from that piece of work:</p> <p><b>Rory Gillies, Operations Manager, Shetland College project lead, consulting with:</b>  <b>Susan Berry, Deputy Principal, Shetland College</b>  <b>Stuart Fitzsimmons, Section Leader Aquaculture Training, NAFC</b>  <b>Caroline Hepburn, Student Support Officer, NAFC &amp; Shetland College</b>  <b>Angela Sutherland, Compliance &amp; Projects Coordinator, NAFC</b>  <b>Laura Burden, Head of Merchant Navy Training, NAFC</b></p>
3. Partners / stakeholders	
3.1	<p><b>Shetland Islands Council</b> staff engaged with this piece of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to explore short term options - Anderson High School Hostel solutions;</li> <li>• to assess medium term options - properties in the Council's estate that could be converted for student accommodation</li> <li>• to prepare for long term options - Knab Masterplan inclusion of student accommodation.</li> </ul>
3.2	<p><b>Students</b> – we recognise accommodation is a key area of student life and plan to conduct further research into student/cadet views on accommodation needs/availability during 2019-20</p>
3.3	<p><b>Funders/sponsors</b> – 4 commercial customers of marine cadet courses were consulted. All highlighted availability of accommodation as a key factor in their choice of NAFC as a provider.</p>

<b>4. Shadow Board focus</b>	
<b>4.1 Financial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This paper focuses on short term options only.</li> <li>• It is recognised medium- and long- term solutions will require in depth cost appraisals before Shadow Board consideration.</li> <li>• The “do nothing” option also carries cost/sustainability implications due to loss of potential students and cadets.</li> </ul>
<b>4.2 Strategic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to marketing strategy: attracting students</li> <li>• Links to industry partnerships: expectations of cadet sponsoring companies</li> <li>• Links to growth plans: increasing PhD studentships and HE student numbers; capacity to host short courses during low occupancy phases</li> <li>• Links to improving the quality of the student experience</li> <li>• Links to college accessibility/transport development – location of accommodation</li> </ul>
<b>4.3 HR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous dedicated accommodation has been staffed, due to the age range of cadets. Staffing implications of medium- and long- term options need to be reviewed</li> <li>• Shared use of other hostel accommodation requires careful consideration of staffing, child/young adult protection issues and links with college student support staff</li> <li>• Further action on accommodation requires:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continued collaboration by working group team June to September 2019 and January to June 2020 to prepare for 2020-21 student intake</li> <li>○ Additional support for marketing, management of potential accommodation providers, support to students with accommodation needs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>4.4 Legal / regulatory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially, appropriate review of accommodation suitability, PVG checks of providers, model student/provider agreements and college disclaimer</li> <li>• Due regard for child/young adult protection and student welfare</li> </ul>
<b>5. Other</b>	

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### 6. Summary of options considered – short term

Option	Key considerations	Recommended action / action owner
Do nothing	<p><b>Risks</b></p> <p>Stated preferences of commercial customers (marine cadet courses) – loss of business (up to £19k per Maritime Programme student lost)</p> <p>Previous experience of low uptake of offered places by students who would have needed accommodation in order to take up a course.</p>	Not recommended
Enhanced approach to attracting private providers (landlords, B&B, spare rooms) to support student search	<p><b>Benefits</b></p> <p>A low-cost option which is partially facilitated at present</p> <p>Requires low level support – agreement is between student and provider</p> <p>Would benefit from marketing of opportunity to local residents</p> <p>Could link to local social media forums</p> <p><b>Risks</b></p> <p>No control of quantity, quality and pricing of accommodation</p> <p>Low control over landlord suitability – could recommend PVGs</p> <p>Low control over student conduct</p>	<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Undertake awareness campaign to local potential landlords</p> <p><b>Action owner</b></p> <p>Existing staff and PM assistance (due to low marketing capacity at present)</p> <p><b>Timescale</b></p> <p>June to September</p>
Provide limited accommodation within other local provision within existing facilities.	<p><b>Benefits</b></p> <p>Makes efficient use of existing, staffed facility</p> <p>Location provides students with access to town and sports facilities</p> <p>Quality of accommodation is high</p> <p><b>Risks</b></p> <p>Unpredictable number of places available for different genders</p> <p>Only suitable for students/cadets under 18</p> <p>Will make only small provision vs level of demand, but may be suitable for some students and therefore reduce demand on other accommodation.</p>	<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Explore potential implementation and report to the Shadow Board (July 19) on practical considerations and cost implications; (if feasible, a draft MOU with invoicing arrangement post vesting)</p> <p><b>Action owner</b></p> <p>Shetland Islands Council team</p> <p><b>Timescale</b></p> <p>June/July</p>

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### 7. Summary of options considered – medium term

Option	Key considerations	Recommended action / action owner
Repairs to Port Arthur House	NAFC is commissioning structural assessment of the building expected approx. August 2019	<p><b>Action</b> Full report, recommendations and costs to be reported to the Shadow Board (late autumn date) for consideration</p> <p><b>Action Owner</b> NAFC Board / team with partner assistance</p> <p><b>Timescale</b> Report: late autumn 2019 / Further action, if recommended, subject to investment being secured by the future college/Shadow Board.</p>
Development of an unused or underused public sector building	<p>Search for appropriate building (or site for temporary accommodation) – sites previously identified are now not available for use.</p> <p>A feasibility study to assess suitability, capital costs, revenue costs (lease) and timescale would be required if a site is identified that a public sector body agrees has potential for use as student accommodation.</p> <p>There is scope to collaborate with bodies requiring key worker accommodation.</p>	<p><b>Action</b> Colleges team ready to work with SIC estates team if suitable sites/properties are identified.</p> <p><b>Action owner</b> Partnership approach</p> <p><b>Timescale</b> Ongoing. Further action, if recommended, subject to investment being secured</p>
Partnership with private student accommodation provider	The experience of other colleges has been researched. Their experience to date suggests accommodation offered is expensive for students and creates a burden for colleges in terms of contracts and leases	Not recommended

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### 8. Summary of options considered – long term

<b>Option</b>	<b>Key considerations</b>	<b>Recommended action / action owner</b>
New build hostel within Knab re-development (Knab Masterplan)	<p>Potential for a purpose built, eco-friendly, energy efficient accessible student accommodation.</p> <p><b>Risks</b></p> <p>Plan may not realise all intended benefits</p> <p>Investment for the plan may be partial or subject to conditions</p> <p>Council priorities may change</p> <p>Timescale is unknown but likely to be 5 yrs.+</p> <p>Ownership of land and buildings to be discussed and/or cost to college or students</p>	<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Maintain watching brief on site plans and investment proposals (e.g. Islands Deal)</p> <p>Assess outline costings based on other similar projects, to inform proposals</p> <p><b>Action Owner</b></p> <p>SIC team, in consultation with college</p> <p><b>Timescale</b></p> <p>In line with development of Island Deal proposals and Knab Masterplan development.</p>