

A new College for Shetland - Consultation Report

Summary

A consultation process on the Ministerial Merger Business Case for bringing together tertiary education providers on Shetland (Shetland College, Train Shetland and the NAFC Marine Centre) has been carried out by the two colleges working together. A combination of an online questionnaire and online meetings were held. Engagement was sought from staff, students and a wide range of stakeholders. A wide range of responses were received to the online questionnaire (30% from staff, 13% from students, 57% from other stakeholders) and good engagement of staff and stakeholders through online meetings.

From the responses received the case for merger was widely understood (88% thought the rationale for merger was clear) and widely supported (78% supported the plans to bring tertiary education together in Shetland). There were views expressed that merger was overdue and further delays should be minimised. The benefits for the merger were identified in terms of improving the student experience, providing clear learner journeys and new areas of teaching; allowing strong strategic planning to support the economic, social and cultural prosperity of Shetland; presenting a single point of contact for meeting local needs; improved opportunities for collaborative working; financial efficiency, sustainability and funding opportunities for a larger single body. The response from the local authority is supportive and makes it clear there will be continued demand from the council for a wide range of services that the new college will provide.

The proposed name (Shetland Institute, UHI) was supported by only 38% of respondents to the questionnaire with the majority (62%) not liking it. A range of alternative suggestions were given.

The governance model was broadly supported, however, it was clear there was some opposition to the proposed non-incorporated status. Staff felt they needed further explanation of the alternative models.

In terms of wider considerations, concerns were expressed for staff terms and conditions and the need for details of transfer arrangements for staff. Concerns were also expressed linked to the proposed leasing arrangements for the current buildings; future funding for their maintenance; disappointment that a single campus is not proposed and concern at the loss of the Train Shetland building. The importance of student accommodation for the success of the new college was highlighted. Staff emphasised the importance of the role of governing board of the college.

More could have been made of external opportunities for the new college; the learning opportunities of the new college; making more of online and blended learning; the importance of addressing the zero carbon agenda; the importance of inclusivity and the need to listen to the student voice. Finally there are opportunities and threats associated with the present COVID situation that are not reflected in the Ministerial Merger Business Case.

1. Introduction

As part of the process towards proposed merger of Shetland College, Train Shetland and the NAFC Marine Centre, a Ministerial Merger Business Case has been prepared and submitted to the

Scottish Funding Council. The two Colleges were tasked with consulting on that business case and seeking the views of staff, students and stakeholders including the local authority on the proposals made. As this consultation relates to a small, discrete geographical area it was agreed that for stakeholders external to the colleges the consultation would be conducted jointly and a single report produced on the outcomes. Student engagement was sought jointly and staff consultation took place separately. All of this work was overseen by the merger working group (composed of senior staff from both colleges).

Working under the restrictions of the COVID-19 lockdown, the consultation comprised of an online questionnaire (www.a-new-college-for-shetland.uhi.ac.uk/consultation) which was available to all for responses and on line meetings for staff, students and some stakeholders. Over 490 individuals or organisations were contacted for engagement. A press release and social media were also used to attract responses more widely. Groups targeted included: Students, Apprentices, Staff, Key industry sector employers, Shetland Islands Council, Mareel, Service Industry providers, Tenants, Scottish Universities, UHI and its academic partners, MSPs for the highlands and Islands, MP, Trade Unions, Schools Community Councils, Equality and diversity groups, Charities and the general public.

In total 153 responses were received to the online questionnaire (including a few responses by email). 28 meetings with stakeholders took place. There was a total attendance of 83. There were a total of 11 academic and support staff meetings held. 2 with staff from NAFC and 8 with staff from Shetland College / Train Shetland and 1 with Mareel senior staff with 62 staff involved in total (further detail is provided in Appendix 1).

This report aims to capture the feedback provided through this consultation. The narrative comprises feedback from students, staff and from wider stakeholders. This narrative was developed using the quantitative data provided through the questionnaire (provided in Appendix 2) and through the meetings (provided at Appendix 3) and qualitative responses received in meetings and through the questionnaire. The response from Shetland Islands Council is included in full at Appendix 4.

2. Student narrative

Students were generally supportive of the merger with some feeling unsure. They saw benefits of shared resource in terms of management but also for shared facilities and more access to resources. They felt that it would be simpler for their choices to have one point of contact. There was a wish for wider access to postgraduate courses and opportunities on Shetland and that the new college should seek to recruit more students to the islands. There was concern regarding space for some subjects and a wish for a purpose built college in town. Students reflected concern about the name but to a lesser extent than the staff. Students wish to have a greater voice in the college and approve of the governance in terms of providing this.

3. Staff narrative

There was a strong desire amongst staff to get the merger process completed; to “get on with it”, or “get it done”. The length of time that the process has gone on for (more than eight years), and the uncertainty this has created, were highlighted by many. Some believed that the merger made

sense since Shetland was 'too small' to have three separate training organisations. Having a single college would, it was suggested, give the sector in Shetland a stronger voice, both locally and nationally. However, the dangers of losing (or diluting) existing specialisms, identities and recognition were also mentioned. Many staff saw benefits from a customer perspective in having a single tertiary education institute to deal with; a 'one-stop-shop' as a number expressed it. Some pointed out that staff tended to be more concerned about specific detailed issues that would directly affect them (such as pay, terms and conditions, pensions, and facilities) rather than about 'big-picture' considerations. Essentially, many staff wanted to know how specifically the merger would affect them. Some felt that these issues had not been adequately addressed in the merger business case. A number of staff commented that 'the devil will be in the detail', and some commented on the difficulty of translating fairly general aspirations, hopes and desires into practical realities.

3.1 Financial

Financial considerations were seen by many staff as being one of the principle driving forces, and benefits, of the proposed merger. Almost two-thirds of (all) responses to the consultation questionnaire (62%) mentioned financial benefits to the merger. Specific benefits mentioned included: reduced costs, saving money, improved sustainability, enhanced efficiency, reduced duplication, fairer funding, more investment, and greater sharing of resources and joint working. 'Sustainability' was a frequently mentioned theme, both in the context that the new college had to be sustainable, and in the context that a merger was necessary to ensure the sustainability of tertiary education in Shetland.

Many comments implicitly or explicitly assumed that there would be financial savings from merging the three existing organisations, with economies of scale, lower costs, greater efficiencies, opportunities for savings, and elimination (or reduction) of duplication and overlap commonly mentioned. Some staff, however, expressed doubt about whether savings would actually be realised (or about how great any savings would actually be), questioning how much duplication or overlap there actually was at present, for example. Concerns were also expressed about the impacts of cost savings on staff and services.

Some staff expressed the view that education should not be judged in monetary terms and others commented that funding for the college should be seen as an investment rather than a cost. The need for capital investment in college facilities (on an ongoing basis) was also mentioned.

3.2 Working together

The benefits of working together were commonly mentioned by staff. This included both working together across the three organisations, but also working with external partners, such as schools, businesses, regional planning bodies, and the SIC, for example. Some staff felt that there was a lack of coordination and a lack of links across the three organisations at present. Some also commented on the need for a (better) flow of information and for a better understanding of each other and of what everyone is doing. The breaking down of divisions and barriers was seen as an important consequence of working together more. However, some staff recognised that greater working together would be difficult to realise in practice across two geographically distant campuses. The advantages of stronger links with a local businesses and industries were also highlighted.

3.3 Facilities

College facilities were mentioned by many staff. Indeed, 'facilities' was one of the principal topics that respondents to the consultation questionnaire felt had not been adequately considered in the merger business case. Some staff commented on the opportunities afforded by the merger for greater sharing of resources and for better and more efficient use of the available facilities. However, some felt that inadequate consideration had been given to the practicalities of operating across two campuses. A number of respondents suggested that a new single campus should be developed for the new merged college, to bring all facilities, staff, students and activities together on one site and to fully realise the potential benefits of the merger. The lack of student accommodation was mentioned and was seen as a major obstacle to the potential for the new college to attract students from outwith the islands (as well as the problems it causes for current students). Some staff expressed concern about the state of some of the current college buildings, and some expressed concern about the loss of the Train Shetland facilities (to be taken over by the SIC). There was concern also that ownership of the college buildings is not to be transferred to the new college (from the SIC) and about the potential future costs that continued leasing of the buildings might give rise to. Finally, the need for ongoing investment in facilities was mentioned by a number of staff.

3.4 Operational

Many staff saw opportunities in the merger to improve aspects of the colleges' operations. Improving communication amongst staff was a frequently mentioned topic, as was expanding and improving the promotion and marketing of the tertiary education sector in Shetland. Better long-term and strategic planning was also mentioned. Some staff saw opportunities for greater flexibility to develop the services offered by the new college with freedom from the constraints of current systems.

3.5 Governance

Views amongst staff of the proposed governance arrangements for the new college were divided. Overall, 42% of responses from staff to the consultation questionnaire had a positive view of the proposed arrangements while 36% had a negative view. Staff opinions on the proposed governance arrangements appeared to be largely linked to the question of whether or not the new college should be incorporated (see below). There was a strong message from staff that the success of the merger and of the new college would depend on there being good governance and strong and effective management and leadership from the college board. The need for flexible and responsive governance and the need to make things happen were mentioned. The need for effective strategic planning, and for the management and leadership of the new college to have a clear long-term vision were highlighted. Freedom from constraints imposed by the Shetland Islands Council (on Shetland College and/or Train Shetland) were mentioned by some staff. A number of comments were made about the desirability of the management board being more actively involved in the colleges; that board members should come and see what was going on and have greater direct contact with staff. In general, that the board should do more to make its presence felt.

3.5.1 Incorporation v. Non-Incorporation

Staff views about the proposed governance arrangements for the new college appear to have been strongly influenced by opinions on whether or not the new college should be incorporated. In turn, these were influenced by opinions about the merits of 'public' as opposed to 'private' ownership (incorporation being equated with 'public' ownership and non-incorporation with 'privatisation').

One of the principal unions representing staff at Shetland College has actively campaigned in favour of incorporation both in the specific context of the new college and as a more general ongoing national campaign. More than half of the college staff who completed the questionnaire expressed an opinion on incorporation versus non-incorporation but these were evenly split for and against incorporation. Many staff commented in the consultation meetings that they were unsure about the merits of incorporation versus non-incorporation; that it was hard to understand the issue; that more information would have been helpful; and that they did not feel they had enough information to make an informed decision. Negative comments by staff at other incorporated colleges were noted by some.

The very different natures of the two principal organisations and the possible effects of this on staff opinion were noted by some: Shetland College and Train Shetland were part of a public body (the Council), with non-incorporation of the new college being portrayed as 'privatisation', while NAFC was operated by an independent charitable organisation and was thus perhaps already more akin to a 'non-incorporated' college. Consequently, NAFC staff appeared to be less concerned about the new college not being incorporated.

Some felt that certain groups of staff were more concerned about the issue than others. For example, there was a perception that opposition to non-incorporation was stronger amongst academic staff at Shetland College than amongst support staff. Some questioned what the concerns about the issue actually were, pointing out that quality assurance requirements, financial scrutiny and accountability would be the same (or very similar) whether or not the new college was incorporated. Some questioned the relevance of the issue (perhaps seeing it as a distraction), arguing that the student experience should be the priority and would not differ between the two models. The financial arguments for non-incorporation (including the ability to build up reserves) concerned some who argued that education should not be viewed in monetary terms and that colleges should not seek to build up reserves (that any surpluses should be ploughed back into education).

3.6 Curriculum

Improving the 'curriculum' was frequently mentioned by staff as one of the principal potential benefits of the proposed new college. ('Curriculum' is here taken to cover a wide range of topics related to the educational offerings of the new college, including what courses are offered and how and where they are delivered.) Just over one-quarter of responses to the consultation questionnaire (26%) mentioned issues related to the curriculum as subjects that had not been (adequately) covered in the merge business case, and one-fifth of respondents (20%) saw improvements to the curriculum as a potential benefit of the merger. Issues related to the curriculum were also commonly mentioned in comments, both in the questionnaire and in the consultation meetings.

A major theme of the comments made was the opportunities offered (or perceived to be offered) to develop and expand the new college's curriculum; including new courses and new areas of teaching. Linked to this was the potential to develop opportunities afforded by local developments (such as the SIC's 'Energy Hub', renewable energy projects, and the Shetland Space Centre, for example. Some comments suggested (or implied) that curriculum development had been 'held back' (or restricted) within the existing colleges. A second major theme was the necessity of meeting local training needs. That included both meeting (and continuing to meet) the training

needs of local business, industries and individuals, and the need to respond to current and future challenges facing Shetland (including Covid-19, Brexit, and the decline of the local oil and gas sector) including the need for retraining. The importance of maintaining support for further education training and apprenticeships was mentioned.

The third major theme related to the curriculum was the need for greater flexibility in how courses are delivered, with greater use of online learning, blended learning and rural learning centres all mentioned. These were seen as offering a number of benefits, including reducing barriers to access to tertiary education (within Shetland), and opening up larger potential markets (outside Shetland). The advantages of reduced requirements for classroom space were also mentioned. The desirability of attracting more students from outside Shetland to study in the islands was also mentioned. Some staff wondered how a balance could be struck in the curriculum between those courses that people (or businesses) needed and those that people wanted to do simply for interest or fun.

3.7 Students

A number of staff saw potential benefits for students in the proposed merger (in addition to the potential development of the curriculum discussed above). Having a single student body across the new college would give students a stronger voice, some felt. Others mentioned the need for improved facilities for students across the college campuses (including student common rooms, for example) and the desirability of ensuring that the 'student experience' was similar regardless of where a student was studying. The lack of student accommodation was also mentioned, as was the desirability of improved public transport links to the colleges. Finally, some staff mentioned the opportunity afforded by the new college to develop a single postgraduate student community.

3.8 Name

A lot of staff did not like the proposed name of the new college ('Shetland Institute UHI'); only one-quarter of the staff who completed the consultation questionnaire were comfortable with it. However, there was no consensus about an alternative: the most popular suggestions being variants on 'Shetland College UHI' (18% of staff responses) or 'Shetland UHI' (14%). The commentary from the staff consultation meetings was more varied than these figures might suggest. Some staff felt that the term 'institute' had 'unfortunate' or 'negative' connotations, although others felt that it had more positive connotations (quality, for example). While 'Shetland College' was frequently proposed as an alternative name it was only done so by Shetland College staff. There was a recognition that that name might be less acceptable to NAFC staff. A number of staff felt that while they did not necessarily particularly like the proposed name it would be acceptable and was not the most important issue facing the new college. Some staff noted that there had already been extensive discussion about the name and that it was unlikely that any name would be acceptable to everyone.

4. Stakeholder narrative

The following outlines the main points raised by stakeholders and other interested parties through the online survey and consultation meetings.

4.1 Benefits of merger

The main points from responses on benefits are summarised within Appendix 5(a).

4.1.1 Student Experience

Critical to the benefits seen by many was the enhancements it could offer to the student experience. This ranged from the overall experience of being a college student as well as the range of opportunities on offer and the provision of progressive learner pathways in a number of curricular areas. Opportunities to broaden the delivery of learning beyond the building based establishment and into communities the length and breadth of Shetland to improve access and to meet a wider range of learner needs was also highlighted.

There was a great deal of emphasis on the need for the new merged college to be inclusive in its widest sense and to treat all learners with respect and meet their needs from whatever starting point that is. This was often expressed with the view that this supports the vision we all have for Shetland as an attractive place to live, work, study and invest in.

Some respondents also felt that the learner offer would be improved by being more effectively integrated into the UHI family, and that single identity would secure more focussed, clearer learner pathways. There were a number of local educational providers and services that highlighted how a single merged college would be better placed to support learners with transition from school to college, particularly those with additional support needs. Benefits were also seen by a number of respondents for students in practical terms, that is, that one merged college would be easier for prospective students to navigate their way through with regard to courses on offer, entry requirements and administration.

4.1.2 Strategic Planning

By far and away the greatest range of comments, around the benefits of this merger proposal centred on the positive contribution a merged college would have in securing the future economic, social and cultural prosperity of Shetland.

Comments included an acknowledgement of the contribution the merged college would make as a community planning partner. The reciprocal relationship it had to have with local employers and the community to make best use of resources, retain the population of Shetland and contribute to the local economy was also highlighted. It was also seen as well placed to embrace the new economic opportunities which are coming to Shetland in the energy and decommissioning sectors.

4.1.3 Joint Working

A number of benefits arising from the proposal to support joint working were highlighted. This included comments about joint working between staff in the existing three establishments, but also opportunities to develop partnership working with other FE and HE establishments nationally and internationally. Then in addition, with respect to the future prosperity of Shetland those opportunities to work more cohesively with the local school education sector, local employers, local service providers and with local industry and businesses.

4.1.4 Marketing and Communications

The benefits which would arise by marketing a single merged entity were also touched on by some respondents. It was felt that this would enable better internal and external communications and it would generate the ability to be more agile, responsive and customer-focussed.

4.1.5 Identity

The opportunity provided to a new merged college to carve out its own unique identity was seen by a number of respondents as beneficial. This centred around building on the strengths of each establishment currently and the acknowledgement that as Shetland is small, one voice in FE and HE from our community would be stronger.

4.1.6 Finance and Sustainability

A key theme considered matters which relate to the significant challenges there are in the current arrangements to ensure establishments are financially sustainability. The ability of the merged college to capitalise on economies of scale was acknowledged. Comment was also made that there were huge opportunities to avoid duplication of effort, for instance in the development of policies and working practices and protocols.

Within comments around the current challenging financial position of the merging entities, there were also a few comments on how a single voice would be better placed to attract new sources of external funding.

4.2 Suggested Changes or Improvements

The main points from responses gathered are summarised within Appendix 5(b).

4.2.1 Student Experience

This was by far and away the area which generated the most comment, often highlighting changes and improvements that should be made to enhance the student experience going forward. The main themes in these comments were inclusion, progression and accessibility.

The provision of a wide variety of learning opportunities to meet the needs of all learners, and for progression pathways to be built into these offers was stressed. In addition, properly hearing the voice of students was emphasised and providing tailored support to ensure the student experience is always a positive one. The need to work in partnership with other learning providers and with schools to enable smooth transitions was again raised.

4.2.2 Staff

Important points were highlighted about the need to ensure staff were listened to, communicated with effectively and treated fairly. These comments related mostly to terms and conditions and the arrangements for the transfer of staff to the new merged college.

4.2.3 Strategic Planning

Central to many responses, particularly from service providers, local employers and the public sector was the potential role the new merged college could have in supporting a positive future for Shetland. Ideas included the types of diversification in the student offer which would assist with this aim, and also how partners could work together to make this aspiration a reality. There was an acknowledgement that the new college would need to be agile and forward thinking to achieve this, but that that in turn could lead to an exciting future with an organisation at the cutting edge of innovation in the economy of Shetland.

4.2.4 Joint Working

Strategic issues such as building links within the community were highlighted, but also more practical matters such as close working with schools to enable learners to access blended learning opportunities.

4.2.5 Marketing and Communications

Some respondents considered that previous opportunities to maximise the potential of the existing entities had been missed, and such opportunities had to be capitalised on going forward with the new merged college. There was a need to attract students from outwith Shetland, by raising the profile of what the learning offer was from new establishment, and more use could be made of social media to do this.

4.2.6 Identity

The key to moving forward positively within a new merged college was seen by some respondents as starting from developing a positive unified clear identity. It was often reflected that the new merged college should be outward looking and rooted in the respective strengths of each merging establishment. The opportunity to start afresh was also recognised here, whereby some of the negative aspects of the last few years could be cast aside and everyone would benefit from a fresh start.

4.2.7 Finance and Sustainability

A few, but wide ranging, suggestions were offered in regard to financial aspects which the merger proposal had not covered. For instance it was felt by one respondent that the climate challenge facing us all was not addressed, whilst another felt that the proposal did not pay enough heed to the impact financial constraints may have on the learner offers which could be made. There were also a few comments made that the proposal ought to highlight the opportunity there would be to access new funding to support post-graduate research projects.

4.2.8 Assets

A few respondents commented on the advantage the new merged college could gain from having a brand new purpose built building. One or two felt that more access to existing facilities would enhance the contribution the college could make to the community, and one respondent thought that there was too much emphasis on building and the conversation should be focussed on how learning took place.

4.3 Governance

The main points from responses gathered are summarised within Appendix 5(c).

4.3.1 Unincorporated (or non-incorporated)

The proposed legal status of the merged college was seen by many to be adequate and appropriate for the size of the new merged college. There were suggestions that a non-incorporated college would provide a greater range of financial options whilst avoiding onerous or restrictive measures, such as 15 day financial planning targets. There were also comments that the college being within UHI would ensure sufficient scrutiny. It was acknowledged by some that the future should not be hampered by red tape and that it would be beneficial to be 'freed' from the bureaucracy of the Council.

4.3.2 Incorporated

The strong opposition from EIS-FELA was noted.

There were some respondents who felt that the non-incorporated model proposed was the wrong one and that an incorporated college would deliver better accountability, public scrutiny and transparency. Respondents often referred to non-incorporation as the 'privatisation' of education and raised concern that education should not be run for profit. There were queries regarding certain aspect of the justifications for non-incorporation as well as reference to the majority of colleges in Scotland remaining public without a clear explanation of why Shetland needed to be different.

4.3.3 Communication and leadership

It was evident from responses that there is a need for governance arrangements to be more clearly explained to all stakeholders. There were many stakeholders who reflected on the controversy surrounding legal status and the need to move on from it. There was a clear acknowledgement from stakeholders that the non-incorporated model was not favoured by some academic staff and the EIS in particular.

There were often comments about how the board of management was key to the success of the new college, regardless of the legal status, especially in ensuring openness and transparency. It was also suggested that there should be training for the board and efforts to ensure that the board of directors have the opportunity to be more involved.

4.4 Covid-19

The timing of the consultation resulted in a number of responses reflecting on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This was especially the case in stakeholder meetings. The main points highlighted are summarised within Appendix 5(d).

4.4.1 Student Experience

Many comments raised concern about how the student experience has changed and will undoubtedly continue to as a result of social distancing measures. It was suggested that school leavers may postpone going south to University, as has been exemplified by the number of pupils making the decision to remain in school for an extra year. There were many who felt that there would be more students looking for alternative 'local' options. Concern about the impact on modern apprenticeships and youth employment was also often raised. Widening inequalities as a result of the pandemic were highlighted by some for the college to be aware of.

4.4.2 Strategic Planning

Many highlighted the important role the College has with regard to recovery and renewal. For example, it was noted there had been a downturn in oil and gas, which in turn impacts on sectors such as hospitality, which has been exasperated by Covid-19. Furthermore, the care sector was highlighted as being an important sector for the College. There were initial signs that recruitment problems experienced during recent years were changing following the pandemic.

4.4.3 Marketing

Comments often reflected that working from home is seen increasingly as a 'new normal' and that there are increased opportunities to entice students who may be more open to considering online vocational training or academic learning.

4.4.4 Finance and Sustainability

There was often reflections regarding the potential economic downturn and the impact that would have on the whole of the Shetland economy. There would also be a change to the 'stability' of the jobs market. There were also concerns raised about how Covid-19 would impact the merger plans and the financial projections for the financial business case.

Appendix 1 - Consultation engagement

Survey

The survey was launched on 28th May and closed at 5pm on Friday 3rd July 2020.

Promotion of the survey was mainly online via social media (within the Colleges and the Council), a media release and a banner advert on Shetnews.

Stakeholders were targeted using an email mailing list. This included local employers, 3rd sector organisations, Community Councils, schools and contacts for NAFC. The distribution list had 496 contacts. Groups targeted included:

- Students & Apprentices
- Staff
- Employers and local businesses
- Shetland Islands Council
- Local Trusts and 3rd sector organisations
- Community Councils
- Scottish universities
- University of the Highlands and Islands and its academic partners
- MSPs for Highlands and Islands and MP for Orkney and Shetland
- Trade Unions
- Schools
- Charities
- General public

Two emails were sent to all on the distribution list at the launch and during the final week. There were two occasions when employers and schools were targeted and Voluntary Action Shetland were asked to circulate to local charities and 3rd sector organisations.

Google analytics indicates that the landing page for the online survey had 891 views. The number of unique visitors was 722 and the top sources to the page were:

Shetnews direct referrals	17%
Google	12%
Facebook	4%
Email	1%

The original email that was circulated went with a link to the Jisc survey as opposed to the landing page within the merger website. Therefore, the email results appear low but further analysis of the response rates within the survey data itself indicate that there were slight improvements in response rates. That correlates with the records of when emails were circulated.

The number of unique visitors to the landing page versus the survey response rate of 152 is disappointing. The analytics would indicate that less than 20% completed the survey when taking

into account the direct referrals from emails. Whilst it was important to ensure that those completing the survey had access to the proposals it may have been the case that visitors were lost from the site by failing to 'encourage' a further click on the survey link.

Meetings with stakeholders & additional submissions

28 meetings with stakeholders took place. There was a total attendance of 83.

10 meetings were held with academic and support staff. 2 of these were with staff from NAFC and 8 with staff from Shetland College / Train Shetland. A meeting was also held with staff representatives from Shetland Arts (Mareel).

16 meetings were held with representatives from the public sector, and 1 with an elected member of Shetland Islands Council.

A Human Resources Partnership Group meeting was held with Union representatives from Shetland College and Train Shetland.

Unfortunately, the time of year as well as factors such as Covid-19 directly impacted on meetings with students with no attendance. Student responses were received direct to the consultation questionnaire and a statement from HISA.

In addition to meetings, consultation responses were also received, as follows:

- EIS FELA (National) – email received. They also entered their response online
- EIS FELA (Shetland) – email response. This was included in survey data at analysis stage
- Rhoda Grant MSP – email
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise – letter
- Shetland Islands Council – full response provided at Appendix 4

Appendix 2 – Quantitative data from questionnaire

Q1) About Respondents

Breakdown of Responses

Of the 153 responses received, almost one-third (30%) were from college staff (Table 1, Figure 1). The other principal categories of respondent were individuals, local businesses, and students.

Table 1 Breakdown of responses by category.

Category	No.	%
College Staff member	45	30%
Individual	23	15%
Local business / employer	20	13%
Student (past or present)	19	13%
Public sector organisation or department	13	9%
School or education service provider	12	8%
Other	9	6%
Community group, 3rd sector or charity	8	5%
Apprentice (past or present)	2	1%
Parent	2	1%
TOTAL	153	100%

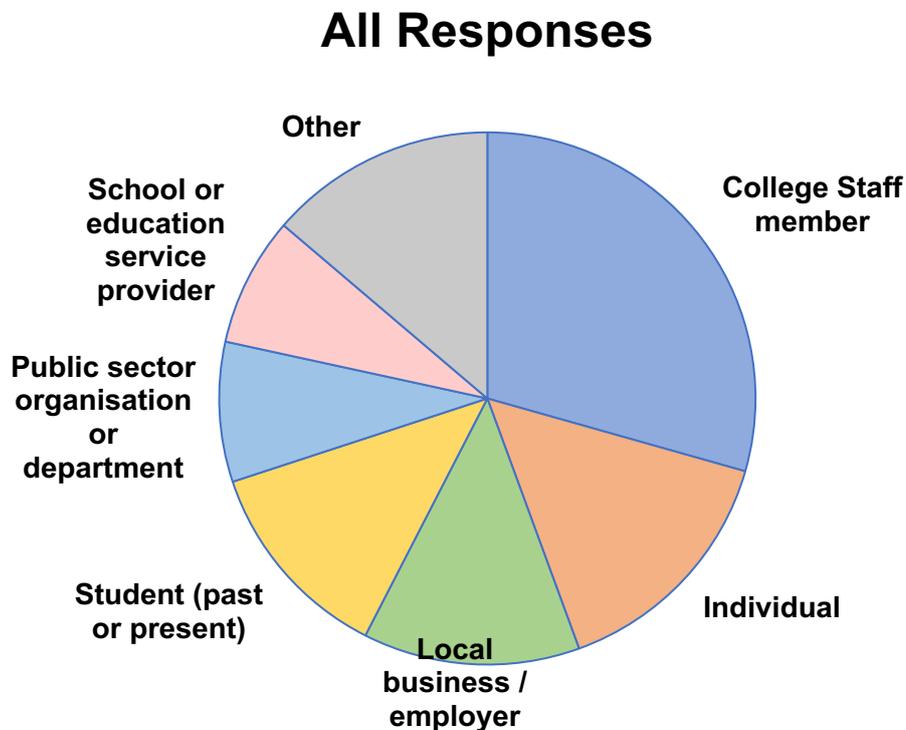


Figure 1 Breakdown of responses by category. (See Table 1.)

Responses by Staff

Of the 45 responses received from college staff more than half (59%) were from Shetland College staff and almost one-third (30%) from NAFC staff, with the balance from Train Shetland staff (Table 2, Figure 2).

Table 2 Breakdown of responses by college staff.

Organisation	ALL	
	No.	%
NAFC Marine Centre	14	31%
Shetland College	26	58%
Train Shetland	5	11%
TOTAL	45	100%

Staff Responses

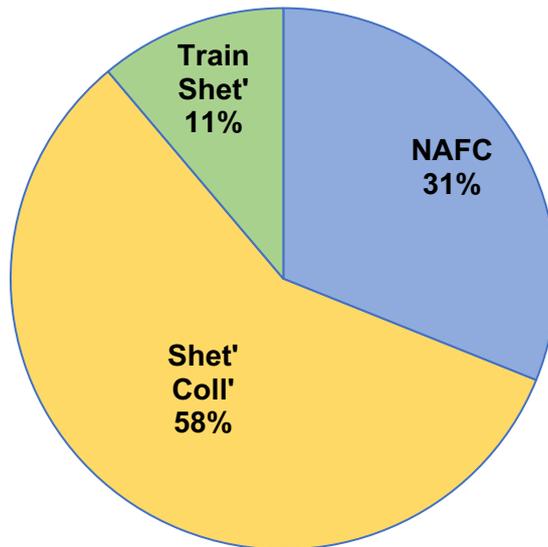


Figure 2 Breakdown of responses by college staff. (See Table 2.)

Responses by Students

Of the 21 responses received from students and apprentices, just over half (57%) were from current students and just under half (43% from former students (Table 3, Figure 3).

Table 3 Breakdown of responses by college students and apprentices.

Students	ALL	
	No.	%
Current Students & Apprentices	12	57%
Former Students & Apprentices	9	43%
TOTAL	21	100%

Student Responses

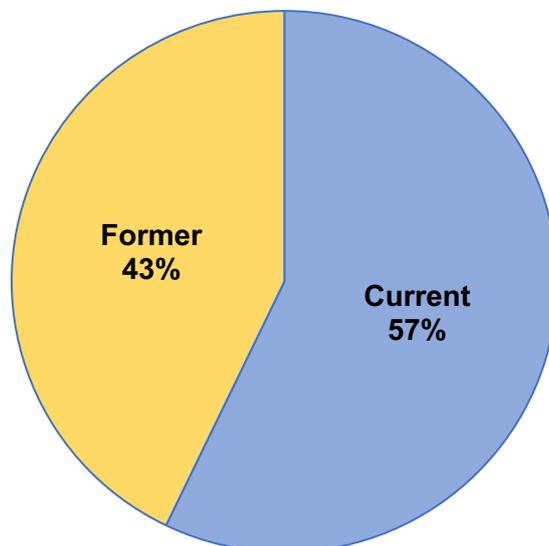


Figure 3 Breakdown of responses by current and former students and apprentices. (See Table 3.)

Responses by Business Category

The 19 responses received from businesses, covered 14 different business sectors (Table 4, Figure 4). Almost one-third of the responses (30%) were from seafood businesses (aquaculture, fish catching and seafood), and 40% were from maritime businesses (seafood + maritime).

Table 4 Breakdown of business responses by business category.

Business Sector	No.	%
Aquaculture	2	10%
Fishing	2	10%
Seafood	2	10%
Maritime	2	10%
Technology	2	10%
Tourism	2	10%
Agriculture	1	5%
Construction	1	5%
Creative	1	5%
Energy	1	5%
Healthcare	1	5%
QA	1	5%
Restaurant	1	5%
Transport	1	5%
TOTAL	20	100%
Total Seafood	6	30%
Total Maritime	8	40%

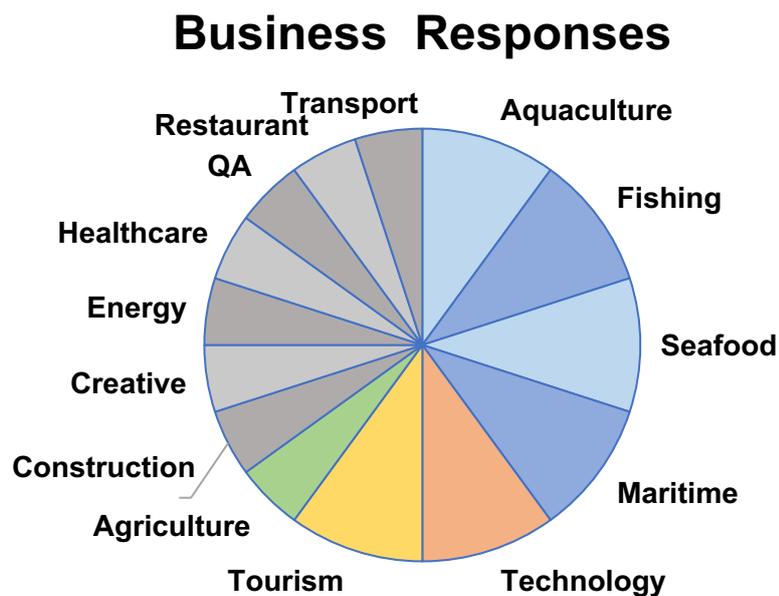


Figure 4 Breakdown of business responses by category. (See Table 4.)

Responses by Postcode Area

Of the 153 responses received, the vast majority (88%) were from addresses (postcodes) in Shetland (Table 5, Figure 5). Half of the responses were from addresses in Lerwick or Scalloway and more than one-third from other areas of Shetland. Of the responses from outside Shetland, most were from elsewhere in Scotland, with the highest numbers from Edinburgh and Inverness (Table 6).

Table 5 Breakdown of responses by postcode area.

Post Code Area		ALL	
		No.	%
ZE1	Lerwick & Scalloway	78	51%
ZE2&3	Rest of Shetland	57	38%
ZE	All Shetland	135	88%
Other Postcode areas		18	12%
TOTAL		153	100%

Table 6 Breakdown of responses from outside Shetland by postcode area.

Post Code Area		ALL	
		No.	%
EH	Edinburgh	5	28%
IV	Inverness	3	17%
KW	Orkney	2	11%
PA	Paisley	2	11%
	Other Scottish	4	22%
Total Scottish		16	89%
	Other UK	2	11%
TOTAL		18	100%

ALL Responses

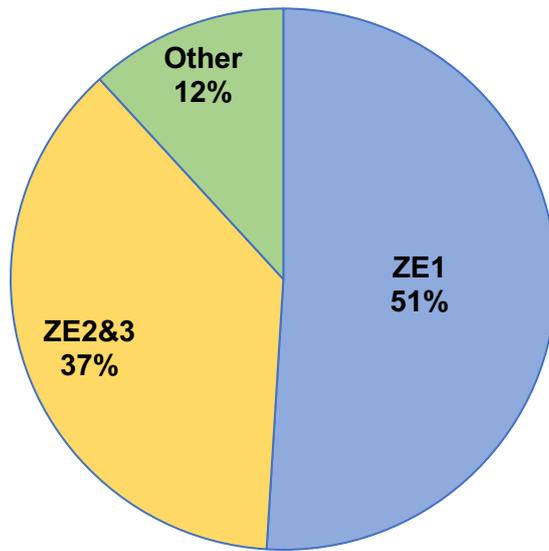


Figure 5 Breakdown of responses by postcode area. (See Table 5.)

Q2) Rationale for Merger

“Has the proposal made clear the rationale for merger?”

The vast majority of respondents (88%) said felt that that the rationale for the merger had been made clear in the proposal (Table 7, Figure 6). Only 9% of respondents thought that the rationale was not clear.

The proportions were similar for responses from college staff, students and other respondents.

Table 7 Breakdown of all responses and of responses by staff, students and other respondents to the question: “Has the proposal made clear the rationale for merger?”

Response	ALL		STAFF		STUDENTS		OTHER	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	134	88%	39	87%	16	84%	79	89%
No	14	9%	4	9%	3	16%	7	8%
Did not answer	5	3%	2	4%	0	0%	3	3%
TOTAL	153	100%	45	100%	19	100%	89	100%

“Has the proposal made clear the rationale for merger?”

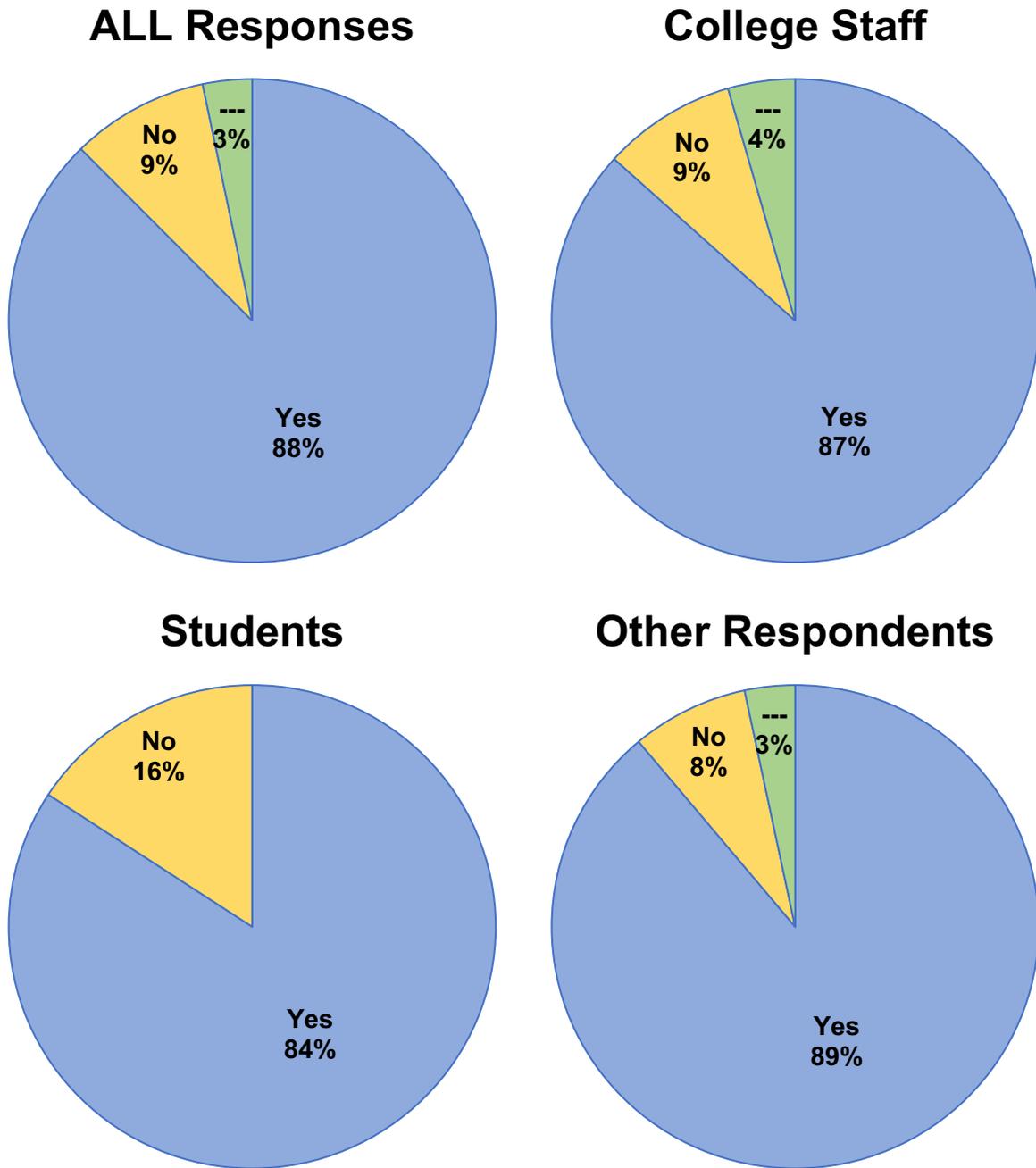


Figure 6 Breakdown of responses by all respondents and by staff, students and other respondents to the question: “Has the proposal made clear the rationale for merger?” (See Table 7.)

Q3) Benefits of Merger

“What do you think are the benefits of merger?”

Most respondents (88% of the total) answered this question. Many respondents saw more than one benefit to the proposed merger.

Almost two-thirds of respondents to this question (62%) mentioned a financial benefit from the merger (Table 8). That included reduced costs, saving money, improved sustainability, enhanced efficiency, reduced duplication, fairer funding, more investment, and greater sharing of resources and joint working.

The other principal benefits mentioned related to the curriculum and having a single service provider for tertiary education in Shetland (a ‘one stop shop’). Suggested benefits for the curriculum included improving the curriculum, offering greater opportunities for students, and meeting community needs.

Other suggested benefits included better governance and strategic planning, benefits to research, enhanced ability to market and promote the services provided, and improvements to the student experience.

A small proportion of respondents (7%) saw no, few or uncertain benefits from the proposed merger.

Table 8 Breakdown of responses to the question: “What do you think are the benefits of merger?” Numbers of respondents mentioning different topics (some respondents mentioned more than one topic).

Response	No.	%
Financial Benefits	83	62%
Curriculum / Service	27	20%
Single Service	26	19%
Governance / Strategic	9	7%
Research	6	4%
Marketing / Promotion	6	4%
Student Experience	6	4%
Other	7	5%
No / Few / Uncertain Benefits	9	7%
Total No. of Responses	134	

Q4) Support for Plans

“Do you support our plans to bring tertiary education in Shetland together in one organisation?”

Slightly more than three-quarters of respondents (78%) said that they supported the plans to bring tertiary education in Shetland together in one organisation (Table 9, Figure 7). Only 7% of respondents did not support the proposals with 15% ‘unsure’.

For college staff the proportion in favour of the proposal was similar (77%). Only one staff respondent opposed the proposal but a higher proportion (20%) were ‘unsure’.

Two-thirds of student respondents also supported the proposal, although one-quarter (26%) were ‘unsure’. Support for the proposed merger was highest amongst ‘other’ respondents, although they also returned the highest proportion of responses opposed to the merger (10%).

Table 9 Breakdown of all responses and of responses by staff, students and other respondents to the question: “Do you support our plans to bring tertiary education in Shetland together in one organisation?”

Response	ALL		STAFF		STUDENTS		OTHER	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	119	78%	35	78%	13	68%	71	80%
No	11	7%	1	2%	1	5%	9	10%
Unsure	23	15%	9	20%	5	26%	9	10%
TOTAL	153	100%	45	100%	19	100%	89	100%

“Do you support our plans to bring tertiary education in Shetland together in one organisation?”

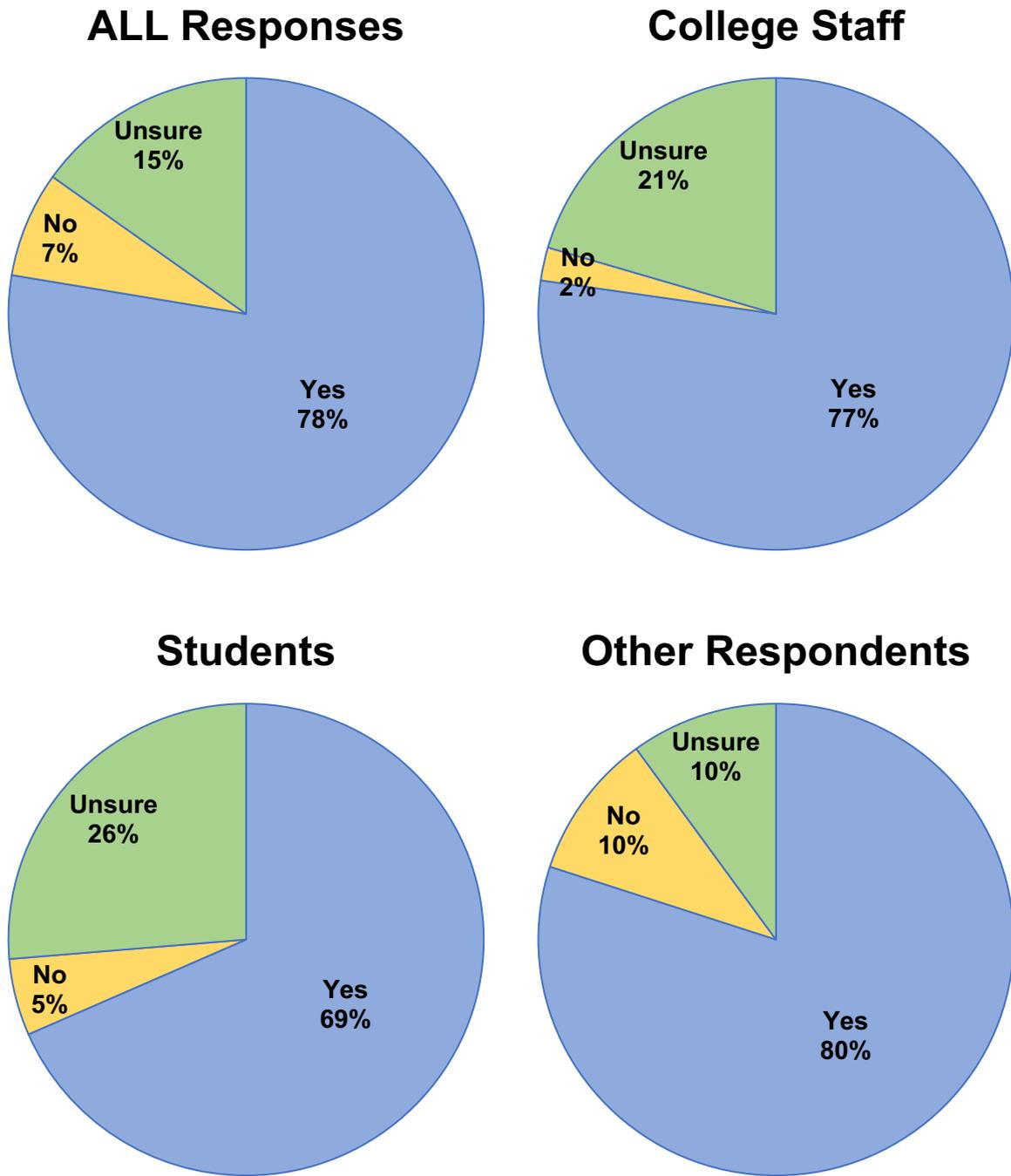


Figure 7 Breakdown of responses by all respondents and by staff, students and other respondents to the question “Do you support our plans to bring tertiary education in Shetland together in one organisation?” (See Table 9.)

Q5) Changes or Improvements

“What changes or improvements had you hoped to see in the merger proposal that you think have not been considered?”

Overall, about half of respondents answered this question (Table 10). The most commonly mentioned topics that respondents felt had not been (adequately) covered in the proposal related to the curriculum, including short courses and online learning, and to college facilities, including the campus(es) and student accommodation. Almost half of those who commented mentioned one of these issues (Table 10, Figure 8).

The next most commonly mentioned topic was staff terms and conditions (including union consultation), mentioned by 8% of respondents and costs (5%).

Table 10 Breakdown of responses to the question: “What changes or improvements had you hoped to see in the merger proposal that you think have not been considered?” Numbers of respondents mentioning different topics.

Response	No.	%
Curriculum / Courses / Short Courses / Online Learning	20	26%
Facilities / Campus / Student Accommodation	19	24%
Staff Ts & Cs / Union Consultation	6	8%
Costs	4	5%
Key Industries	3	4%
Public Control	3	4%
Research	2	3%
Vision / Values	2	3%
Student Voice	1	1%
No Answer	70	46%
Not Sure	4	3%
Responded to Question	79	52%
TOTAL	153	100%

“What changes or improvements had you hoped to see in the merger proposal that you think have not been considered?”

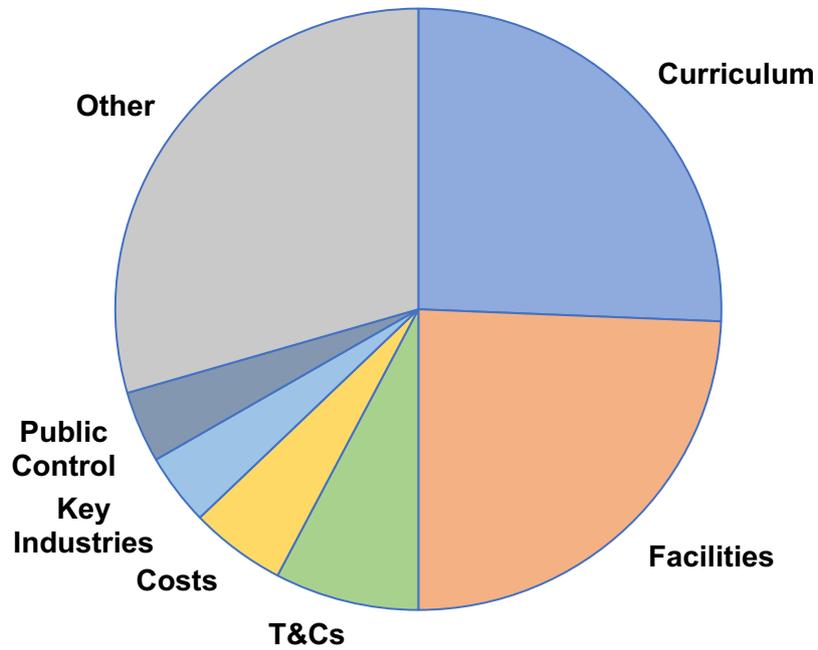


Figure 8 Breakdown of responses by all respondents to the question: “What changes or improvements had you hoped to see in the merger proposal that you think have not been considered?” (See Table 10.)

Q6) Governance Arrangements

“What are your views on the proposed governance arrangements?”

Of the 153 responses received, 119 (78%) replied to the question on governance. Just under half of these responses were categorised as ‘positive’ and less than one-quarter as ‘negative’ (Table 11, Figure 9). Small number of respondents said they were ‘unsure’ or had no comment to make and several responses were ‘ambiguous’ (that is their view on the proposed governance arrangements was not clear).

Amongst college staff, a slightly higher proportion (42%) expressed positive views of the proposed governance arrangements than did negative (36%) (Table 11, Figure 9).

Amongst students, more than half of responses (54%) were positive and only a small proportion (8%) negative, although the total number of responses to this question was relatively small. Just over half of ‘other’ responses were also positive.

Of the responses that were categorised as either ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ (that is, omitting ‘unsures’, ambiguous and no comments), 69% of all responses were positive (Figure 10). More than half of responses from staff (54%) and the majority of those from students (87%) and other respondents (74%) were positive.

Table 11 Breakdown of all responses and of responses by staff, students and other respondents to the question: “What are your views on the proposed governance arrangements?” Responses, grouped as ‘positive’, ‘negative’, etc.

Response	ALL		STAFF		STUDENTS		OTHER	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Positive	57	48%	16	43%	7	54%	34	49%
Negative	26	22%	13	35%	1	8%	12	17%
Unsure	8	7%	2	5%	2	15%	4	6%
Ambiguous Answer	14	12%	3	8%	1	8%	10	14%
No Comment / No Answer	14	12%	3	8%	2	15%	9	13%
TOTAL	119	100%	37	100%	13	100%	69	100%

“What are your views on the proposed governance arrangements?”

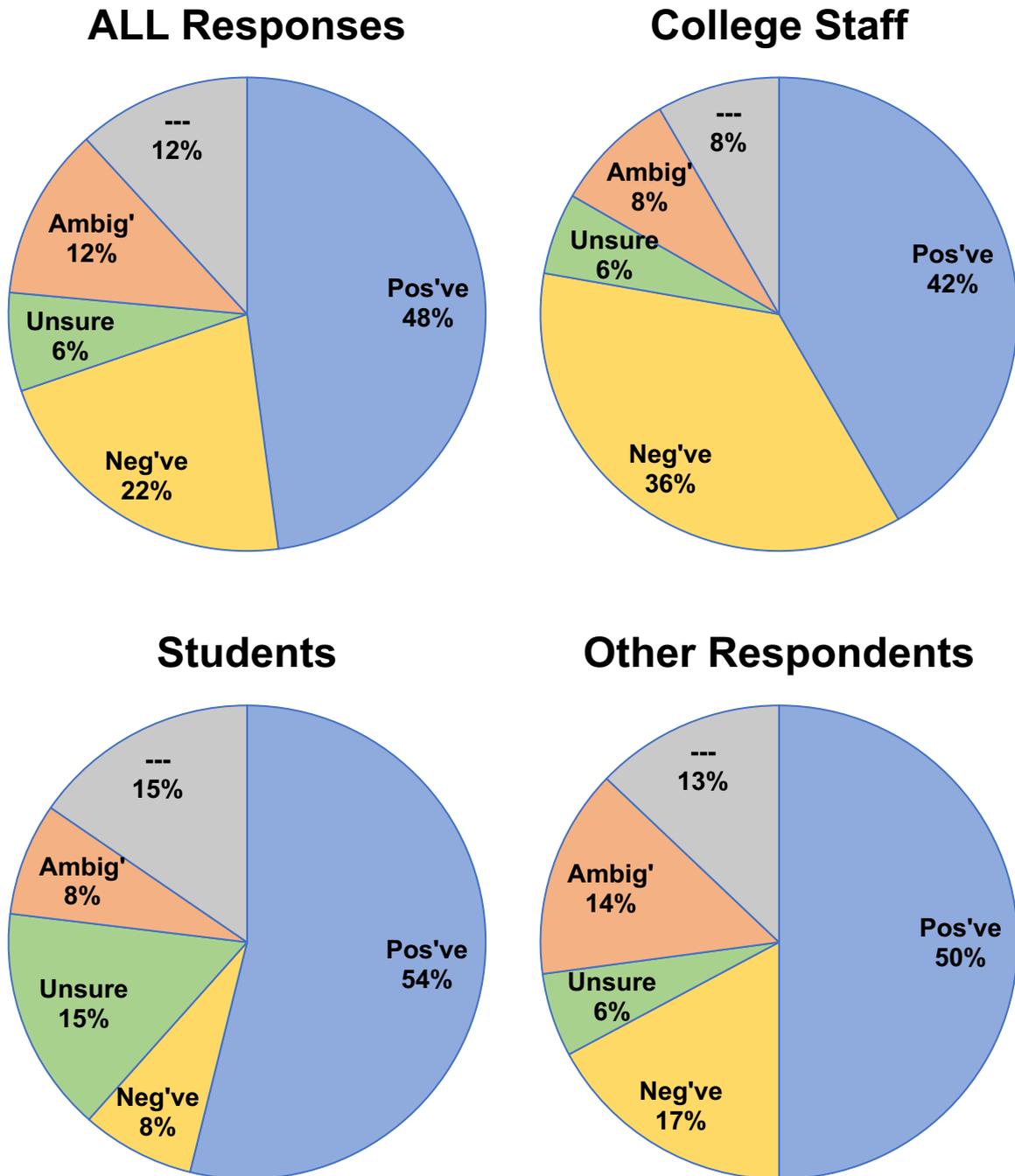


Figure 9 Breakdown of responses by all respondents and by staff, students and other respondents to the question: “What are your views on the proposed governance arrangements?” (See Table 11.)

“What are your views on the proposed governance arrangements?”

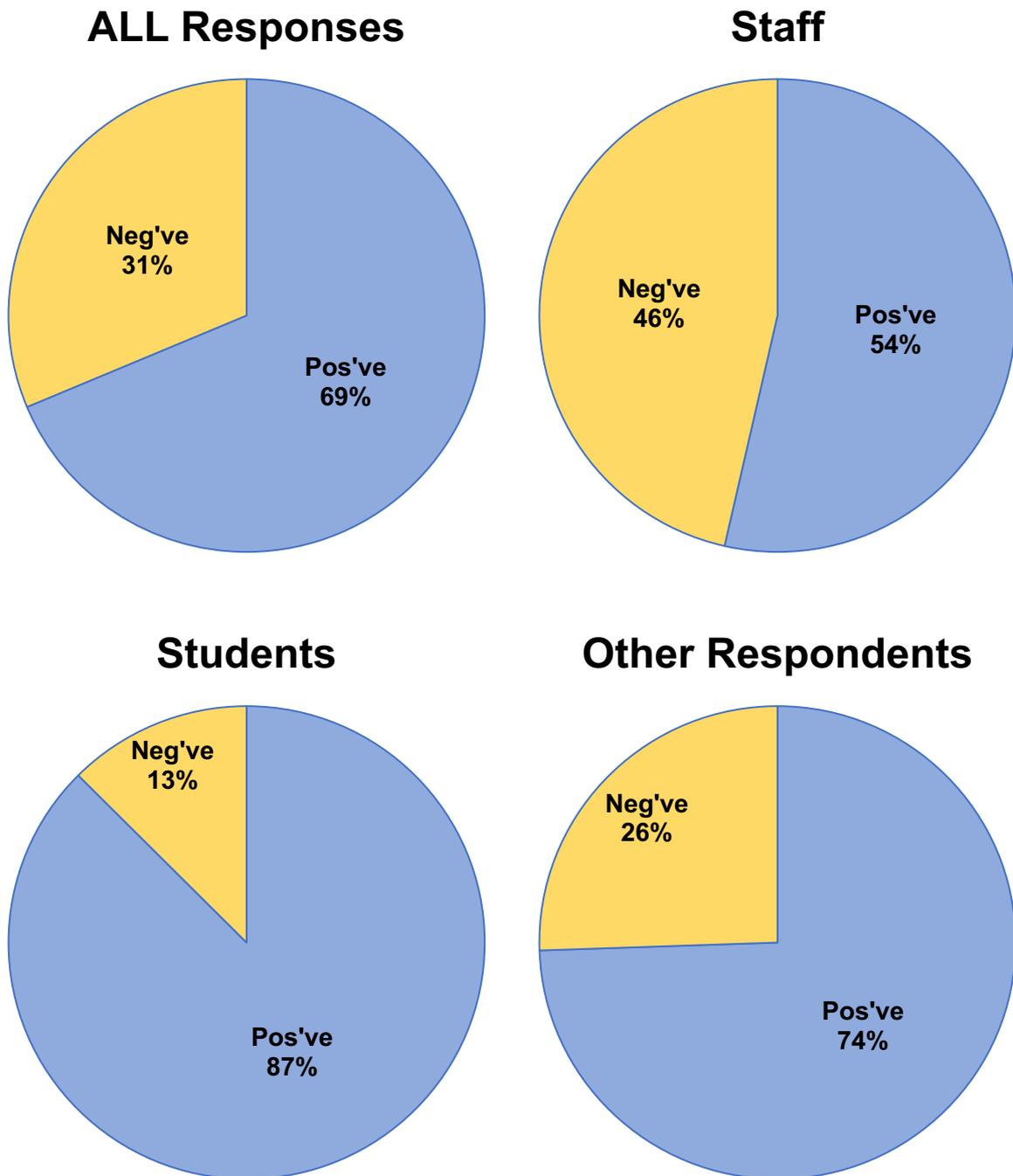


Figure 10 The balance of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ responses by all respondents and by staff, students and other respondents to the question: “What are your views on the proposed governance arrangements?” (See Table 11)

Incorporation v. Non-Incorporation

Overall, just over one-quarter of responses were interpreted as opinions on whether the new college should be incorporated or non-incorporated (Table 12). Of those, a slightly higher proportion favoured incorporation than non-incorporation (Table 12, Figure 10).

More than half of the staff responses included an opinion on the subject, but these were evenly split between favouring incorporation and non-incorporation. The vast majority of responses from students expressed no clear opinion on the subject, as did most responses from other respondents although more of the latter favoured incorporation.

There was a marked difference in opinions on the subject between responses from Shetland and non-Shetland addresses (Table 13, Figure 12). Only one-quarter of responses from Shetland addresses expressed an opinion and those were almost equally split between favouring incorporation or non-incorporation. In contrast, more than half of the responses from outside Shetland expressed an opinion and most of those favoured incorporation.

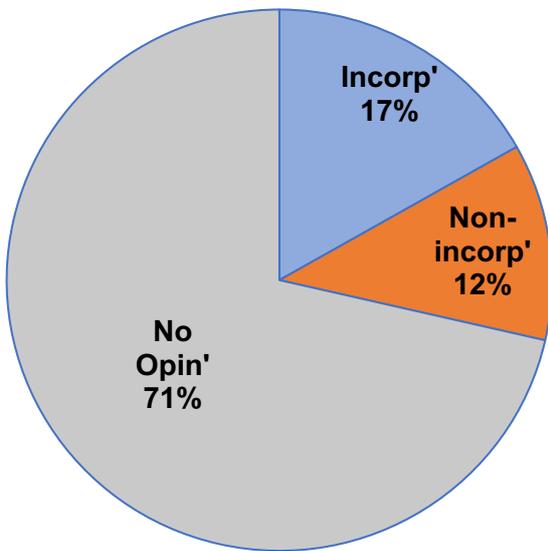
Table 12 Breakdown of all responses and of responses by staff, students and others interpreted as being in favour either of the incorporation or non-incorporation of the new college.

Response	ALL		STAFF		STUDENTS		OTHER	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Favour Incorporation	20	17%	10	27%	1	8%	9	13%
Favour Non-incorporation	14	12%	10	27%	0	0%	4	6%
No Opinion	85	71%	17	46%	12	92%	56	81%
TOTAL	119	100%	37	100%	13	100%	69	100%

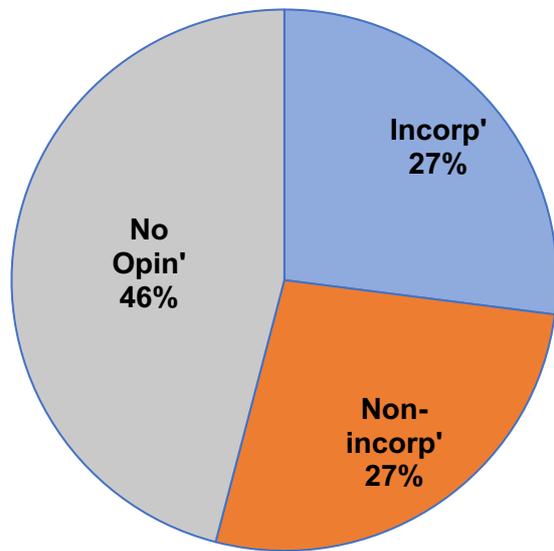
Table 13 Breakdown of responses from Shetland and non-Shetland addresses interpreted as being in favour either of the incorporation or non-incorporation of the new college.

Response	SHETLAND		NON-SHETLAND	
	No.	%	No.	%
Favour Incorporation	14	13%	6	46%
Favour Non-incorporation	13	12%	1	8%
No Opinion	79	75%	6	46%
TOTAL	106	100%	13	100%

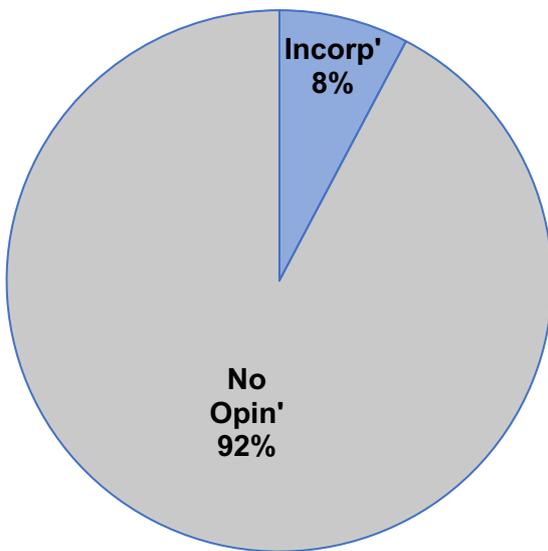
ALL Responses



College Staff



Students



Other Respondents

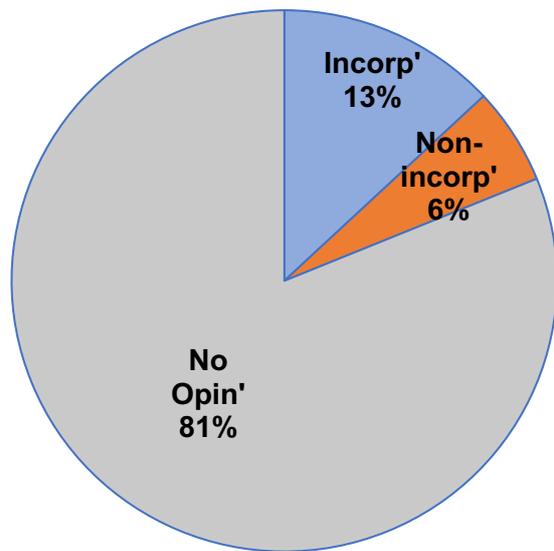


Figure 11 Breakdown of comments by all respondents and by staff and other respondents interpreted as being in favour of the new college being incorporated or non-incorporated. (See Table 12.)

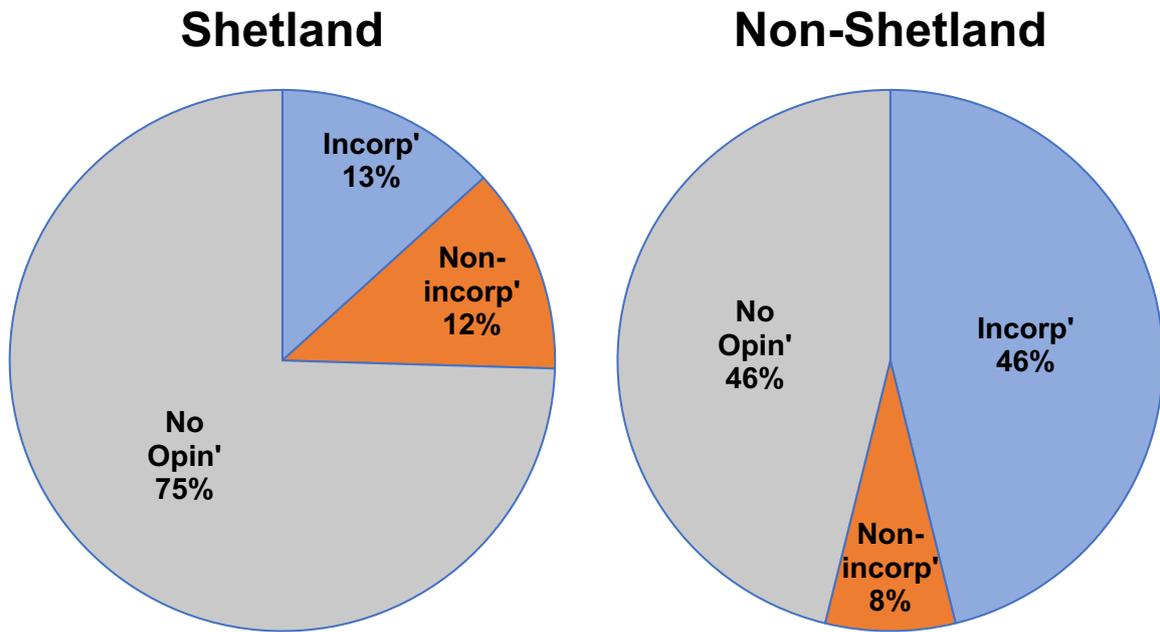


Figure 12 Breakdown of comments from Shetland and non-Shetland addresses interpreted as being in favour of the new college being incorporated or non-incorporated. (See Table 13.)

Q7) Proposed Name

“The proposed name for the new College is Shetland Institute UHI, are you content with this or if not what would be your suggested name?”

Overall, more than one-third of respondents (37%) said they were content with the proposed ‘Shetland Institute’ name, which was the largest single category of response (Table 14, Figure 13). Although a majority of respondents did not like the proposed name there was no consensus on an alternative, with one quarter of respondents offering no alternative. Among the alternative names that were suggested (Table 14, Table 15), variants on ‘Shetland College’ were most frequent (15% of responses) followed by variants on ‘Shetland UHI’ or ‘UHI Shetland’ (8% of respondents).

The breakdown of responses by college staff was broadly similar, with just over one-quarter content with the proposed name, but again no consensus about an alternative.

Most students favoured ‘Shetland College’ but half of ‘other’ respondents were comfortable with ‘Shetland Institute’.

Table 14 Breakdown of responses by all respondents and by staff, students and other respondents to the question: “The proposed name for the new College is Shetland Institute UHI, are you content with this or if not what would be your suggested name?”

Response	ALL		STAFF		STUDENTS		OTHER	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Shetland Institute	57	36%	12	27%	9	30%	36	49%
Shetland College	23	15%	8	18%	13	43%	0	0%
Shetland UHI / UHI Shetland	14	9%	6	13%	2	7%	6	8%
Other Name	23	15%	7	16%	2	7%	8	11%
Don't Like / No suggestion	38	24%	12	27%	3	10%	23	31%
Did not answer	2	1%	0	0%	1	3%	1	1%

“The proposed name for the new College is Shetland Institute UHI, are you content with this or if not what would be your suggested name?”

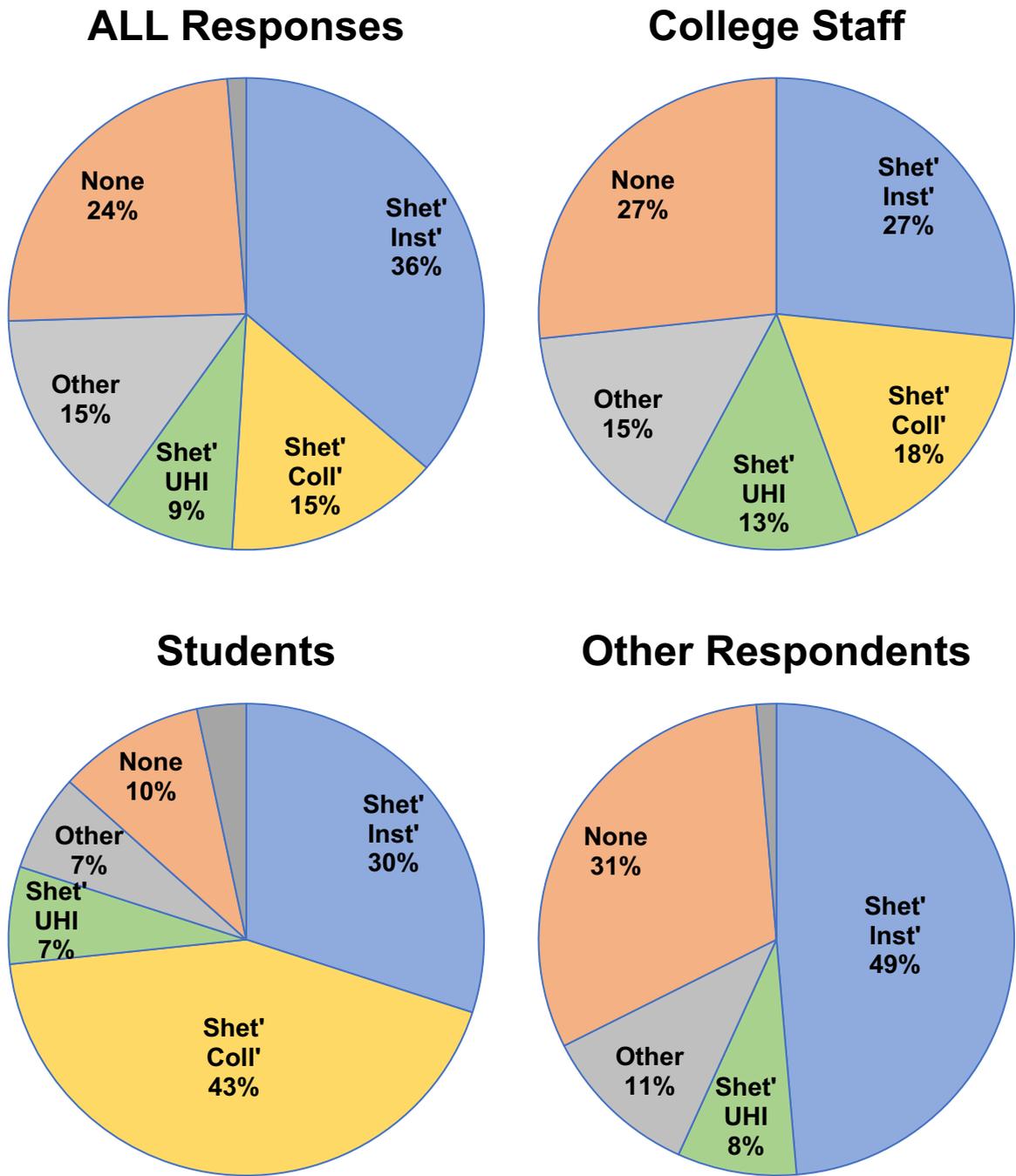


Figure 13 Breakdown of all respondents and of responses by staff, students and other respondents to the question: “The proposed name for the new College is Shetland Institute UHI, are you content with this or if not what would be your suggested name?” (See Table 14.)

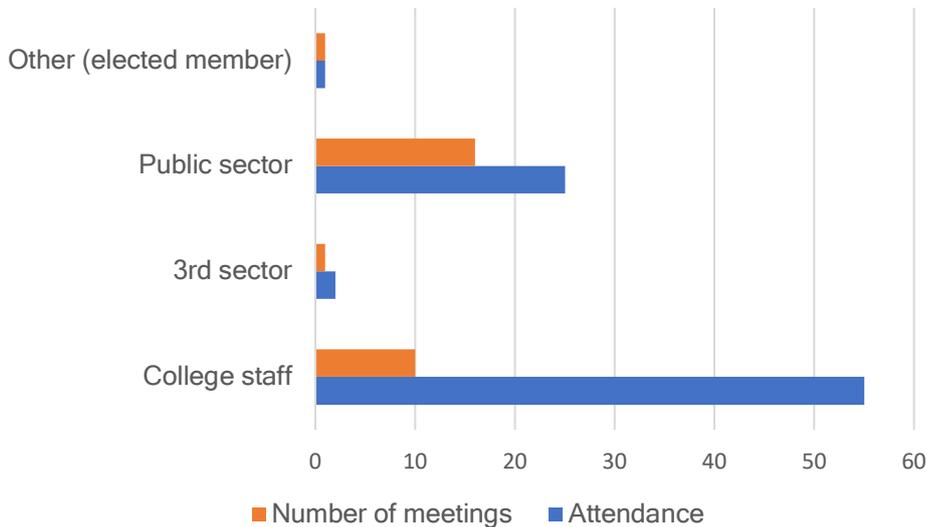
Table 15 Full list of responses to the request for alternative names for the new college.

“Shetland UHI” or “New College Shetland UHI”
60' North Shetland - The Centre for REAL (Research, Enterprise, Advancement, Learning) Development!!
60(degrees) North College
chetland college then campus location is scalloway or lerwick
College's Shetland - UHI
Don't particularly like 'institute'
New College Shetland or Shetland UHI. There are other educational institutions in Scotland with the name 'New' which I gather
New College Shetland UHI
North Atlantic College
North Atlantic College UHI
North Isles College
Remove the word Institute
Shetland Academy UHI
Shetland College
Shetland College (UHI) or Shetland UHI
Shetland College if further Education. Institute is too old hat and pretentious.
Shetland College of the Future
Shetland College or North isles college
Shetland College UHI
Shetland College UHI (Gremista Campus) and (Scalloway Campus) d
Shetland Colleges
Shetland Colleges UHI
Shetland Institue for reasearch and education
Shetland Institute of Learning
Shetland Islands College UHI
Shetland Training and Higher Education
Shetland UHI
Shetland UHI or UHI Shetland
Tertiary Education Shetland (TES)
The Shetland College
The Shetland Learning Hub
UHI - Shetland Campus
UHI Shetland
Zetland College

Appendix 3 - Stakeholder meetings – Summary report

Meeting attendance

28 meetings with stakeholders took place. There was a total attendance of 83.



There were a total of 10 academic and support staff meetings held. 2 with staff from NAFC and 8 with staff from Shetland College / Train Shetland. A meeting was also held with staff representatives from Shetland Arts (Mareel). The Council also held a Human Resources Partnership Group meeting which was attended by Union representatives from Unison and EIS/FELA.

Public sector and 3rd sector meetings were held with representatives from:

- SIC – Youth & Employability Services
- SIC – Corporate Services
- SIC – Community Care & Resources
- SIC – Community Planning
- SIC – Eric Gray and Supported Living & Outreach
- SIC – Finance Services
- SIC – Children’s Services
- SIC – Workforce Development
- SIC – Community Health & Social Care
- SIC – Executive Services
- SIC – Development Services
- SIC – Self-directed support
- SIC – Economic Development
- SIC – Infrastructure Services
- SIC – Quality Improvement Service (Education)
- Developing Young Workforce

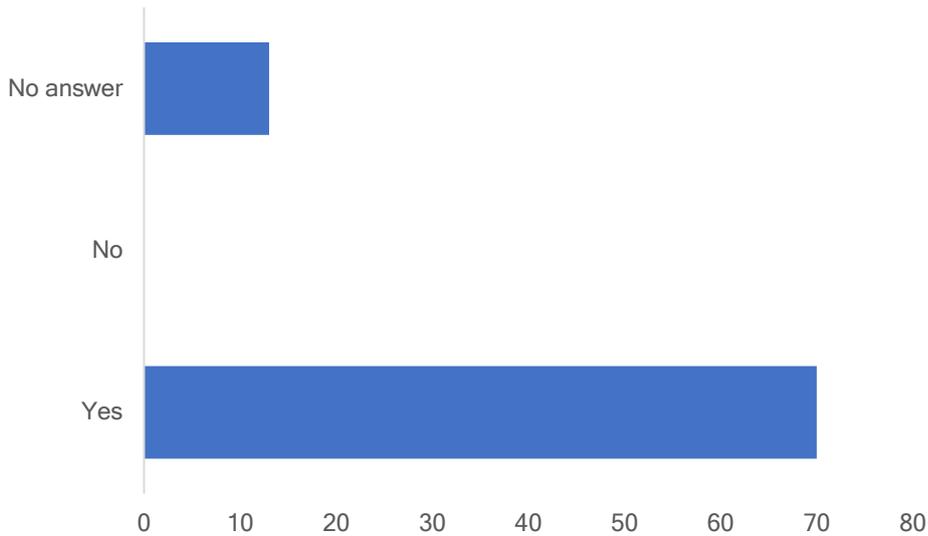
Unfortunately, the time of year as well as factors such as Covid-19 directly impacted on meetings with students.

In addition to meetings, consultation responses were also received by email, as follows:

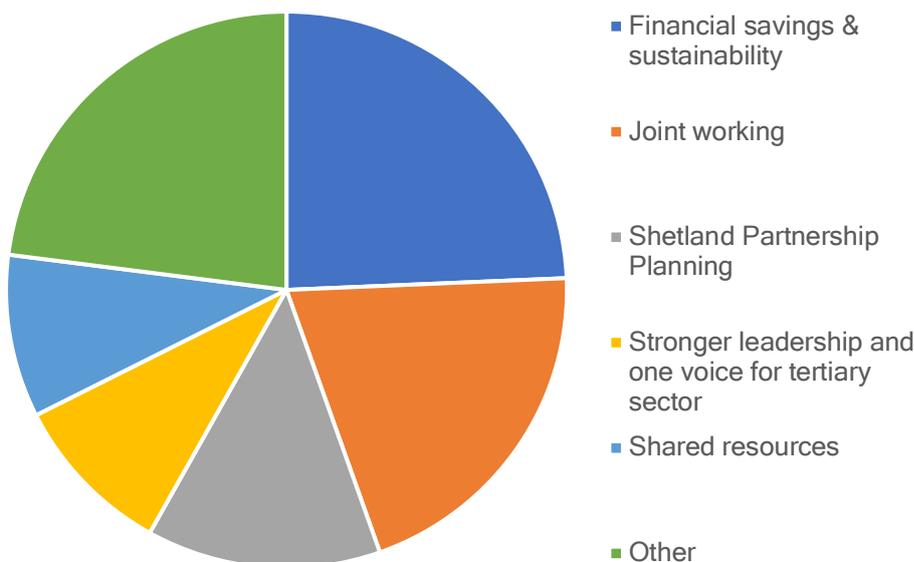
- EIS FELA (National)¹
- EIS FELA (Shetland)²
- Rhoda Grant MSP
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Merger proposal feedback³

Q2 Has the proposal made clear the rational for merger?



Q3 What do you think are the benefits of merger?



¹ Their response was entered in the survey online by EIS FELA

² Their written response has been included in the survey data analysis

³ Data from consultation meeting responses only

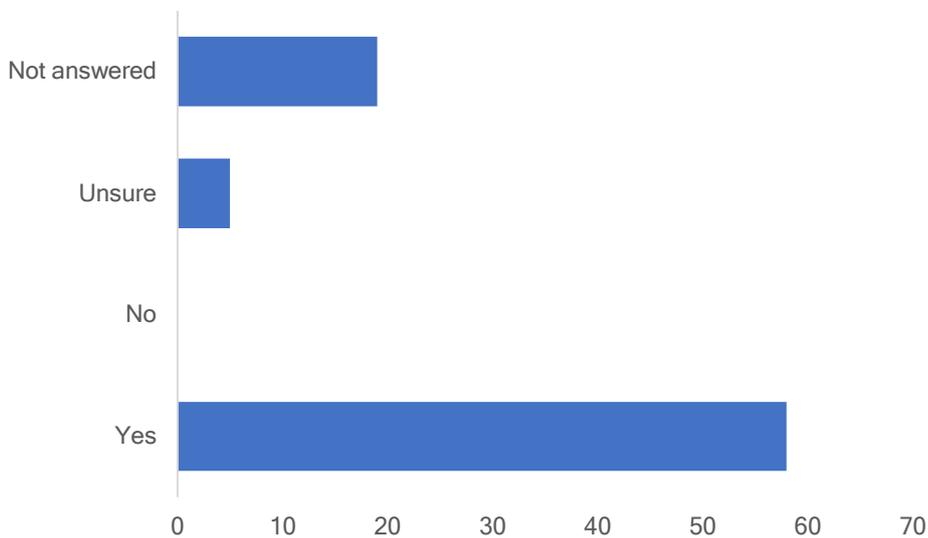
Showing benefits highlighted within consultation meetings

Other benefits highlighted included improved student experience, improved research and PHD links as well as parity of services.

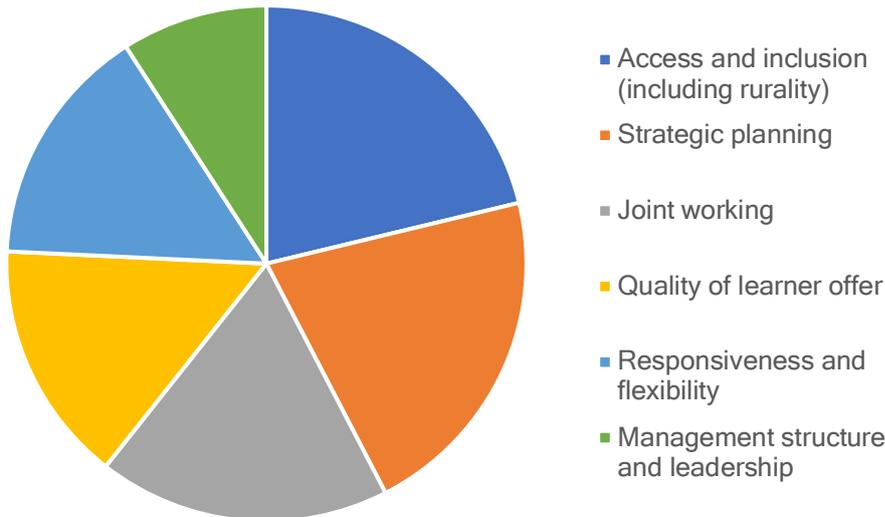
Concerns highlighted during discussions about the benefits of merger included:

- Financial viability
- Space allocation and suitability of campus
- Change and impact on staff
- Covid-19 and the economic downturn
- Staff terms and conditions, job security and pensions.

Q4 Do you support our plans to bring tertiary education in Shetland together in one organisation?



Q5 What changes or improvements had you hoped to see in the merger proposal that you think have not been considered?



Showing frequently mentioned changes or improvements

Other changes or improvements suggested included:

- Campus and student accommodation
- Covid-19 response and impact on business case
- Clarification on job and pension security and staff T&Cs.

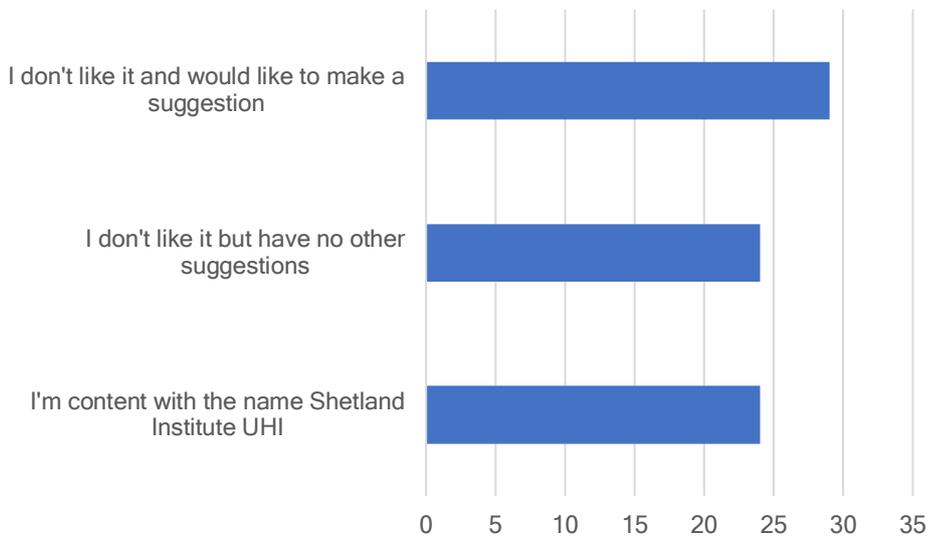
Q6 What are your views on the proposed governance arrangements?

Concerns on the proposed governance arrangements included T&Cs, job security and financial viability. The student experience and quality of learner offer was also highlighted as being an important consideration.

From the data available, at six⁴ meetings the majority suggested Incorporated as preferred whilst at ten meetings the majority suggested Non-Incorporated. At the remaining meetings there was either no clear majority or they remained undecided or did not see the difference.

Q7 The proposed name for the new College is Shetland Institute UHI, are you content with this or if not what would be your suggested name?

⁴ Includes EIS email submission



68% of respondents did not like the suggested name. It was noted there were negative connotations to the word 'Institute' as well as a historical link.

In order of preference (on the most number of meeting attendees who suggested it), the following alternative names were suggested:

- Shetland College
- Shetland UHI
- New College Shetland
- North Atlantic College
- UHI Shetland
- Shetland Islands College UHI
- Hjaltland College.

Q8 Do you have any further comments?

Covid-19, the impact on the local economy and the ability to respond to evolving training needs were highlighted. The concern of the impact on the business case for the merger in that respect was also raised along with the potential for further merger delays and changes to funding. Positive experiences from C-19 in relation to connectivity and the need to build on that was also reflected in discussions.

The need to maintain and/or improve communication and engagement, especially during the next transitional stages was often highlighted, especially by staff.

It was often stressed in meetings by a variety of stakeholders how important it was for the merger to not experience any further delays and to end uncertainty within the sector.

Appendix 4

A new college for Shetland:

Consultation response from Shetland Islands Council

Our Council is organised into five directorates and a number of service areas. These are responsible for overseeing Council services and differ in size and function. Some are involved in the direct provision of services to the public; others provide support to Councillors and departments. This paper collates the responses from staff across the directorates and service areas.

Further information is available from www.shetland.gov.uk/about_introduction/

Shetland College UHI and Train Shetland have been delivered by the Council for over forty years, latterly as part of our Development Directorate.

Whilst our direct involvement in the operations of Shetland College UHI and Train Shetland will cease as a result of merger, the services, which we require as a customer will continue. These include:

- Employability services: Bridges, Employability Pathway, Project Search
- Forward Directions and life skills courses (inc. Eric Gray)
- CPD requirements including vocational training, lifelong learning, professional qualifications including awards for registry staff and PDA's
- Skills for work and Foundation Apprenticeships
- Modern Apprenticeships
- Primary and Secondary PGDE
- Business Gateway
- Developing Young Workforce
- Funding research projects including Centre of Rural Creativity, etc.

Shetland's situation and the importance of fishing and aquaculture in the local economy is reflected in the facilities, knowledge and expertise at NAFC Marine Centre UHI which is recognised nationally and internationally. The Council has supported Shetland Fisheries Training Centre Trust (SFTCT) for many years. Historically, the Council provided core grant funding and more recently commissioned services including Marine Spatial Planning, inshore fisheries research, the annual fish survey and one off research projects.

The current arrangement is not financially sustainable.

The tertiary education sector in Shetland is a partner in supporting the vision that 'Shetland is an attractive place to live, work, study and invest'.⁵

It is essential that there is robust, sustainable, tertiary education provision in Shetland to support the needs and aspirations of our community.

⁵ www.shetland.gov.uk/communityplanning/documents/180801SPPforWebFINAL.pdf

In order to achieve this, Shetland Islands Council is committed to working alongside every stakeholder who has a role in ensuring the College Merger proposal succeeds and is delivered timeously.

Has the proposal made clear the rationale for merger?

The proposal clearly sets out a distinct and refined rationale which reflects the aspirations of the Shetland Partnership Plan as well as the individual aspirations of both merging colleges.

Shetland is an island community. A single entity providing tertiary education in Shetland, with services working more efficiently together, will avoid overlap whilst ensuring training and learning needs are developed and delivered efficiently in our community.

What do you think are the benefits of merger?

It has been clearly outlined how the new merged college will offer unique, high quality further and higher education opportunities for students.

The academic development potential of the merger shows how the future will build on the experience of the current institutions whilst progressing curriculum development. The student experience has been identified as central to the future with a clear commitment to ensuring “all students will be valued and their ambitions supported”. The curriculum development process will also ensure planning is closely aligned to the needs of local employers, communities and individuals whilst reflecting regional and national priorities.

Upon completion, the College Merger must deliver a streamlined, efficient, flexible and financially sustainable college that can meet the needs and aspirations of our community and contribute to wider goals of tertiary education in Scotland through UHI.

The independence from the Council will ensure the new college will be in a greater position to set its own strategic goals whilst being more commercially minded.

There will be a single voice around tertiary education in Shetland both locally and further afield. The new college will be a very strong Shetland Partnership Planning Partner and will be better positioned to be responsive to local need. That will in turn improve career pathways and the curriculum offer available.

The new college will contribute to wider national and international research and education programmes.

What changes or improvements had you hoped to see in the merger proposal that you think have not been considered?

The merger proposal has made clear how work continue to improve the student experience and student journey. However, an issue closely associated with the merger is affordable student accommodation. Affordable accommodation is a significant challenge for young people, whether

students or apprentices or those in employment. That is an area which the Council would wish to work closely with the new College.

There is potential for the new college to be more visionary in its development with regards to campus accommodation and we would like to see future environmental considerations being furthered. The Islands Deal includes certain projects with cross-cutting themes such as The Shetland Campus Project.

We would encourage the new College to explore how the carbon footprint could be reduced whilst also tackling island rurality challenges by taking advantage of ongoing improvements in connectivity. With the growing use of digital solutions, a commitment to developing remote learning programmes should be considered.

It is important to ensure that employability courses and access for lower level qualification on entry for employability skills are continued and improved as part of the overall curriculum development. Furthermore, the whole college environment has to be accessible to all in our community with equality and parity for all students and learners central in that respect.

What are your views on the proposed governance arrangements?

EIS-FELA have raised their concerns with regards to the proposed governance arrangements through various consultative forums with the Council. However, when considering both the Full Business Case⁶ as well as the Ministerial Merger Business Case the Council were satisfied that the governance arrangements proposed within the MMBC best support the proposed outcomes of merger.

The proposed arrangements are appropriate and would ensure a management structure that will ensure effective streamlined leadership and governance. The new college will benefit from not having the level of bureaucracy that applies to the Council's current tertiary services.

The proposed name for the new College is Shetland Institute UHI, are you content with this or if not what would be your suggested name?

The proposed name for the new College should be reconsidered. It is important for the title to include 'Shetland', however, consultation responses and feedback from consultation meetings suggests that the word "institute" has negative connotations locally and therefore should be avoided

Do you have any further comments?

We have heard from staff how important it is for them to be part of the next steps and for effective two-way communication and engagement to be maintained.

Staff want to be directly involved in the transition to the new College. We are sure that will also be the case for students and learners.

⁶ www.shetland.gov.uk/coins/viewDoc.asp?c=e%97%9De%92o%7B%8A

During the next twelve months, staff need to be supported with adequate resources to support successful transition and implementation of merger. Furthermore, this must not be at the expense of ensuring adequate resources are in place to ensure the tertiary education sector can respond flexibly to Covid-19 and contribute effectively to the evolving economic recovery.

Finally, Shetland Islands Council wish to stress the importance of the merger being prioritised and all efforts being made to mitigate further delay on the merger timescales.

ENDs.

Appendix 5a: Benefits of merger

The main points from responses from stakeholders on benefits are summarised below.

Student Experience

- Clearer application process for students
- One point of entry will be great from a service user's point of view
- Easier access to learning for students
- A one-stop shop is appealing
- Easier access to learning and research opportunities for students
- A cohesive and comprehensive tertiary education offer in Shetland
- More focussed, less eclectic provision
- Being part of the UHI family will open up lifelong learning opportunities – further opportunities then for skills development and subsequent career development
- More students able to study in Shetland
- Optimises post-compulsory education and training opportunities for Shetland
- Enhance student experience – more extra-curricular activities and a more holistic experience
- Blended learning opportunities
- More consistent offer to students
- Provide those who are financially disadvantaged with access to excellent learning opportunities
- More curriculum flexibility
- The student experience has to be properly resourced
- Ability to provide CPD opportunities 'on the job'
- Lifelong learning opportunities which take you from leaving school to degree level
- Offer opportunities to learn in parts of Shetland other than Lerwick
- Meet the needs of all learners
- Support learning to be offered throughout the isles
- Opportunity to improve partnerships with schools to ensure transitions which support all learners
- Vocational pathways are important.

Strategic Planning

- Opportunity to create an organisation which is responsive to the needs of the Shetland economy
- Meet the learning and development needs of the whole of Shetland
- Create a vital asset for the people of Shetland
- Meet the social, economic and cultural needs of Shetland in the future
- Can create a strategic vision more aligned for the future of Shetland
- Stronger for Shetland as a unified entity
- Access to tertiary education is important for all communities
- An enhanced level of training available to Shetland businesses and the wider community
- The proposal aligns with the strategic vision for the UHI
- Partnership role in the future development of Shetland
- Opportunity to ensure Shetland is ready to embrace new economic developments

-
- The ability to 'grow our own' in Shetland
 - The new merged college will be a strong Shetland Partnership partner
 - Help make Shetland a great place to live, work, study and invest in
 - Ensure input at Shetland Partnership level
 - Enhances the ability of tertiary education to participate in community planning
 - Attract people to come to Shetland to live
 - Provide opportunities for professionals to retrain – those who can't leave the islands for family reasons.

Joint Working

-
- Provide a co-ordinated approach to the provision of FE/HE education in Shetland
 - More joint working between staff
 - Better linking between departments, hopefully leading to more multi-disciplinary ways of working
 - Better communication between the two colleges
 - Collaboration opportunities with other higher education institutions
 - A collaborative and co-ordinated approach to learning and this includes working with all other providers
 - The people in charge of the new college will be interested in academia so the new college will be more strongly and robustly managed
 - Close working with the school education sector to ensure the needs of Shetland's economy can be met and Shetland is a vibrant place to live in
 - Better able to deploy staff effectively.

Marketing and Communications

-
- Allow for better communications for staff and students
 - Better opportunity to market FE/HE learning opportunities
 - A commercial mind-set will make the college more nimble and flexible in what they offer
 - Create a more customer focussed organisation.

Identity

-
- Opportunity to create an organisation Single identity created for the establishments
 - Both colleges will be on an equal footing
 - Will give a strong voice for the future for matters of interest to the sector
 - Quality research at NAFC strengthened
 - Unified approach to the promotion of learning
 - Each organisation is strong in different areas and will come together as a wonderful cohesive whole
 - A single organisations is easier for external engagement and this will benefit Shetland
 - The new merged college will benefit from the wider national and international perspective which the NAFC has
 - One route into HE/FE and from that into the UHI, could be very powerful.
-

Finance and Sustainability

- Sustainable future for the organisations and for Shetland
- Reduce unnecessary expenditure
- Reduce duplication in administration
- Save on staffing costs
- Shared services
- Savings in management costs
- Create diversity and efficiency
- Streamline services – consolidation of roles and administrative and finance functions
- Rationalise facilities
- Consolidation of processes and policies and practices
- Consistent and efficient approach to education
- Reduce the number of high earners among College staff
- Bring professionals together to share expertise
- Make the best use of the limited resources we have to serve the business needs of the community
- Fair funding at last for the NAFC
- Access to more funding
- Opportunity to attract additional funding
- More opportunities for service level agreements and contracts with the local public and private sector for the provision of training.

Appendix 5(b): Changes and improvements

The main points from stakeholder responses on changes and improvements are summarised below.

Student Experience

- Provide more and broader, opportunities to learn in Shetland
- Improve alignment to the UHI
- Improvements to the curriculum are required
- Need to hear the student voice, and inject life into it, and not rely on HISA
- Widen learning opportunities
- Stronger voice for students
- Offer a variety of courses and opportunities
- Provide support for those with barriers to learning
- Support for post-graduate opportunities – important for the local, national and international stage
- More consideration needs to be given to student facilities
- Bus timetables need to fit in with student finishing times
- Students need to be connected better – there are small number studying the same course, so they need be connected at different levels
- More night classes and courses need to be offer in practical skills which support the local jobs market
- Provide more post-graduate opportunities
- Would like to see an actual list of courses
- Offer a wider range of courses which includes the environment and the arts
- Develop the number and range of apprenticeships offered
- Provide an outline of inclusive learning opportunities
- Need to consider the changes there will be for NAFC students
- More focus on remote an online learning
- Be clear about new courses being offered
- Need to be part of the digital learning agenda
- Lack of student accommodation is an issue and doesn't help with attracting students
- Employability courses and opportunities like Project search should be offered
- Meet the needs of learners better, and be more flexible around when course run, particularly where staff are being released to attend
- Ensure learning is person-centred
- Provide online and distance learning opportunities for those with disabilities
- Ensure there are Senior Phase opportunities for young people with additional support needs
- Opportunities for those with complex needs to access lifelong learning opportunities
- Genuine partnership is required to support young people with additional support needs to access the learning opportunities they dream of.

Staff

- Provide for more stable staffing arrangements – harmonise terms and conditions
- Nationally agreed terms and conditions for staff must be retained
- More information is needed on the TUPE process for staff

-
- Staffing issues don't appear to have been dealt with under TUPE
 - Need to be careful about the potential loss to the new establishment of skilled and experienced staff
 - Need to retain nationally agreed terms and conditions for staff
 - Staff have not been listened to enough.

Strategic Planning

- More focus on delivering services which support Shetland's key industries (seafood and renewables)
- Need to see a focus on agriculture
- Need to see a focus on tourism
- Provide more industry-led vocational courses
- Provide short courses for the marine industry. This could save money and could be done in partnership with the local fire service and local airports
- Pulling together resources and refocussing for the good of Shetland is a great thing and it will provide for a more powerful future
- Provide an outline as to how the new merged establishment will respond to changing economic need
- More science courses need to be offered to support future careers in Shetland e.g. in technician posts. These posts are available locally and schools cannot offer the full range of course required to support career progression in this area
- Proposals could be more forward looking
- There is a need to provide opportunities to support what is happening in Shetland e.g. big developments in the energy and renewables sector
- There is an opportunity to forge partnerships and create innovation centres
- Emphasise working with partners
- Ensure courses are offered which support the registration requirements for local regulated employment, and in seamless pathways
- There is scope for more employer engagement
- Opportunity to harness new and emerging opportunities in the oil and gas sector
- Opportunity to get involved in the Climate Change agenda, and the needs of that sector.

Joint Working

- The merged organisation needs to be more focussed on the delivery of tertiary education for Shetland Islands Council
 - Joint working needs to be improved
 - Build links with quality establishments e.g. RGU
 - Need to create a more collegial environment where staff and students work together on a more equal footing
 - Build community links
 - Shetland Arts have ideas for more courses which could be offered in the future
 - School timetables seem to create a barrier to joint working
 - Staff should be empowered to lead their sections without having to constantly check
 - Keep a close relationship with the local authority.
-

Marketing and Communications

- Need to look for students from outwith Shetland
- Place more emphasis on the establishment as being a place where quality research takes place
- Better promotion for the college – come to study in Shetland
- Improve the profile of local provision
- An emphasis on complementing what's already out there
- Opportunity to invest in marketing and to use social media
- Opportunity to sell the new merged college as a provider for careers in Care.

Identity

- Model the new college on the best aspects of different approaches from around the world
- Need concrete, active and detailed commitments rather than vague statements
- Don't be pretentious – remember you are a college
- This proposal loses the benefit of the research aspect of NAFC – we need to build on Shetland's good reputation
- There is a need to create the right reputation for the future – high standards of professionalism, commercialism and ambition
- The identity (branding) of the various parts of the new college will be important
- Important to be outward facing.

Finance and Sustainability

- Sustainable – reduced overheads
- Ensure there is less duplication of support staff
- The new college needs to be more competitive with its pricing – some training required locally can be procured more cheaply from providers on the Scottish Mainland
- Sustainability is critical for the global climate challenge – there is scope in the proposal to include the sustainable practices the new college will undertake
- Care is needed in the Seafood and Sea sections to not create a situation where supply outstrips demand and it becomes unsustainable
- Further due diligence is required on the financial figures
- This merger does not appear to have followed the tried and tested processes of previous mergers
- Any financial savings made should be ploughed back in.

Assets

- Provide a new purpose built campus
- Provide a new college in town
- Use the old Anderson High School building
- Access to the college facilities at night and at the weekend for the public of Shetland
- Need a vision for accommodation – think about the OU model with no dedicated anything
- Reduce the footprint and the carbon footprint and offer learning anywhere.

Appendix 5(c): Governance

The main points from stakeholder responses which referred to governance arrangements are summarised below.

Unincorporated (or non-incorporated)

- Provides greater range of financial options, whilst still having the appropriate checks and balances the right approach.
- Adequate and appropriate for the size of the new college
- Lack of clarity on why there were concerns about reporting for public money within unincorporated organisation
- 15 day financial planning targets for an incorporated college are onerous and restrictive
- Being part of the UHI provides sufficient scrutiny and governance
- Unincorporated provides flexibility to meet commitments in the most efficient and effective way.

Incorporated

- Strong opposition from EIS-FELA on proposed model within proposals
- Fears relating to privatisation and education being run for profit as well as potential impact on jobs
- Concerns about accountability, public scrutiny and transparency
- Queries surrounding the need to operate with large reserves as opposed to adequate and appropriate resources with a small surplus year on year
- Specific points from the MMBC were highlighted and queried including “funding partnerships” and an Audit Scotland report
- Vast majority of colleges in Scotland remain public and a lack of clarity as to why Shetland would be different.

Communication and leadership

- More information would be helpful to help understand the differences
- Legal status has been controversial and it would be good to move on from that
- Non-incorporated more favoured by non-academic staff and incorporated by academic staff
- Should be an active board of directors who are committed and keen to be involved and find out more
- Success will depend on quality of board and recruiting the best people to lead
- Good quality board training should be provided
- The board has to be open and accountable.

The main points from stakeholder responses which referred to Covid-19 are summarised below.

Student Experience

- Online delivery seen as the new normal
- College experience will change, more so south but also locally
- Widening inequalities as a result of Covid-19
- More students may decide to study in Shetland or look for alternative and 'local' options (e.g. instead of certain modern apprenticeships or due to furlough)
- More flexibility required.

Strategic Planning

- Contribute to making the community more resilient
- Be part of recovery and renewal conversations
- College has important role in Business Resilience Forum
- Shetland's economic recovery is going to be reliant on a college that can respond to upskilling and retraining people
- Provide more online vocational training
- Downturn in oil and gas with knock on impact on sectors such as hospitality a concern, exasperated by Covid-19
- Working from home and the value that is being added to the computing and digital skills
- Reduced school leaver numbers (c.50 less than last year)
- Care sector will remain an important business focus for the college.
- Priority seen as local economy.

Marketing

- Provide more online vocational training
- Working from home is the new normal and that might open up new opportunities for some to consider going back into employment.

Finance and Sustainability

- Economic downturn (e.g. oil and gas)
- Need to be sure of the impact of C-19 on the merger plans and financial projections for the college
-