

Transition Board – Shetland Merger Project

Committee	Transition Board – Shetland Merger Project
Subject	Consultation report and response
Action requested	<input type="checkbox"/> For information only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For recommendation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For approval
Brief summary of the paper	Presentation of the MMBC consultation report for note. Discussion and agreement of Transition Board response to the consultation report.
Resource implications [if yes, please provide detail]	No Click here to enter text.
Risk implications [if yes, please provide detail]	Yes Timely preparation of response to allow report and response to meet the timelines we have been given
Date paper prepared	28-Jul-20
Date of committee meeting	05-Aug-20
Author	Jane Lewis
Equality and diversity	No
Status	Non-confidential
Freedom of Information Can this paper be included in 'open' business?*	Yes
Status following the meeting	

Context

The colleges were instructed to consult on the Ministerial Merger Business case. The consultation has been completed and a report has been prepared which is being reviewed by the College Board and the NAFC trustees. The draft report is included in this paper and any amendments from their review will also be tabled at the Transition Board. A draft response from the Transition Board is included below. The consultation report and response will be passed to UHI for transmission to the SFC. The timeline we are working to is the 12th August.

The board is asked to:

- **Note the consultation report and the matters raised by it**
- **Review, discuss and agree the Transition Board response to the consultation**

Draft Transition Board response to consultation

The Transition Board is pleased to see the engagement from across Shetland and beyond to the consultation on the Ministerial Merger Business Case (MMBC). This comes in the context of the announcement of the Islands Deal from the UK government and the Islands Strategy from UHI.

In particular the Board was pleased to note that the MMBC was considered clear and that the majority of respondents were in favour of bringing together Shetland College, NAFC Marine Centre and Train Shetland into a single organisation to deliver tertiary education in Shetland. The Board notes the observations on the length of time taken to get to this point and is keen to build on the enthusiasm for bringing provision together. The Board looks forward to working with all its partners to maintain the pace and momentum of activity towards achieving a new college for Shetland by the summer of 2021.

The Transition Board welcomes the strong support of the Shetland Islands Council and the many areas it wishes to work with the College in the future. We wish to acknowledge our role in supporting delivery of the Shetland Partnership Plan and strengthening the social economic and cultural prosperity of the Shetland Islands.

The Board welcomes the various suggestions linked to improving the student experience, improving the learning environment, providing clear learner journeys and wider curriculum development. In particular we note the desire from students for more postgraduate opportunities. We also seek to attract more students to our islands. We remain committed to local learning opportunities for all and seek to support a dynamic curriculum including remote delivery to meet future challenges and opportunities as they arise.

The Transition Board recognises the challenges of developing a single college across two campuses and notes the desire for a single site more centrally located. In developing the MMBC it was not thought a realistic aspiration for the short term. The board also recognises the challenges of managing the current estate and the need for capital investment particularly in terms of delivering community engagement in the college, improved learning spaces and the provision of student accommodation. We will be working hard to realise the investment in the islands externally to achieve these objectives.

The Transition Board notes the concerns about the proposed name Shetland Institute and has set in train a process to reconsider the name chosen taking into account the views of staff and students.

The Board notes that some concern has been expressed about the proposal that the new college be non-incorporated. Since the completion of the MMBC the Shadow Board has further explored non-incorporated and incorporated status and the Transition Board remains content with the proposal of non-incorporated status as in the MMBC.

The Transition Board is acutely aware of the changes COVID-19 has occasioned in the period since the MMBC was completed and will be taking these into account in the work to develop the new college.