

MINUTES

A&B – Public

Shetland Islands Council

Auditorium, Shetland Museum and Archives, Hays Dock, Lerwick

Wednesday 22 February 2017 at 10.00am

Present:

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| M Bell | M Burgess |
| P Campbell | A Cooper |
| A Duncan | B Fox |
| R Henderson | D Ratter |
| F Robertson | G Robinson |
| C Smith | G Smith |
| T Smith | M Stout |
| A Westlake | J Wills |
| A Wishart | V Wishart |

Apologies

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| G Cleaver | S Coutts |
| A Manson | D Sandison |

In Attendance (Officers):

M Boden, Chief Executive
N Grant, Director of Development Services
J Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law
W Shannon, Interim Joint Principal
M Thomason, Management Accountant
B Kerr, Communications Officer
L Adamson, Committee Officer

Chair:

Mr Bell, Convener of the Council, presided.

Circular:

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Declarations of Interest

Mr Burgess declared an interest in Item 1, as a Trustee of Shetland Fisheries Training Centre Trust, and a pecuniary interest as a supplier of services to Shetland College. Mr Burgess said that as the item is strategic, rather than financial, he would remain in the meeting.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2016 were approved on the motion of Mr C Smith, seconded by Mr Robertson.

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2016 were approved on the motion of Ms Wishart, seconded by Mr Campbell.

Shetland Tertiary Sector Strategic Plan

The Council considered a report by the Interim Joint Principal (SCB-124) which presented the Strategic Plan for the Tertiary Education Sector in Shetland. The Decision Note, from the Shetland College Board on 9 February 2017, was tabled at the meeting.

In introducing the report, the Interim Joint Principal advised on the worthwhile engagement and consultation on the Strategic Plan with all staff groups, and on the formation of a Working Group. He advised on the challenges for the tertiary sector, from both within and outwith Shetland. He reported also on the optimism for the future of the sector, where he highlighted the increasing numbers of students enrolled at the Colleges. He reported on the importance to collaborate for the interest of the tertiary sector as a whole and where possible to avoid duplication, and advised that an Operational Plan would be developed following approval of the Strategic Plan.

In referring to Page 2 of the Strategic Plan, in the paragraph headed “Shetland College UHI”, the Interim Joint Principal advised on a proposed further change at the request of a Senior Lecturer to the 6th line, for ‘managed’ to read ‘governed’. He advised however, that having sought clarity from the Executive Manager – Governance and Law, that the 6th sentence be changed to read, “....Development Services Directorate and is governed by a Committee (Shetland College Board) which reports to the Council’s Education and Families Committee”. The Interim Joint Principal also referred to page 12 of the Strategy, at Goal 2, and advised on a proposal to change the first bullet point from “employers in Shetland” to “employers throughout Shetland”.

In response to questions, the Interim Joint Principal advised on the major challenges ahead to replace the current level of European Funding to the Colleges that will be lost as a result of Brexit, where he reported that the immediate challenge will be the loss to the NAFC in terms of funding for research projects. He advised on the focus going forward for the industry to pay for services received, and on collaborative working and integration across the wider sector and to avoid publication.

In response to a question regarding the proposed amalgamation of the Colleges, the Interim Joint Principal advised on the number of major obstacles which halted that proposal, linked mainly to staff pensions and properties. He added however, that efforts will be made to address these matters which will inform future direction for the tertiary sector in Shetland.

In response to a comment regarding the length of time taken to report on the Strategic Plan to Council, the Interim Joint Principal advised that dealing with a number of different staff groups from different organisations had resulted in the consultation process taking longer than had been anticipated. In response to a question regarding the expectation for a report on the management review in the term of this Council, he commented that the timeline was tight but he advised on his intention, within the next few weeks, to report on the next stage in the process and on his management proposals.

Reference was made to Page 13 of the Strategic Plan, where a suggestion was made for a change to the 5th bullet point, that the word 'research' be deleted and replaced with 'all academic'.

During the discussion, Mr Burgess advised on a suggestion for an additional bullet point at Goal 4, on the need to develop a culture for alumni through colleges in Shetland. He also made comment on the contribution from industries in Shetland to the UK economy, where it was suggested that the statement in 5th bullet point in Goal 6 be expanded in that regard.

During debate, Mr Campbell reported on the progress made to date, and he referred to the increased student numbers this year and the prospect to exceed student numbers next year. Mr Campbell advised that all Trustees of the Shetland Fisheries Training Centre Trust (SFTCT) had been invited to attend the recent Shetland College Board (SCB) meeting to allow a joint discussion on the proposals in the report, however only the Chair of the SFTCT had been available to attend. The Chair of the STFCT agreed to advise all Members of the Board of SFTCT on the discussion, and the decision reached, which incorporated the amendments made by the SCB. It has proved impractical for a meeting of the SFTCT to be arranged, however each Trustee has been advised on the decision, and all have indicated their support. The decision will be ratified at the next meeting of the SFTCT.

Mr Campbell moved that the Council approve the recommendation of the Shetland College Board, namely to "adopt the Strategic Plan for the Tertiary Education Sector in Shetland, subject to the undernoted amendments, and that it form part of the Council's Policy Framework, to be managed by the Shetland College Board, in partnership with the Education and Families Committee and the NAFC:

Goal 2 title to read "Deliver high quality learning experiences and successful outcomes for all learners"

Goal 3 – bullet point five to read "Nurture a scholarly spirit amongst all academic staff and students, and provide research opportunities for learners"

Goal 4 to read "Provide high quality governance, leadership and management structures".

Mr G Smith seconded.

Dr Wills advised on the need for an additional Goal 7 in the Strategic Plan, for the Council to move to have a single College in Shetland as soon as possible. Dr Wills said that one College should be supported for both educational and financial reasons, and to allow advantage to be taken of all economies of scale. He said also that the issues relating to pensions and properties are technical, and can and should be overcome. Dr Wills moved, as an amendment, for the addition of a Goal 7, that the Council should move to have a single College, to be achieved as soon as possible. Mr Ratter seconded.

During the discussion, Members advised that while they had sympathy for the amendment, a single College in Shetland would be the ultimate aim. It was however important to stick to the agreed path, to work in a collaborative fashion, moving towards a single management structure, to achieve efficiencies, avoid duplication, and maximise income from delivery of subjects. While moving forward

in that regard, the pension and property issues can be tackled, and as they are resolved, could align to a single College. The need to continue delivery of high quality tertiary education to all ages was the important factor, as was currently being undertaken by the two Colleges, however in moving forward reductions in funding will ultimately draw the organisations together. It was noted also, that there was no reference in the Strategic Plan to indicate a change of direction of Policy other than to aspire to a single College, and that approval of the Strategic Plan would be a step along the way.

Mr Burgess referred to his earlier suggestions for amendments to the Strategic Plan, including an additional Goal 4 “Create culture of Alumni from Shetland's Colleges” and for the 5th bullet point of Goal 6 to be changed to read, “Engage with funding bodies and build the case for appropriate and sustainable levels of local and central government funding, given the contribution of Shetland's key industries to the national economy.” Mr Campbell confirmed his acceptance of these additional amendments to his motion. This received the consent of his seconder.

Following summing up, voting took place by a show of hands, and the result was as follows:

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| Amendment (Dr Wills) | 3 |
| Motion (Mr Campbell) | 14 |
| Abstention (Mr Fox) | |

Decision:

The Council adopt the Strategic Plan for the Tertiary Education Sector in Shetland, subject to the undernoted amendments, and that it form part of the Council's Policy Framework, to be managed by the Shetland College Board, in partnership with the Education and Families Committee and the NAFC.

- Goal 2 title to read “Deliver high quality learning experiences and successful outcomes for all learners”
- Goal 3 – bullet point five to read “Nurture a scholarly spirit amongst all academic staff and students, and provide research opportunities for learners”
- Goal 4 to read “Provide high quality governance, leadership and management structures”
- Goal 4 – an additional bullet point to read, “Create culture of Alumni from Shetland's Colleges”
- Goal 6 – Bullet point 5 to be changed to read, “Engage with funding bodies and build the case for appropriate and sustainable levels of local and central government funding, given the contribution of Shetland's key industries to the national economy”

(Mr G Smith left the meeting).

The Council considered a report by the Chair of Development Committee (SIC-0217-DV-12) which presented the Supplementary Guidance (SG) - Aquaculture.

In introducing the report, Mr Cooper advised from the additional decision at Committee, for a review to be undertaken of the Sullom Voe Harbour Area for aquaculture developments, to be reported in due course. Mr Cooper moved that the Council approve the recommendation in the report. Mr T Smith seconded. Dr Wills asked for his abstention to the decision to be recorded.

Dr Wills advised on his alarm at the request for a review to be undertaken of the status of the Sullom Voe Harbour Area, which at present was free from aquaculture developments. He advised on the tonnage of farmed salmon produced in Shetland during 2013, but he questioned if anybody knew what was the tonnage of salmon faeces released. He said that he did not agree to any increase in aquaculture developments, where it is not a sustainable industry, and there are also the problems with sea lice. He said that despite a large oil terminal at Sullom Voe, the inshore area is relatively pristine, and the Special Area of Conservation status, which had largely contributed to this situation, should never be changed.

During the discussion, Members were advised on the discussion at Development Committee and on the purpose of the review. It was confirmed that there is no assumption that the review would result in any new developments, but that a review of the status of the area was overdue.

Mr Robertson advised on the thorough consultation process, he said that the SG – Aquaculture was an excellent document, and that salmon farming was an important industry to Shetland. In terms of the review, he advised on the need for an extremely cautious approach when considering aquaculture developments in Sullom Voe. Mr Cooper advised on the need for the review to be carried out, which he said would not impact on the SG for the aquaculture industry.

Decision:

The Council adopted the Supplementary Guidance – Aquaculture as statutory guidance to the Local Development Plan.

10/17

Chair's Report – Development Committee – 8 February 2017
Works Licence Policy

The Council considered a report by the Chair of Development Committee (SIC-0217-DV-13) which presented the updated Works Licence Policy, following consultation.

Mr Cooper introduced the report, and moved that the Council approve the recommendation contained therein. Dr Wills seconded.

Decision:

The Council adopted the Works Licence Policy as the policy framework for marine developments

The meeting concluded at 10.55am.

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Convener