



Strategic Plan

2008/2011

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Introduction

This strategic plan sets out a clear summary of the strategic direction and priorities of the Board of Management for Shetland College for the three year period 2008-2011.

This Strategic Plan has been developed with input from the Board of Management and staff of Shetland College.

From a strategic perspective the Board has provided direction which has helped to inform the planning of the college over the next three years. Staff input at all levels at cross-college committee meetings and workshops has also helped to inform the key strategic objectives of this plan. This input will also help inform the development of the more detailed college-wide operational milestones and targets for each year of this Strategic Plan. A more detailed annual Operational Plan will be produced to underpin this 3-year Strategic Plan.

Shetland College remains a non-incorporated college with a Board of Management of nine members and is part of Shetland Islands Council's Education and Social Care Department.

The Board of Management consists of six elected members of Shetland Islands Council, a representative of NHS Shetland, the Federation of Small Businesses and a representative of HIE.

The composition of the Board of Management changed substantially following the local Government elections in May 2007 with six new members joining the Board, including a new Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

The Strategic Priorities of the college as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2005-08 were considered and endorsed by the Board of Management at its first meeting following appointment. These are as follows:

1. To promote broad-based Further and Higher Education, Life Long Learning and Social Inclusion, through the identification of the training, education and vocational needs in Shetland and delivery of provision to meet them;
2. To promote and meet the needs of, indigenous industries and support new and sustainable industries;
3. To promote social and cultural development and Shetland's heritage;
4. To maintain a position of financial health and stability;
5. To strengthen the governance and management arrangements;

6. To develop the physical environment and IT infrastructure through continued investment and use of ICT and maintenance of the college properties;
7. To promote the achievement of excellence through commitment to quality standards and continued investment in staff development.

Recently, in preparation for this new Strategic Plan to take the college forward over the next three years, the Board of Management have re-endorsed the Strategic Priorities with a slight amendment to Strategic Aim 2, which now reads:

2. To play a significant role in developing the Shetland economy through meeting the needs of established and new industries *and services*

and the addition of an eighth Strategic Priority:

8. To ensure a quality experience for all learners

This reinforces the college's commitment to be learner-centred and to put the learner at the heart of what the college does. It also recognises the relative shortfall in student facilities in areas such as social and recreational spaces and the need to address these.

Shetland College, along with its sister organisation Train Shetland, is seen by the Board of Management as being the prime deliverer of Further Education, Vocational Training and Short-Course Training in Shetland and, along with the NAFC Marine Centre, the main deliverers of Higher Education.

Shetland College is a college for everyone in Shetland. It is important that Shetland College is available to learners wherever they may be in Shetland and at whatever their entry level may be. To that end the Learning Centres in North Isles, North Mainland, Whalsay, West Mainland, Lerwick and South Mainland have an extremely important role to play. This has been recognised by Shetland Development Trust which has invested £210,000 over the next three years to ensure the sustainability of the network of learning centres. It is recognised that the learning centres can contribute to the regeneration and economic and social sustainability of some of our more rural and fragile communities.

It will be important for Shetland College to continue to adapt to meet the changing circumstances faced by Shetland and its population.

A look back at the history of Shetland College demonstrates how this has been an important facet of life at Shetland College over the years.

In the early 1990s, Shetland was not entirely typical of the Scottish norm. The islands consistently had the lowest rate of unemployment, the local economy was buoyant and well-paid job vacancies, while not in abundance, were certainly commonplace. Some 66% of the population of over 22,500 were economically active, and the two decades since the discovery of offshore oil had seen the population increase by 30%.

By 1993, further education (FE) had also experienced a similarly dramatic growth, from two full-time lecturers at a further education centre in 1970/71 (with no full-time learners), to ten staff in 1984/85 with twenty five full-time learners, and in 1992/93 to twenty five lecturers with one hundred full-time learners, sixty youth trainees and almost 1,400 others attending part-time courses or classes. In addition to the 65 learners embarking upon higher education on the British mainland in 1992/93, another five learners attended colleges on the Scottish mainland.

In the period since, learner numbers at Shetland College have fluctuated with the development of new courses and modes of delivery, and the deletion of less well-subscribed courses. One college section was disbanded, and six full-time lecturers took early retirement in 2003.

In 1997 Shetland College became an academic partner in what is now the UHIMI and through which most of its HE activity is funded. The college's HE portfolio of programmes continues to develop and now includes courses in Accounting, Business and Management, Construction Management, Contemporary Textiles, Culture Studies, Environment and Heritage, Health and Care, and Information Technology. In 2005 the College was granted validation approval for the BA Contemporary Textiles, and the College was also one of the UHI academic partners to gain revalidation of the BA Culture Studies. BSc Environment and Heritage is offered at Honours level. The college has also participated since 2003 in delivery of the post-graduate MSc Chartered Teacher programme, led by Lews Castle College.

In more recent years, part-time learner numbers have risen consistently, whilst full-time learner numbers, in most subject areas have continued to decrease.

Wider Access: Shetland College Enrolments	Further Education		Higher Education		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Total 2007/2008	66	1,316	63	195	1,640
Total 2006/2007	71	1,281	84	132	1,568
Total 2005/2006	87	963	52	150	1,252
Total 2004/2005	82	875	56	106	1,119
Total 2003/2004	80	628	70	122	900
Total 2002/2003	92	605	46	142	885

The ongoing process of increasing growth in learner participation helped address widening access to provision, by offering a range of programmes to the local community using a variety of delivery modes.

Wider Access: Total Enrolments in Shetland in 2007/2008	Further Education		Higher Education		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Shetland College	66	1,316	63	195	1,640
Short Course Training with Train Shetland	N/A	2,242	N/A	N/A	2,242
Engineering (with NAFC Marine Centre)	0	311	N/A	N/A	311
Community Development (SIC Evening Classes)	N/A	1,386	N/A	N/A	1386
Total	66	5,255	63	195	5,579

The college works closely with strategic partners at a local level including HIE Shetland and Careers Scotland to develop programmes and training to support economic development within the islands. It also works in partnership with NAFC Marine Centre, located in Scalloway, five miles from the college's main campus, to deliver FE programmes in Engineering.

It is important that the college participates and contributes to strategic partnerships with responsibility for the economic and social well-being of Shetland.

Currently the college is a partner in groups such as the Community Regeneration Partnership, Skills for Scotland Strategy Group, Community Learning and Development Strategy, Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnership, More Choices - More Chances Partnership, Vocational Pathways Strategic Group, Creative Industries Unit and Cinema and Music Venue Project Team.

The college is also a member of the General Industry Panel which considers strategic and operational matters pertaining to industries outwith agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture.

Participation in these groups helps inform the college of future skills needs in Shetland and already is indicating opportunities in renewable energy, music and creative arts, textiles and continued and growing work in ESOL and certificated literacies and numeracies.

The college is also committed to contributing to the successful delivery of the outcomes contained in the Single Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Government and will be heavily involved in a number of indicators such as:

- Increase the proportion of school-leavers (from Scottish publicly funded schools) in positive and sustained destinations (FE, HE, Employment or Training).
- Increase the availability and uptake of community learning opportunities, specifically targeting the hard to reach within communities.
- Increase the percentage of Scottish domiciled graduates from Scottish Higher Education Institutions in positive destinations.

- Improve knowledge transfer from research activity in universities.

With a population of around 22,000 people, it will always be a challenge for Shetland College to be able to offer the breadth of provision required locally and at the same time be financially viable. Class numbers are always likely to be small, therefore it is important to seek opportunities wherever possible to combine and maximise classes and class numbers.

Shetland College requires a multi-skilled, flexible staff for the reasons outlined above. It is important to keep staffing structures under constant review and over the last two years, as a response to weaknesses identified following the early retirement of key staff, the management structure has been strengthened to include a Depute Director and Operations Manager and the post of Guidance Co-ordinator has been established. Marketing has also been strengthened through the recent appointment of a Marketing Assistant and new staff have been recruited to posts of Librarian, Administration Manager and PA to the Senior Management Team. The Head of Section posts in Computing and Construction have been recruited to and the temporary lecturer posts in the learning centres will be permanent from July 2008.

The college is committed to the continuing professional development of its staff to ensure that they are well placed to delivery quality learning experiences to all its learners.

The profile of our student population continues to change with a continued drop in full-time numbers but increasing numbers of part-time students. It is important therefore to ensure that access to learning is flexible to meet these changing circumstances whether that is through physical access to the learning centres or by being able to access learning in a variety of ways, e.g. networked delivery, on-line, face-to-face or blended delivery. Shetland College is committed to developing its infrastructure and learning and teaching methodologies to ensure the best use of new technologies. Shetland College is able to offer courses from Access 3 to post-graduate study.

Another growing area of work is with schools throughout Shetland. The College is committed to building on the already strong links with schools. Already there is in place a substantial vocational pathways programme embracing skills for work in childcare, hairdressing, engineering and an NPA in construction skills together with a good sound engineering unit. All in all, approximately 24% of the 3rd and 4th year school population are engaged in vocational pathways. This is testimony to a strong partnership with the Council's Schools Service.

Similarly, Shetland College is determined to ensure that it contributes to meeting the needs of those who require additional support or opportunities to participate in learning and therefore contribute to life in Shetland. This would include providing opportunities for Christmas leavers, working with Bridges to meet the needs of those young people looking for more choices and more chances; working in partnership with Adult Learning to provide certificated communication classes and ESOL classes at a variety of levels; and working with the Eric Gray Centre to provide learning opportunities for adults with additional needs.

Shetland College aims to “meet the needs of learners throughout Shetland” and it is our ambition that all school-leavers, and indeed those returning to learning, are able to make an informed decision as to whether Shetland College is the place to continue their studies.

GEORGE SMITH
Director

ANDREW HUGHSON
Chairman of the Board of Management

Our Mission

Shetland College seeks to make a major contribution to the local economy through the provision of high quality further and higher education and training which meets the needs of the population and employers.

Our values are:

- Culture of Enterprise and Innovation
- Effective working partnerships
- Sound governance and management
- Consistently meeting and exceeding customer expectations
- Commitment to quality standards
- Research, scholarship and learning

taking account of current national priorities.

Our Vision

- To encourage staff and learners to realise their potential
- To be innovative and responsive providers of high quality tertiary education
- To be dynamic and innovative in meeting industry needs
- To respond to community needs
- To promote distinctive research, scholarship and learning in Shetland

The community relies heavily on Shetland College, as the main provider of post-school education in Shetland, to deliver a range of further and higher education appropriate to its needs. The College continues to develop close links with the community on both a formal and informal basis.

National and Local Contexts

In considering the strategic priorities for the college for 2008-2011, it is important to take cognisance of external drivers such as the Scottish Funding Council Priorities, UHI's Strategic Plan, the Scottish Government's guidance to the Scottish Funding Council and the Single Outcome Agreement between Shetland Islands Council and the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Funding Council sets out a number of overarching strategic priorities in its 2006-09 Corporate Plan, these are:

- providing opportunities for learners
- improving the employability and skills of learners
- delivering skills for Scotland
- maintaining relevant learning provision
- developing responsive future approaches to funding
- enhancing the quality of the experience of learners
- supporting research and innovation
- promoting further and higher education internationally
- supporting effective, well-led and well-managed colleges and universities

In her letter of guidance to the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council, Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, has stated that her priorities for the college sector 2008/09 are for modest growth targeted selectively on the delivery of:

- increased investment in supporting young people aged between 16 and 19 who need more choices and more chances to participate in education, employment and training

- additional support for strategic investment (such as more targeted articulation and innovative approaches to learning delivery)
- additional investment in Knowledge Transfer funding
- delivery of improved opportunities for school pupils to experience vocational learning, including through school and college partnerships

Skills for Scotland, the Government's Lifelong Skills Strategy requires colleges to deliver core, employability and vocational skills and training to meet national, regional and local needs. Individuals should be empowered to demand a quality of learning experience. It requires learning and training providers to:

Consider themselves as part of one system geared towards helping people develop the skills they need, where articulation, integration and working with other providers are the norm:

- building on the effective partnership working that already exists;
- work with awarding bodies and use SCQF to enable all learning to be recognised;
- ensure that it is easy for individuals to progress from one form of learning to another; and
- understand and support individuals before and after their learning and into employment.

Develop Strong partnerships and communication links to ensure that information about an individual's support needs, learning styles and achievements are shared:

- for those school pupils who undertake part of their learning in college, they should be able to relate this learning to the wider curriculum and their achievements and learning in college must be recognised and acknowledged within their school; and
- address the barriers which prevent young people from undertaking different models of learning, including learning opportunities outside of school.

Provide high quality, relevant, learning opportunities that have value in the workplace:

- provide learning at times and places accessible by workers;
- offer easy access to robust information about learning opportunities and funding to individuals and employers;
- emphasise and prioritise employability as a key outcome from learning;
- ensure that learning is geared towards helping individuals to utilise their skills at all levels, from foundation-level to PhD - not just their subject-based knowledge and understanding, but also the practical application

- skills, generic cognitive skills, communication skills and autonomy, accountability and the ability to work with others - providing individuals with the ability to utilise skills and foster innovation in a changing and demanding labour market; and
- engage with employers so that people can use the skills gained through learning to access work and progress in the workplace.

Work with and through their representative bodies - in the case of universities and colleges this means Universities Scotland and the Association of Scottish Colleges, to:

- Ensure that in teaching individuals they provide them with essential skills
- Ensure positive destinations for individuals where the learning that those individuals have undertaken will be effectively used
- Work closely with business to develop courses that will lead to individuals having the knowledge and skills that meet both business need and individual aspirations; and
- Work with business in developing relationships that will make best use of the knowledge created in institutions for the benefit of Scotland's economy.

Make effective use of labour market information and information, advice and guidance in:

- Developing learning, qualifications and work experience opportunities: and
- Responding to demand from individuals and employers and different segments of these markets.

Work with Learndirect Scotland to register all publicly-funded learning courses on the National Learning Opportunities Database, so that the Database can become an effective national resource for all to use.

The UHI Strategic Plan is currently being drawn up for 2008-11 but the strategic priorities are likely to include the following:

- Make a transformational contribution to the economic, environmental, social and cultural development of the region
- Create excellence in learning and teaching and research
- Create a distinctive and innovative university
- To be a leading provider of Lifelong Learning within Shetland and beyond
- Widen access to learning within the region
- Be financial sustainable

Shetland College also has a contribution to make to the Single Outcome Agreement between Shetland Islands Council and the Scottish Government. In particular the College will impact on:

- Increase the proportion of school-leavers (from Scottish publicly funded schools) in positive and sustained destinations (FE, HE, Employment or Training).
- Increase the availability and uptake of community learning opportunities, specifically targeting the hard to reach within communities.
- Increase the percentage of Scottish domiciled graduates from Scottish Higher Education Institutions in positive destinations.
- Improve knowledge transfer from research activity in universities.

Strategic Priorities 2008-2011

Shetland College's previous Strategic Plan (2005-08) set seven Strategic Priorities to achieve its mission. This plan further reviews progress towards these Strategic Priorities, sets one new Strategic Priority and sets out actions for each of those Priorities.

Strategic Priority 1

To promote broad-based Further and Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion, through the identification of the training, education and vocational needs in Shetland and delivery of provision to meet them.

Strategic Priority 2

To play a significant role in developing the Shetland economy through meeting the needs of established and new industries and services.

Strategic Priority 3

To engage in the social and cultural development of Shetland, including Shetland's heritage.

Strategic Priority 4

To maintain a position of financial health and stability.

Strategic Priority 5

To strengthen the governance and management arrangements.

Strategic Priority 6

To develop the physical infrastructure of Shetland College to meet known and future needs, including the IT infrastructure.
To ensure continued investment in and maintenance of the College estate.

Strategic Priority 7

To promote the achievement of excellence through commitment to quality standards and continued investment in staff development, recognising that staff are a key resource.

Strategic Priority 8

To ensure a quality experience for all learners.

Strategic Priorities 2008-2011: Planned Actions

Strategic Priority 1

To promote broad-based Further and Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Social Inclusion, through the identification of the training, education and vocational needs in Shetland and delivery of provision to meet them.

- The College will continually review its provision in Further and Higher Education in the Arts, Business, Computing, Community Learning, Construction, Care and Social Sciences to ensure that provision is commensurate with the needs identified
- Continue to work in partnership with SIC Schools Service to develop Vocational Pathways for school pupils with the intention of increasing the range of opportunities available
- Continue to build effective working relationships with the schools throughout Shetland and create more learning opportunities for school pupils
- Be an active partner in the More Choices, More Chances group
- Take an active role in the development of a Skills Strategy for Shetland to ensure that individuals are equipped with the skills Shetland needs and improve inclusiveness and equality of opportunity through offering a range of programmes from Access 3 to degree to meet local demand
- Further develop the use of e-learning as a tool for learning throughout College learning and teaching activities

Strategic Priority 2

To play a significant role in developing the Shetland economy through meeting the needs of established and new industries and services.

- Improve links with local industries and services at a strategic level, through proactive membership of local forums and through regular liaison with local industry groups, services and development agencies
- Improve links with local industries and services at a customer level through offering vocational qualifications and bespoke training required to provide the skilled workforce needed by industries and services
- Promote need for a strategic forum for economic development

- Develop Knowledge Transfer activity - act on recommendations of report on textile industry
- Explore and develop opportunities for research to inform needs of industry, and, to inform development of learning and teaching
- Ensure regular liaison with industry groups, development agencies and employers

Strategic Priority 3

To engage in the social and cultural development of Shetland, including Shetland's heritage.

- Continue to work in partnership with HIE, Shetland Arts and others to develop Creative Industries Unit
- Participate in work of Mareel Project team to achieve cinema, music venue and adequate educational facilities for creative arts, industry work, digital media and film
- Progress the development and validation of HNC/D in music production for delivery in 2009-2010
- Pursue the development of BA (Hons) Contemporary Textiles and MA Art & Regeneration
- Contribute to the review of the work of the Shetland Cultural Strategy Group and determine the contribution Shetland College can make to this group
- Develop further a range of community based short courses in creative arts
- Develop opportunities for co-operation and joint working with Shetland Amenity Trust Museum and Archive Service through the Centre for Nordic Studies project

Strategic Priority 4

To maintain a position of financial health and stability

- Work in partnership with SIC Finance Service to ensure accurate financial information is available to management and the Board of Management
- Ensure all requests for financial and other forms are completed and returned within set deadlines
- Develop systems to ensure effective practices to comply with the government's "Efficient Government Initiative"
- Be aware of and make application for external funding to develop learning and teaching opportunities and the ongoing development of the College infrastructure
- Maintain accurate records of student enrolments using SITS, and to ensure that reliable management information is available to inform the range of learning opportunities available at Shetland College
- Review and improve the marketing of courses and services provided by Shetland College
- Use robust benchmarking data as it becomes available to inform financial planning and management

Strategic Priority 5

To strengthen the governance and management arrangements.

- Keep under review the management and support services structure to meet the needs of Shetland College
- Consider remit and membership of Quality Improvement Committee and Academic Board and determine structure suitable to needs of College
- Support formation and work of Student Association and encourage participation of student representatives in work of College, including committees at all levels
- Encourage the active participation of the Board of Management in the academic activities of Shetland College through the provision of 'champions' for each Section

- Ensure active participation in UHI Committees and regular dissemination and discussion with staff of main points for action
- Ensure members of the Board of Management carry out relevant training to undertake their duties

Strategic Priority 6

To develop the physical infrastructure of Shetland College to meet known and future needs, including the IT infrastructure. To ensure continued investment in and maintenance of the College estate.

- Secure funding for the construction of a Phase III extension
- Ensure DDA Audits and Fire Safety Management Plan are in place and continually monitored
- Ensure active management of Health and Safety Issues
- Complete outstanding capital projects from 2007-2008
 - Reception area and additional room Phase 1
 - Library reorganisation
 - Master keys
 - Storage
- Carry out an audit of existing IT equipment and facilities and prepare a plan for further upgrade/replacement for next three years
- Establish regular meetings with SIC Building Services to ensure planned maintenance programme is in place and regularly monitored
- Conduct regular review of Estates Strategy

Strategic Priority 7

To promote the achievement of excellence through commitment to quality standards and continued investment in staff development, recognising that staff are a key resource.

- Continue to improve learner retention and attainment levels including the effective use of relevant performance indicators
- Continue to develop staff ownership of a robust self-evaluation process which includes rigorous monitoring and action planning
- Support the development of staff through appropriate planned training and self-evaluation and address relevant staff development needs through staff reviews to help provide a high quality learning experience for our learners and to meet the needs of the College
- Use a variety of teaching approaches in the delivery of the curriculum to meet learner needs
- Put in place effective arrangements for student recruitment, enrolment induction, retention and progression and carry out regular review
- Continue to develop opportunities for staff to share best practice
- Continue to conduct staff satisfaction surveys and act on information produced
- Maintain liP status and follow-up any action points from earlier review

Strategic Priority 8

To ensure a quality experience for all learners.

- Improve the scope of the curriculum to include the development of core and soft skills, citizenship and employability
- Enhance the range of support services to the learners
- Increase the use and effectiveness of ICT e-learning in curriculum delivery to ensure innovation and responsiveness in teaching

- Develop SPARQS initiative/learner participation in College committees, learner forums, etc
- Develop a culture of examining and responding to trends and changing demand
- Embed quality enhancement in all aspects of College activity
- Ensure adherence to equality, diversity and inclusion regulations in all college practices, and regularly review and refresh the college's Quality Manual and all policies and procedures
- Continue to conduct student satisfaction surveys and act on the information produced and develop feedback mechanisms
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