



**Education and Families Committee
Special Shetland Islands Council**

**10 October 2013
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Blueprint for Education in Shetland Decision on Skerries School Secondary Department	
CS-52-13-F	
Report Presented by Director of Children's Services	Children's Services

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This Report presents the Consultation Report on the proposed closure of Skerries School Secondary Department. An Executive Summary of the Consultation Report is attached as Appendix A, and the full Consultation Report is attached as Appendix B.
- 1.2 Statutory Consultation was carried out on the proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department between 14 May 2013 and 28 June 2013 in line with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Having weighed up the balance of evidence presented, the Consultation Report recommends approval to close Skerries School Secondary Department and transfer the pupils to the Anderson High School from 18 August 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter. If this approval is given there is a duty on Children's Services to inform the Scottish Ministers of the decision. Thereafter, Scottish Ministers have a six-week period to decide whether or not to call-in the decision.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 That the Education and Families Committee recommend that Shetland Islands Council RESOLVE that:
- (a) education provision at Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - (b) the pupils of Skerries School Secondary Department continue their education at the Anderson High School from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter and

- (c) the catchment area for the Anderson High School be altered to include the current catchment area for Skerries School Secondary Department.

2.2 Should the Proposal be approved then please note that:

- (a) the Scottish Ministers have a six week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the Proposal so no action can be taken regarding implementation;
- (b) the Director of Children's Services will work with pupils, parents and staff at Skerries School and the Anderson High School and the Janet Courtney Halls of Residence to develop a transition plan that would ensure an effective transition for pupils to the Anderson High School;
- (c) the Director of Children's Services will ensure all staff will be properly consulted about their future, as will relevant trade unions. The individual wishes of each member of staff will be taken into consideration within the context of appropriate human resource policies and agreements.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 A detailed re-fresh of the Blueprint for Education was undertaken by Children's Services in 2012. On 20 September 2012 Shetland Islands Council approved a Statement for Education 2012-2017; Commitments for Education 2012-2017; and a Plan for Delivering Education 2012-2017 (Min Ref:74/12). Statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Skerries School Secondary Department to be carried out in 2013 was part of the approved Plan.
- 3.2 The statutory consultation process commenced with the publication of the Proposal Paper on 14 May 2013 and ran until the 28 June 2013.
- 3.3 In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Act) Scotland 2010, a public meeting was held in Skerries Public Hall on 07 June 2013, where twenty-eight people attended. An additional public meeting was held in Anderson High School, the proposed receiving school on 28 May 2013 where four people attended. Transcripts of these meetings are published on Shetland Islands Council's website and are appended to the Consultation Report.
- 3.4 In addition, thirty-eight written responses were received on the Proposal.
- 3.5 Following the end of the statutory consultation period, in line with legislation, the Proposal Paper, all written responses and transcripts of the public meetings were then sent to

Education Scotland who published a formal report on the educational aspects of the Proposal on 19 September 2013.

3.6 Children's Services published their response to the consultation, in the form of a Consultation Report on 19 September 2013. This was circulated at the time, both electronically and in paper copy. The Consultation Report contains:

- a record and a summary of the number of written responses received during the Statutory Consultation Period, and Children's Services' response to these;
- a summary of the representations made at the public meetings held during the consultation period, and Children's Services' response to these;
- the full text of Education Scotland's Report on the educational aspects of the Proposal and Children's Services' response to the issues raised in their report;
- a statement of how Children's Services has reviewed the Proposal following all the representations made during the consultation period;
- details of any omissions or inaccuracies in the Proposal Paper.

3.7 The Consultation Report has been published in electronic and printed formats and its publication has been advertised in the local media. It is available on Shetland Islands Council's website and free of charge in printed form from Hayfield House, Shetland Library, Skerries School and Anderson High School. An executive summary of the Consultation Report is also published on Shetland Islands Council's website and is Appendix A to this report.

3.8 The Consultation Report contains a full analysis of all the issues raised through the Consultation Process. The summary of the written responses indicates that 60% respondents disagree with the Proposal. The table below, an extract from the Consultation Report, shows an analysis of the responses, including the key issues of concern.

Number of written consultation responses received	38	%
Number of responses that:		
agreed with the Proposal	9	24%
disagreed with the Proposal	23	60%
did not indicate an opinion or request further information	6	16%

Of the 9 who agreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:	
Quality of Education	6
Financial Issues	5
Peer Interaction	2

Of the 23 who disagreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:	
Community Concerns	17
Quality of Education	11
Financial Issues	11
Relationships / Friends	9
Child Safety	8
Democratic (or Decision Making Process)	8
Travelling Distance/Time	6
Access to Community Services	4
Out of School Activities	3

- 3.9 The Consultation Report is a comprehensive analysis of all the issues which have been raised and Children's Services' responses to those. The key points made and responses provided are considered under the following headings:
- Transport
 - Quality of Education
 - Child Safety
 - Out of School Activities
 - Peer Interaction
 - Community Concerns
 - Housing
 - Shared Management
 - Transition Issues
 - Relationship/Friends and Family Life
 - School Capacity
 - Employment
 - Timescale of the Programme
 - Deomocratic/Decision Making Process
 - Learning Environment/Resources
 - Financial
 - Health
- 3.10 The key conclusions from the Consultation Report are set out below.
- 3.10.1 In recognition of the importance of school education to communities in Shetland, the required Refresh of Blueprint for Education involved further informal consultation across Shetland during the summer of 2012. This was in addition to the information collected through extensive community-wide informal consultations carried out in 2008 and 2010. All Children's Services consultations have endeavoured to share with stakeholders the challenges Shetland Islands Council faces in trying to secure a sustainable school estate for the future whilst continuing to deliver high quality education. This aim has even greater focus in 2013 with the financial position Shetland Islands Council faces and the resultant target savings Children's Services must make to meet these targets. It is Shetland Islands Council policy, through the Medium Term Financial Plan, that Children's

Services saves a further £3.268 million over the next three years. Almost all of this money is to come from the Blueprint for Education proposals.

- 3.10.2 Formal proposals were developed from the outcomes of all the informal consultations and on 20 September 2012 Shetland Islands Council agreed a Statement for Education in Shetland 2012-17; Commitments for Education in Shetland 2012-17 and a Plan for delivering these. The Plan contained a number of proposals which require Children's Services, under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to undertake a number of statutory consultations. This proposal to discontinue education at Skerries School Secondary Department is one of these consultations.
- 3.10.3 Throughout this consultation Children's Services has given special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of The Schools(Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.
- 3.10.4 The statutory consultation process was robust and provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to identify key issues of concern.
- 3.10.5 To ensure Children's Services fulfilled the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 in their fullest regard, we commissioned a socio-economic study on this proposal and a health impact assessment. We also carried out an Integrated Impact Assessment and NHS Shetland carried out a Health Impact Assessment.
- 3.10.6 The Standards in Schools (Scotland) etc Act 2000 requires local authorities
"to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential".
- 3.10.7 Education Scotland visited Skerries School to speak to parents, pupils and staff. They had the opportunity to view the proposal paper and all written responses.
- 3.10.8 In summary, the report by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal recognises:
- that the proposal offers some educational benefits to young people directly affected by the Proposal and more widely across Shetland Islands Council;
 - the Council has set out a reasonable case for the likely educational benefits to be gained by transferring the young people to a larger school;
 - that the secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from an increase in curricular opportunities;

- that the secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from an improved access to a wide range of subject teachers across all curriculum areas;
- that the secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from access to a wider range of the teaching staff together with more promoted staff and types of specialist support staff;
- that the secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from access to greater resources across the school in respect of ICT, clubs and societies;
- that the secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from a wide range of sports and leisure facilities;
- that the secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from access to a wider and more diverse group of young people on an individual, group or team basis;
- that the Council has presented clear arguments for the benefits likely to accrue to the wider educational community from savings resulting from the proposed closure;
- that the Proposal would contribute to the Council's duties to secure best value and contribute in part to an aim linked to equality of opportunity across the islands.

3.10.9 The principal requirement of the local education authority is to provide adequate and efficient education and it must ensure that this education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential.

3.10.10 Children's Services does not believe it is delivering these obligations to their fullest extent in Skerries School Secondary Department as the curricular opportunities are limited, access to suitably qualified staff is limited, and the children have very limited access to any class mates to learn in groups with, learn from, or play team games with. Opportunities to develop social skills and a suitably wide range of communication skills in line with the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence are inherently limited.

3.10.11 It is incumbent upon Children's Services to offer the best possible educational opportunities to all of the children in Shetland. Children's Services does not believe that educating tiny numbers of children together offers the best possible educational opportunity for those children for their secondary education. The shortcomings in this model are highlighted more starkly now with the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence, and the entitlements for all children within that framework.

3.10.12 There remains huge resistance within the community of Skerries to closing their secondary department. Children's

Services accepts this, but considers the imperative to deliver a better education to the children of Skerries to be an outcome it must continue to pursue. All of the information, views and concerns gathered during the consultation period, provides relevant community planning partners in Shetland with all the information they need to support Skerries to continue to thrive as a community, should the secondary department close.

- 3.10.13 For critical educational reasons heightened by the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, the secondary aged children from Skerries School should be educated in the Anderson High School. They will receive a very high quality education there, will have access to a range of specialist teachers, and be able to socialise and learn with groups of children their own age. They will be very well supported in the Halls of Residence and will be able to travel home each weekend.
- 3.10.14 Of the thirty-eight written responses received during the consultation, 60% disagreed with the proposal, 24% agreed with the proposal and 16% did not express an opinion.
- 3.10.15 This proposal, if implemented has the potential to provide recurring savings to Shetland Islands Council of £76,336. This amount will be reduced to £73,473 by providing an escort on the ferry to accompany the children. This proposal makes an ongoing contribution to Children's Services meeting its target budget agreed in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

4.0 Implications

Strategic

- 4.1 Delivery On Corporate Priorities – this report helps to achieve the aims of the:

Shetland Islands Council Corporate Plan

- All children and young people deserve the best life chances and we are determined that all our young people will have the best chance to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- This year we will continue to examine the educational estate and conduct a series of consultations on primary and secondary schools in line with the blueprint for education.
- We will have robust financial management arrangements that ensure we can make the transition to financial sustainability.
- This year we will meet our budget targets set out in the medium term financial plan.

Shetland Single Outcome Agreement 2012/15

- Area 5.1 – To support schools in their development towards a Curriculum for Excellence;

- Area 5.2 – The strategy provides a framework for developing childcare provision 2012/15;

Children's Services Directorate Plan

- To deliver the best possible service we can which balances access, opportunities and resources.

- 4.2 Community /Stakeholder Issues – in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Children's Services has consulted with all relevant stakeholders / consultees. Full details of the outcomes of the consultation are in the Consultation Report attached as Appendix B.
- 4.3 Policy And/Or Delegated Authority – in accordance with Section 2.3.1 of the Council's Scheme of Administration and Delegations, the Education and Families Committee has responsibility and delegated authority for decision making on matters within its remit which includes school education. However, as the decision required would be a variation of an existing plan and policy, a decision of the Council is required. This report is related to the function of an education authority.
- 4.4 Risk Management – The outcome of the Appeal in the Court of Session and the report from the Commission on Rural Education are both now available. There may be changes in legislation but these are not to be passed until at least Spring 2014. In the meantime the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 is the legislation to be followed. Failure to reduce the net ongoing running costs of the Council carries a significant risk of the Council's financial policies not being adhered to and will require a further draw from Reserves.
- 4.5 Equalities, Health And Human Rights – An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out in respect of this closure proposal for Skerries School Secondary Department. A summary of the impacts forms part of the Consultation Report at Section 14, including how adverse impacts can be mitigated against. The full Integrated Impact Assessment is an appendix to the Consultation Report.
- 4.6 Environmental – An Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out on the overall Blueprint for Education proposals. A summary of this assessment forms part of the Consultation Report, and the full Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment is an appendix to the Consultation Report. There are no significant environmental implications at this stage.

Resources

- 4.7 Financial – The approved 2013-18 Medium Term Financial Plan includes a savings target of £3.268m on Blueprint for Education. The identified savings of £73,473 from this

proposal make an important and ongoing contribution to achieving this target.

Failure to agree to the closure of Skerries School Secondary Department would result in an additional cost pressure of £6,123 per month.

- 4.8 Legal – A proposal to close a school is a “relevant proposal” in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Shetland Islands Council must comply with the requirements as set out in that Act.
- 4.9 Human Resources – Shetland Islands Council has Human Resource policies which will be utilised if the decision is taken to agree to the closure of Skerries School Secondary Department. Children’s Services will ensure that consultation with all staff affected and with Trade Unions will be held following any decisions taken.
- 4.10 Assets And Property – None arising directly from this report, as the Skerries School building will remain part of the school estate to deliver nursery and primary education to the children on Skerries.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Consultation Report on the proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department recommends that:
 - 5.1.1 education provision at Skerries School Secondary Department be discontinued with effect from 4 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - 5.1.2 the pupils of Skerries School Secondary Department continue their education at the Anderson High School from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - 5.1.3 the catchment area for Anderson High School be altered to include the current catchment area for Skerries School Secondary Department.

For further information please contact:
Audrey Edwards, Executive Manager – Quality Improvement
Tel: 01595 74 3966. E-mail: Audrey.edwards@shetland.gov.uk
Report Finalised: 30 September 2013

Appendices

Appendix A: Executive Summary of the Consultation Report

Appendix B: Consultation Report

Background Documents

Blueprint for Education 2012 – 2017 (CS-19-F)

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=13620>

Shetland Islands Council Medium Term Financial Plan (F-034-F)

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=14850>

END

Blueprint for Education

Proposal to Close Skerries School Secondary Department

Consultation Report

Executive Summary

Shetland Islands Council, Children's Services recommends that:

1. Education provision at Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter;
2. That the pupils of Skerries High School Secondary Department continue their education at the Anderson High School, from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
3. The catchment area for the Anderson High school be altered to include the current catchment area of Skerries School Secondary Department.

The statutory consultation period in relation to the proposed closure Skerries School secondary department ended on Friday 28 June 2013.

Please note that this is a summary document for information only.

Representations

Twenty eight people attended the public meeting held at Skerries School on 07 June 2013.

Four people attended the additional public meeting held at the Anderson High School on 28 May 2013.

The total number of written representations received during the consultation period was thirty eight.

Number of written consultation responses received	38	%
Number of responses that:-		
• supported the proposal	9	(25%)
• disagreed with the proposal	23	(60%)
• did not indicate an opinion or request further information	6	(16%)

For those that agreed with the proposal the most often stated reasons were: - quality of education; financial issues and peer interaction.

For those that disagreed with the proposal the six most often stated reasons were: - community concerns; quality of education; financial issues; relationships/friends; child safety; and issues with the decision making process.

Community Concerns

Key issues raised:

- Families will leave the island if the secondary department is closed.
- Children will not learn about their local culture and heritage.
- Older residents will lose contact with young people, there will be fewer people available to provide care for the elderly, and community will lose the enterprising spirit brought by young people.

Response

- The principal requirement of a local education authority is to provide adequate and efficient education to assure the development of young people to their fullest potential, and Children's Services does not believe it is delivering these obligations to their fullest extent in Skerries School secondary department.
- Children's Services remains committed to offering pre-school education and primary education on all remote isles and this commitment was agreed at Shetland Islands Council on 20 September 2012.
- On the basis of the newly agreed Community Plan for Shetland 2013-2020, Shetland Partnership's relevant Community Planning partners will provide appropriate support for Skerries ensuring they receive all the community and economic support available to them.

Quality of Education

Key issues raised:

- Pupils receive a good education at Skerries School and attainment is higher than at the Anderson High School.
- Skerries School offers more subjects than stated in the Proposal Paper, and ex-pupils have not been able to take the courses they wanted at the Anderson High School.
- Skerries School is a good example of Curriculum for Excellence and education in the islands is important for maintaining local skills.

Response

- Children's Services acknowledged in the proposal paper that Skerries School offers a quality education to its children, however it is felt that educating such small numbers of children together is not the best possible educational opportunity.
- Under the Curriculum for Excellence teaching staff will require professional recognition in additional subjects which will further limit the subject choice available at Skerries School. Previous examples of Skerries pupils being unable to continue their desired subjects at the Anderson High School were where the range of subjects were weighted towards one area of the curriculum, which is not considered best practice.
- The number of pupils at Skerries School and the staffing that can be allocated to the school means it is not possible to fully deliver a child's entitlement to the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence.

Financial Issues

Key issues raised:

- The council should make savings in other areas, such as senior management.
- There are inaccuracies in the calculation of savings and closure of the secondary department would not bring significant savings anyway.
- The negative effects on the local economy, such as the closure of a local salmon farming company and raised costs on social care, would outweigh the savings found by closing the secondary department.

Response

- Children's Services has been given a target budget under the Medium Term Financial Plan; Since the start of the 2012/13, Children's Services has already saved £4.2 million in the schools area of the budget without making further changes to the school estate - it cannot do much more without considering again how many schools it has.
- A full financial breakdown of the estimated savings achievable by closing Skerries School Secondary Department was included in the appendices of the proposal paper; the estimated savings have been revised to £73,473 to account for the cost of an escort travelling with children on the ferry to/from Lerwick.
- As previously mentioned, the Skerries community will receive support from Community Planning partners ensuring they receive all the community and economic support available to them.

Relationships/Friends

Key issues raised:

- It is wrong to remove children from their families, and it is better for a child's development to be with their family.
- Children will have nobody to confide in at the Halls of Residence.
- Children might struggle to make friends at the Anderson High School.

Response

- Children's Services accepts that in an ideal world all children would be able to stay at home and commute to school daily, however the geography of Shetland makes it challenging to deliver secondary education fully with the resources available.
- All children in the Halls of Residence are assigned a key worker, who is one of the qualified and experienced house parents. They have regular meetings with their key worker and there is regular contact with parents to discuss any issues emerging from these meetings.
- Ultimately, if a parent is unconvinced that a move to a mainland school is the best option for their child or family, it is always open to explore alternative options, such as home education.

Child Safety

Key issues raised:

- There are issues with bullying in the Halls of Residence.
- Halls of Residence staff will not be familiar enough with children, especially those with complex needs, and might not notice when they are unwell.
- The ferry crossing required to travel to Lerwick would be unsafe, especially without an escort, and children might suffer travel sickness.

Response

- The Halls of Residence has a no tolerance policy towards bullying, supported by an Anti-Bullying Committee, and in the most recent edition of an annual anti-bullying survey 100% of respondents reported bullying was not a problem there.
- The Halls of Residence has a qualified and experienced team of house parents who have successfully supported children from other remote isles to live in the Halls of Residence from Secondary 1.
- Children's Services proposes provision of an escort for the ferry crossing over open water.

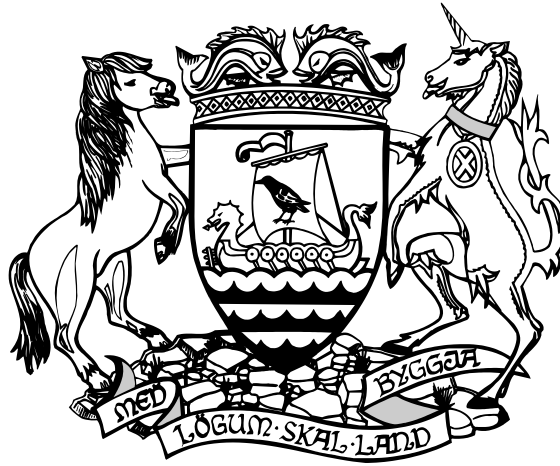
Democratic (or Decision Making Process)

Key issues raised:

- The proposal is unlawful, infringing on e.g. The Scottish Government's Commission for Rural Education, and the United Nations Human Rights Convention.
- The school and community has been negatively affected by continued closure attempts – the school should have been left alone after the previous proposal was not passed.
- There has not been enough consideration for the long term future of education in Shetland or for viable alternatives to closure, such as use of ICT.

Response:

- Legal objections raised against the proposal were not valid. The whole scheme applying to school closures is codified in legislation and the procedure used throughout consultation has followed statutory guidelines.
- Children's Services has been working on the Blueprint for Education since 2007 and during that time there have been Shetland-wide community consultations to discuss the overall shape of future education provision in Shetland. Changing secondary education provision in Skerries School remains a priority as Children's Services considers that current arrangements do not serve the children of Skerries best educationally.
- Remote teaching in a setting as small as Skerries School offers very little scope for efficiencies, as current staffing levels would have to be maintained; there may also be issues with internet provision when the Scottish Government's Pathfinder project ends in 2014.



Shetland Islands Council Children's Services Consultation Report

The following schools are affected by this Consultation Report:

- **Skerries School**
- **Anderson High School**

This Consultation Report has been issued by Shetland Islands Council Children's Services in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

NB: Services Committee was replaced in part by Education and Families Committee in May 2011.

Schools Service, Education and Social Care was replaced by Schools/Quality Improvement, Children's Services in May 2011.

These terms are used somewhat interchangeably throughout this document.

Contents

1	Summary of Process for this Consultation Report
2	Introduction
3	Background
4	Consultation Process
5	Representations
6	Summary of the Written Responses
7	Summary of Oral Representations made at the statutory public meeting held at Skerries Public Hall on Friday 07 June 2013
8	Summary of Oral Representations made at the additional public meeting held at the Anderson High School on Tuesday 28 May 2013
9	Children's Services Responses to those written and oral representations
10	Summary of Consultation with Children
11	Summary of Consultation with Staff
12	Education Scotland's Report
13	Review of the Proposal to discontinue education at Skerries School Secondary Department
14	Integrated Impact Assessment
15	Socio-Economic Study
16	Health Impact Assessment
17	Strategic Environmental Assessment
18	Omissions or Inaccuracies
19	Compliance with Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010
20	Representations to the Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15 (4) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010
21	Conclusion
22	Recommendation

Appendices

- A Proposal Paper
- B Education Scotland's Report on the Proposal
- C Transcript of the public meeting held at Anderson High School on Tuesday 28 May 2013
- D Transcript of the public meeting held at Skerries School on Friday 07 June 2013
- E Health Impact Assessment
- F Integrated Impact Assessment
- G Socio-Economic Study
- H Strategic Environmental Assessment
- I Skerries Exam Results

1. Summary of Process for this Consultation Report

1.1 Notice of Consultation

A Notice of Consultation was provided to the consultees listed under Distribution List 1.10. This Notice provided full details of how to access the Proposal Paper. The Proposal Paper was available in affected schools, Hayfield House and Shetland Library. It was also published on the Council's website, www.shetland.gov.uk

1.2 Advertisement in Local Media

A Notice of Consultation was published in local media on Friday 10 May 2013.

1.3 Length of Consultation Period

The Consultation Period for the Proposal ran from Tuesday 14 May 2013 until Friday 28 June 2013. This period allowed for the statutory minimum of 30 school days.

1.4 Public meetings

Public meetings were held on:

Tuesday 28 May 2013
at Anderson High School
Lerwick
7.00pm to 9.00pm

and

Friday 07 June 2013
at Skerries Hall
Skerries
12.00pm to 2.00pm

A note was taken at the meetings of questions and views. These notes are published on the Shetland Islands Council website, and a copy will be made available on request.

1.5 Involvement of Education Scotland (previously Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education)

Shetland Islands Council provided Education Scotland with a copy of the Proposal Paper on the date of publication. Education Scotland also received a copy of all relevant written representations received by Shetland Islands Council from any person during the Consultation Period. Education Scotland has also received a summary of all oral representations made to Shetland Islands Council at the public meetings that were held. Education Scotland has prepared a report on the educational aspects of the Proposal. As a result of the summer holiday period, Children's Services agreed with Education Scotland that their three-week period would commence on Monday 26 August 2013. In preparation of their report, Education Scotland have entered the affected schools and made such reasonable

enquiries of such people there as they considered appropriate and have made such reasonable enquiries of such other people as they consider appropriate.

1.6 Preparation of Consultation Report

Shetland Islands Council has reviewed the Proposal having regard to Education Scotland's report, the written representations that it has received and the oral representations made to it by any person at the public meetings. Children's Services has, on behalf of Shetland Islands Council, prepared this Consultation Report.

This Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed formats. It is available on the Shetland Islands Council website, from Hayfield House, Shetland Library, as well as the affected schools, free of charge from **19 September 2013**.

Anyone who made written responses during the Consultation Period has been informed about the publication of this Report. This Report includes a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meetings, Shetland Islands Council's response to Education Scotland's Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of Education Scotland's Report and all other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled.

This Consultation Report also contains a statement explaining how it complied with the requirement to review the Proposal in light of Education Scotland's Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received.

This Consultation Report was published on 19 September 2013 and is available for further consideration for a period of three weeks. The intention is that interested parties should have time to see and digest the contents of this Consultation Report and also have time if they so wish to voice concerns and approach and lobby the Councillors who will shortly be deciding on the Proposal.

1.7 Decision

This Consultation Report, together with any other relevant documentation, will be considered by Shetland Islands Council Education and Families Committee on 10 October 2013. This decision is then subject to Shetland Islands Council approval on 10 October 2013.

1.8 Scottish Ministers Call-in

As set out in The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Shetland Islands Council is required to notify the Scottish Ministers of its decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Paper and Consultation Report.

The Scottish Ministers have a six week period from the date of that final decision on 10 October 2013 to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Within the first three weeks of that six-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the six-week call-in process has been notified to Shetland Islands Council, they will not proceed to implement the Proposal approved at Stage 1.7 above. If the Scottish

Ministers call-in the Proposal they may refuse to consent to the Proposal or grant their consent to the Proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally. Until the outcome of the call-in has been notified to Shetland Islands Council, they are unable to proceed to implement the Proposal.

1.9 **Note on Corrections**

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in the Proposal Paper either by Shetland Islands Council or any person, Shetland Islands Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or, there has been an inaccuracy. It will then take appropriate action which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the Proposal Paper or the revision of the timescale for the Consultation Period if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland would have been advised. The Consultation Report highlights the actions taken and why.

1.10 **Distribution**

A copy of this Consultation Report is available on the Shetland Islands Council website: www.shetland.gov.uk.

Copies are also available free of charge from Hayfield House, affected schools and the Shetland Library.

The list of Consultees are:

- the Parent Councils of the affected schools;
- the parents of the pupils of the affected schools;
- the parents of any children expected by Children's Services to attend any of the affected schools within two years of the date of the publication of the Proposal Paper;
- the pupils at the affected school in so far as Children's Services considers them to be of a suitable age and maturity;
- the staff (teaching and other) at any affected school;
- any trade union which is a representative of the staff;
- the Community Councils of the affected areas;
- the Community Planning Partnership;
- any other users of the affected schools that Schools Service considers relevant;
- the constituency Member of the Scottish Parliament;
- the constituency Member of Parliament;
- the list Members of the Scottish Parliament.

Copies of this Consultation Report are also available on request from:

Children's Services
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
Shetland
ZE1 0QD

Or by email: blueprintforeducation@shetland.gov.uk

This Consultation Report is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to the above address.

Shetland Islands Council Children's Services Consultation Report

2. Introduction

- 2.1 This is a Consultation Report prepared in compliance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the following Proposal:

The Proposal

That subject to the outcome of this proposal exercise and statutory consultation process as set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010:

1. education provision at Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
2. the pupils of Skerries School Secondary Department continue their education at the Anderson High School from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter and
3. the catchment area for the Anderson High School be altered to include the current catchment area for Skerries School Secondary Department.

- 2.2 The purpose of the Consultation Report is to:

- provide a record of the total number of written responses made during the Statutory Consultation Period;
- provide a summary of the written responses;
- provide a summary of oral representations made at the public meetings held on 28 May and 07 June 2013;
- provide a statement of Children's Services response to those written and oral representations;
- provide the full text of Education Scotland's Report and a statement of Children's Service's response to this Report;
- state how Shetland Islands Council reviewed the above Proposal following the representations received during the Statutory Consultation Period and the Report from Education Scotland;
- provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper and state how Shetland Islands Council acted upon it;
- State how Shetland Islands Council has complied with Section 12 of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above Proposal;
- Provide an explanation of how representations can be made to the Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15(4) of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

3. Background

- 3.1 In June 2007, Children's Services was given a remit by Shetland Islands Council, through the Corporate Plan, "to develop a modern blueprint for the shape of the service across Shetland for 10 years time". Children's Services has been working on developing a Blueprint for Education since being given this remit. Some of the key milestones are set out below.
- 3.2 In November 2007, the Services Committee of Shetland Islands Council considered a report "Developing a Blueprint for the Education Service". Following consideration of the report, Councillors agreed that:
- the key drivers should be to provide the best quality educational opportunities and best quality learning environment for all;
 - in so doing, the opportunity for savings to bring budgets to a sustainable level should be considered; and
 - the final Blueprint was presented to Services Committee with an action plan to look at all schools, internal management, the necessary investment required, quality of education, new ways of delivering education and the potential for each school within a realistic timescale.
- 3.3 Membership of a Member/Officer Working Group was agreed in early 2008 in order to help take forward the development of a Blueprint for Education.
- 3.4 As a result of the issues emerging from the Working Group, Shetland Islands Council gave approval for Children's Services to undertake a community-wide informal consultation consisting of a widely distributed questionnaire and comprehensive series of meetings in order to inform the direction of the Blueprint for Education. Following analysis of the consultation outcomes Councillors approved the following Principles for Education in March 2009:
- to ensure strategic planning, effective leadership and quality assurance to bring about improvement;
 - to ensure effective partnership working;
 - to ensure that all families have access to quality early education and childcare provision;
 - to ensure all schools deliver Curriculum for Excellence, specifically, a broad curriculum, a breadth of experience, social interaction and learning experiences;
 - to ensure all learners experience smooth transitions between stages of learning, supported by the highest possible professional standards;
 - to ensure all learners in Shetland have equal opportunity throughout their educational experience to enable them to achieve their full potential;
 - to ensure that these principles are delivered within Shetland Islands Council's budget.

These principles are Shetland Islands Council policy and underpin the development of the Blueprint for Education.

- 3.5 Children's Services undertook work on various aspects of education service delivery. Informed by this work it was agreed by Shetland Islands Council that Children's Services undertake a consultation process to gather information on options for change across all schools in Shetland. This informal consultation took

place between January 2010 and the end of March 2010. Further information can be found at www.shetland.gov.uk.

- 3.6 Following an evaluation of the informal consultation, nine proposals were presented to Services Committee on 17 June 2010.
- 3.7 Services Committee and subsequently Shetland Islands Council agreed to take forward the Blueprint for Education Primary Proposal 2 and Secondary Proposal 2.
- 3.8 Secondary Proposal 2 included:

“Formal consultation would begin for the closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and Skerries School Secondary Department.”
- 3.9 Primary Proposal 2 included:

“Formal consultation would begin for the closure of Uyeasound Primary School, Burravoe Primary School, North Roe Primary School, Olnafirth Primary School and Sandness Primary School.”
- 3.10 Between August 2010 and May 2011, Children’s Services undertook Statutory Consultation on the Proposals in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. As a result of these consultations and subsequent approval from Shetland Islands Council and the Scottish Minister, education provision was discontinued at Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and at Uyeasound Primary School.
- 3.11 The planned Statutory Consultation on education provision at Olnafirth Primary School due to take place in August 2011 was deferred following the implementation of a national year-long Moratorium on Rural School Closures in June 2011. A Commission on the Delivery of Rural School Education was also established and has now reported. The key recommendations made by the Commission have been considered during the development of this report.
- 3.12 In February 2012 Councillors asked Children’s Services to “undertake a refresh of the Blueprint for Education using existing information, taking account of the outcome of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural School Education deliberations and guidance, when available, considering the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, the Senior Phase, the National Qualifications range and links with further education/other learning settings and based on the underpinning principles of the Blueprint for Education project of equality, quality and value for money, and taking account all new learning methods and Information Communication Technology links and facilities”.
- 3.13 Children’s Services reported back to Councillors on 20 September 2012 and they approved the following:
 - Shetland Islands Council’s Statement for Education 2012 - 2017

“We will ensure the best quality education for all our pupils to enable them to become successful learners, who are confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. We will achieve this through the highest standard of teaching and learning delivered in modern, well equipped school buildings which are financially sustainable”.

- Shetland Islands Council's Commitments for Education 2012 - 2017. These commitments were made taking account of the Principles of Education agreed by Councillors in March 2009. See 3.4.
 - Primary Education: we will provide primary education in all our remote isles with pre-school provision as and when required. We will organise primary education in establishments which are viable both educationally and financially.
 - Secondary Education: we will organise education to provide the breadth of curriculum to best develop a young person's skills and particular interests in viable establishments/schools.
 - Childcare: it will be developed in line with the Childcare Strategy. We will work with voluntary and private sector providers to secure more integrated and flexible services that meet local need.
 - Youth Strategy: we will develop a Youth Strategy for Shetland which encapsulates activities children and young people are involved in across Shetland.
 - Catchment Areas: we will consult on any change to a school's catchment area as part of any future statutory consultation process.
 - Travel Times: we will organise transport to ensure that, as far as possible, pupils will not travel for longer than the current maximum single journey time in 2011/12.
 - Transport: we will ensure School Transport is given high priority.
 - Community involvement in Schools: we will work to ensure that: children's community identity is protected, opportunities are put in place for them to be participating in any new school community they are part of and the Youth Strategy is developed to enhance young people's participation in the communities they are part of.
 - Use of Buildings: we will ensure that the potential use of school buildings will be part of the statutory consultation process.
- Shetland Islands Council's Plan for Delivering Education 2012-2017

Phase 1

Closure Proposal	Receiving School	Statutory Consultation	Proposed Transfer Date
Aith Junior High School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2013	August 2014
Skerries School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2013	August 2014
Olnafirth Primary School	Brae High School Primary Department	2013	August 2014
*Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2013	August 2016

Phase 2

Closure Proposal	Receiving School	Statutory Consultation	Proposed Transfer Date
Burravoe Primary School	Mid Yell Junior High School Primary Department	2014	August 2015
North Roe Primary School	Ollaberry Primary School	2014	August 2015
Urafirth Primary School	Ollaberry Primary School	2014	August 2015
Urafirth Primary School Nursery Department	Ollaberry Primary School	2014	August 2015

Phase 3

Closure Proposal	Receiving School	Statutory Consultation	Proposed Transfer Date
Whalsay School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2015	August 2016
Sandness Primary School	Happyhansel Primary School	2015	August 2016

*The statutory consultation regarding the proposed closure of Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department was moved from Phase 3 to Phase 1 following a request from Sandwick Parent Council. This was approved by Education and Families Committee on 23 January 2013 and Shetland Islands Council on 18 February 2013.

- 3.14 As stated above, consultation was undertaken between August 2010 and May 2011 on closing Skerries School Secondary Department. The outcome of that Proposal was that a majority of Councillors voted for Skerries School Secondary Department to stay open at that time. The reason for re-visiting this proposal so soon is principally due to concerns about educational sustainability, including concerns about future teacher recruitment for a three-pupil secondary school department. The proposal to revisit Skerries School Secondary Department has been widely publicised locally, along with the other Blueprint Proposals, since mid - 2012 and a Parent Council (not Skerries) has asked for and been granted an altered timeline within the overall Blueprint scheduling.
- 3.15 On 28 August 2013, Shetland Islands Council approved an updated Medium Term Financial Plan for 2013 - 2018. The Plan identified savings of £3.268 million for Children's Services from the implementation of the Blueprint for Education.
- 3.16 As a result of the development of the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence, Children's Services proposed amendments to the secondary proposals agreed in the Blueprint for Education 2012 - 2017, to Education and Families Committee, and a special meeting of Shetland Islands Council on 11 September 2013. These proposed changes would mean retaining Secondary 1 to Secondary 3 education in Baltasound Junior High School, Mid Yell Junior High School and Whalsay School.

Shetland Islands Council deferred decision on these proposals for one committee cycle to allow time to consider a number of alternative options which could re-shape all of secondary education in Shetland. Education and Families Committee will meet to consider these options on 13 November 2013.

4. Consultation Process

4.1 The requirements for consulting on proposed school closures are set out in The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

- The Proposal Paper was issued on 14 May 2013. This is attached as Appendix A. A copy of this document or information on the Proposal was provided free of charge to the consultees listed within the document. Copies were also available at the affected schools, Hayfield House and at Shetland Library.
- A Public Notice ran in the Shetland Times newspaper on Friday 10 May 2013. A Notice of Consultation appeared on www.shetnews.co.uk and remained for the duration of the consultation. Details of the consultation also ran on local radio.
- Two Public Meetings were held on 28 May 2013 at the Anderson High School and 07 June 2013 in Skerries Public Hall.
- The Quality Improvement Officer for both schools consulted with staff and pupils separately.
- The Consultation Period ended on Friday 28 June 2013.
- A copy of the Proposal Paper was sent to Education Scotland. They visited Skerries School and the Anderson High School and spoke to relevant consultees. They also received a copy of all written representations. They then prepared a Report on the educational aspects of the Proposal. This is attached as Appendix B.

4.2 This Consultation Report is Children's Services response to the issues raised during the Consultation Period including a response to identified inaccuracies in the Proposal Paper.

4.3 This Consultation Report will be published three weeks before a final decision is taken by Shetland Islands Council.

5. Representations

5.1 Twenty-eight people attended the Public Meeting held in Skerries Public Hall on 07 June 2013. The minute of this public meeting is attached as Appendix D. Four people attended the additional Public Meeting held at the Anderson High School on 28 May 2013. The minute of this public meeting is attached as Appendix C.

- 5.2 The total number of written responses received during the Consultation Period was thirty-eight.

Shetland Resident	16
Parent / Carer	10
Community Councils	3
School Staff	3
Young Person	3
Parent Councils	2
Former Pupil	1
Total	38

The detail of how each respondent described their interest is detailed in the table above.

6. Summary of the Written Responses

Number of written consultation responses received	38	%
Number of responses that:		
agreed with the Proposal	9	24%
disagreed with the Proposal	23	60%
did not indicate an opinion or request further information	6	16%

Of the 9 who agreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:	
Quality of Education	6
Financial Issues	5
Peer Interaction	2

Of the 23 who disagreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:	
Community Concerns	17
Quality of Education	11
Financial Issues	11
Relationships / Friends	9
Child Safety	8
Democratic (or Decision Making Process)	8
Travelling Distance/Time	6
Access to Community Services	4
Out of School Activities	3

7. Summary of Oral Representations made at the Statutory Public Meeting held at Skerries Public Hall on Friday 07 June 2013

- The community has been through this situation before – not much attention was paid to what was said then and there is no faith that any attention will be paid now.
- People do not feel the position has changed since previous consultations. Will comments from those previous consultations be included this time?
- People grow weary with having to repeat themselves for new consultations.
- Why is it believed children would have a better education in the Anderson High School than they do in the Skerries School Secondary Department?
- A pupil from Skerries recently attended the Anderson High School and the subjects that pupil chose to do at Skerries were not available at the Anderson High School.
- The staffing situation in Skerries is very unfortunate and the school is currently using relief, stand-in teachers.
- Has the newly appointed head teacher been informed about the secondary closures?
- There has always been interest in advertised posts at the Skerries School.
- Children do better in small classes with one-to-one teaching.
- Skerries School has internet and good resources to support staff to deliver courses they do not specialise in.
- Pupil achieved a grade one in Standard Grade Art and Design without a dedicated specialist teacher, only help from instructors, ex-pupils and occasional visits from a teacher from Scalloway Junior High School.
- If someone is willing to help supervise, children can do very well (without specialist teaching).
- Children forced to leave their parents at eleven years old would find it very traumatic and this would affect their learning.
- In the past people who did not want to go to the secondary school in Lerwick received no qualifications; if junior high schools continue to close this might be the case again in future.

- The proposal paper does not mention the attainment of Skerries School pupils in the past.
- Respondents have been told attainment cannot be published as it would identify individual pupils, but pupils have given permission for it to be published.
- People in Skerries would like the whole of Shetland to know the results which come out of Skerries School.
- It is not true that children in Skerries do not have access to sports clubs and after school groups – for example, the children in one family have personal swimming lessons at the weekends and play football for the TSB team.
- Some councillors questioned the decision to revisit closure of the Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department; these statements apply to Skerries School as well as to Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department.
- How will children, some as young as eleven years, be kept safe during ferry transit to the Anderson High School?
- The proposal paper says only information from 2009 was available regarding ferry journey sailing disruptions and cancellations, but people in Skerries have managed to get information for 2012.
- Scottish Government Review on Research in School Travel states that long journeys can result in stress and problem behaviour in children.
- With the current travel arrangements, children would spend 44.5 hours per week in Skerries (not including time spent sleeping) and 123.5 hours spent in Lerwick.
- The ferry service cannot be guaranteed; children could miss an untold amount of educational time due to transport issues.
- The return journey could be 150 minutes.
- What is the council policy on school travel time?
- Will a new socio-economic study be completed for the new consultation?
- Will the company used for the previous socio-economic study be used again for the new consultation?
- The Janet Courtney Hostel currently costs around £900,000 per year, which works out at around £18,750 per pupil between the 48 pupils; should the additional cost for the three Skerries pupils not be the

£900,000 divided amongst 51 pupils?

- The only clear saving will be the secondary teacher's salary.
- The school's budget has already been cut by over 83%.
- What happened to the staff at Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department after that school closed?
- Are there a lot of staff in the Anderson High School who were in Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department before closure?
- Who will be responsible for children during transit to Lerwick?
- The safety concerns on a ferry are not the same as those on a bus; it is easier for a bus driver to monitor children than for ferry crews to do the same.
- Ferry crewmen have previously said they would not be responsible for school children and it was not part of their job.
- The Scottish Government does not support school closures for financial reasons alone; why are financial reasons included in the proposal?
- Curricular education is only a small part of bringing up a child; children spending most of the week away from their parents is going to reduce their ability to teach them other skills and knowledge required in adulthood.
- Threats of school closure have been the reason for population decline.
- Scottish Government guidelines state that once a school closure proposal has undergone full consideration and it is agreed not to close a school the local authority should make no further closure proposal for at least five years, unless there is a significant relevant change.
- Given the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education has not yet been passed as legislation, does that mean everything in that document is invalid?
- The whole consultation is based on that Act, so if it is not passed will Children's Services have to do a whole new consultation?
- The current consultation is engineered to close Skerries School Secondary Department before new recommendations become law.
- If the Council had not squandered its resources rural schools would not be under threat.
- The school and ferry are the only services the Council pays for in

Skerries, and it is a shame that both are being cut.

- A small group of teachers is likely to know each child and get a real understanding of that child's learning needs in a small class setting.
- Many children would become "lost in the crowd" at a larger school.
- In Skerries School each pupil has individual teaching and learning experiences and lessons are tailor-made for the pupil.
- One of the listed advantages of closure is that staff will have access to better continued professional development and peer interaction; staff on Skerries can benefit from continued development through various virtual networks and internet resources, and should also have the same support from the Shetland Islands Council, its network of schools and in-service sessions.
- There are entire periods of the ferry crossing to Lerwick where ferry crew members are nowhere near the saloon; unless the intention is to lock passengers in the saloon, assurances need to be made that children would remain in a safe place throughout the journey.
- A pupil who was bullied and struggled with learning at Anderson came to Skerries School and managed top grades in some exams.
- Parents have expressed concerns about children being in the hostel – in the past a parent has had to move to Lerwick at the taxpayer's expense to be closer to a child.
- One child is currently in a juvenile detention centre after falling in with a crowd whilst staying in the hostel.
- There are still no solutions to problems that were raised in previous consultations – such as the safety of pupils during journey to and from Lerwick.
- The Anderson High School lacks the homely feeling and the one to one teaching Skerries pupils are used to.
- The hostel has homely features and the people there try to make it more welcoming, but pupils still miss their home environment.
- The value of new houses has effectively been halved due to threat of Council cuts affecting Skerries.
- With proposed ferry cuts, if children have a long weekend off school they will still only be able to return to Skerries on Friday and have to leave again on Monday morning.
- The socio-economic report was only completed in November 2012 – it is

a waste of money to do another so soon after.

- The area will have five under threes by September 2013, which means the school roll will be increasing.
- Skerries child has a doctor based in Whalsay and a paediatrician; will Council make provisions for appointments?
- Hostel staff will not know children individually and will not notice the signs which may indicate a health issue.
- Does the hostel cater for special dietary needs?
- Children in Skerries are used to a diet containing fresh seafood, including lobster, crabs and scallops; will any of these be available at the hostel?
- Skerries children learn important life skills outside of school including skills required for the fisheries industry, such as net mending.
- Skerries children can earn and manage their own money through after school activities such as fishing and managing creels; how will they earn this extra money when they go to the Anderson?
- Local skills in Skerries include crafting, building, plumbing and fishing; the education children receive in these life skills is second to none in Skerries.
- Video conferencing was used for learning ten years ago; why can't technology be used today in place of on-site specialist teachers?
- Skerries children have always been praised for the ability to communicate and interact with all age groups.
- Skerries School has an ideal situation for the transition between primary and secondary and pupils don't even know it's happening.
- Skerries primary and secondary school is what Curriculum for Excellence is all about.
- Curriculum for Excellence is about producing successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Skerries children are all of these.
- (In response to assertion that transition is better for S1-S6 than for S5-S6) It is not ideal in the slightest to have a child going from Skerries to the Anderson at eleven years old rather than sixteen.
- Alternatives to closure, such as better use of ICT, should be explored before closure.

- The Scottish Government would want to see that an alternative had been attempted before closure was commenced.
- Three new houses have been built in Skerries recently and by the end of summer (2013) there will be four families in the area.
- Under no circumstances will the Skerries community give up their fight for the Skerries School Secondary Department.
- People from other areas of Shetland argue that closure would allow a better education in their areas, but why should that come at the expense of the Skerries children?
- Lerwick children would have a better education if they came to Skerries.
- Skerries parents are being bullied into sending their children to a boarding school.
- Skerries School Secondary Department closing will not mean more money being added to the budgets of other schools, it will simply be money saved from the overall budget.
- Director of Children's Services made comment in press that each pupil in Shetland would be an amount of pounds per year educationally worse off because Skerries was kept open after last consultation – this was a totally irresponsible comment.
- Skerries should not be targeted in the media about costs.
- A figure of £170,000 was previously quoted as the cost of the secondary department and national media then singled out an individual quoting this as the cost for his personal education.
- Children's Services will not publish the exam results of pupils in case they identify them, but are happy to publish financial information that identifies the cost of that pupil's education.
- Previous figures about the cost of Skerries School and potential savings with closure of the secondary department were successfully challenged and subsequently withdrawn.
- Shetland Islands Council needs to look at other ways of saving money.
- The law entitles and insists that children receive education and part of a family life as a basic human right.
- At the moment Skerries is an economically viable community which puts millions into Shetland's economy.
- It is unclear whether the proposals are for money saving or to increase

the educational opportunities of Skerries children.

- People in Skerries are unconvinced that Curriculum for Excellence will change children's lives in any meaningful way.

8. Summary of Oral Representations made at the additional public meeting held at the Anderson High School on Tuesday 28 May 2013

- Why does the Consultation Report not go to Executive Committee?
- Are the statistics quoted in the Proposal Paper available in the Economic Development brochure published annually by Shetland Islands Council?
- What is the total cost of the consultation process? Where does the budget for consultation come from?
- What was the total cost of the previous consultation on Skerries School?
- Can you ensure that the annual cost information is sent out to all Elected Members?
- What is the current primary roll at Skerries School?
- Are there any families on the island with children not yet of school age?
- Is the Skerries population declining generally?
- The ferry crossing is unpredictable.
- What will be the arrangement for travel during adverse weather conditions? Will there be any provision for flying children in and out of the island when ferry travel is unavailable?
- The additional Halls of Residence costs are quoted as approximately £1,500, but the current cost per pupil is around £18,000 per year; if these are the costs until the new hostel is in place the three pupils will impact on the savings being proposed.
- Is there any reason the Skerries pupils would get home more often than Fair Isle pupils living in the Halls of Residence?
- Would putting Skerries pupils home less often – every third weekend – provide a larger saving?
- Fair Isle School volunteered to have their secondary department withdrawn many years ago – the circumstances are different as Skerries

families are having their school taken away from them.

- What support will there be for pupils who are unable to adapt to life in the Halls of Residence and at the Anderson High School?
- If Junior High Schools are closed this will be the first time in Shetland's recent history that there will have been no alternative secondary education provision for students who do struggle at the Anderson High School.
- There is an assumption that all pupils forced to study at the Anderson High School will thrive, but there is concern that some will not.
- Are there any Skerries residents currently attending the Anderson High School?
- When travelling by plane there is a load restriction of four passengers for landing at Skerries.
- There is no media presence at this meeting; will there be any report to the media? Will there be a communications statement?
- If the proposal were not approved by Council or by the Scottish Government, what would be the impact of closure not going ahead?
- Would Children's Services go into the reserves (until required savings of the Medium Term Financial Plan were found)?
- Has the Medium Term Financial Plan not been broken already by projects such as Mareel?

9. Children's Services Responses to those written and oral representations

- 9.1 This section details the relevant points raised in the written submissions and at the public meetings.

Issue: Transport

Points Made

- Children shouldn't be forced to take a one and a half hour unsupervised ferry journey.
- Being able to walk to school is better for children's learning.
- Long journeys to school have a negative effect on children's educational performance.
- Long journeys to school are an act of cruelty.
- The ferry can be disrupted by adverse weather conditions.
- What care is available for children when it is not possible for them to travel home at the weekend?
- There are issues with the ferry timetable.
- Ferry service is under review and no clear timetable has been set.
- Current ferry timetable means parents cannot visit their children for a single day.
- When pupils are off school for in-service days on Monday and Tuesday, Skerries pupils would still have to return to the hostel on Monday as there are no ferries on Tuesday or Wednesday.
- If pupils don't get out on Sunday or Monday ferry, they would be unable to attend school until Thursday.
- How will children be supervised during ferry crossing?
- Children travelling on rough seas without an escort would be unacceptable.
- Travelling on rough seas in open water is different from sheltered water.
- Children might suffer travel sickness, especially on the ferry, and would have to deal with this themselves.
- What if an accident occurs on the ferry?
- Taxis are not always there when ferry arrives.
- Families don't know from day to day who the ferry crew will be.
- No safety audit of transport arrangements has been completed despite recommendation in 2010 consultation that this be done.
- When regular ferry is out of service for maintenance, alternative vessel

takes longer and will reduce weekend time home to forty-one hours.

- Bus would leave pupils at Vidlin before heading to drop others off at Whalsay terminal – what happens if the ferry is cancelled? What if it can't get into Skerries and has to turn back?

Response

Research about long journeys to school is about daily travel time, not a journey which is only undertaken twice a week. The staff at the Halls of Residence are very experienced at planning for adverse weather. If there is a bad forecast on a Friday the management of the Halls of Residence will arrange transport to get the children home on one of the two earlier ferries that day. If in the unlikely event of children getting to Vidlin and the ferry being cancelled at very short notice, the Halls of Residence management have agreed with Children's Services that they will provide senior staff contact numbers including mobile numbers so that they can be contacted as quickly as is possible. These numbers will also be available to parents. The children will be transported in a taxi not a bus, so won't be left outside waiting at the Vidlin terminal.

The Council's policy on daily travel for secondary children is that children should not travel for longer than sixty-five minutes in a single journey. There is no Council policy on travel time for twice weekly journeys.

Staff at the Halls of Residence are on duty to support children from the remote isles during every weekend they are not able to go home, so staff would be there if Skerries children got stuck out. If Skerries children were stuck out on a weekend when other remote isles children were due to go home, it is likely all of them would be stuck. If this wasn't the case, staff will be called in to provide care.

The new Skerries ferry timetable was introduced on 26 August 2013. With it, parents would be able to visit their children for a day on a Wednesday.

School in-service days are on a Monday and a Tuesday. Children from Skerries could leave on the 8.30 am ferry from Skerries on a Wednesday morning which goes to Lerwick and they would be in school for approximately 11.00 am, only missing two periods of school. In the event of bad weather prohibiting the ferry travelling on a Sunday or a Monday, then children would not have to wait until Thursday to get to school. They would get out on a Wednesday morning.

Due to the remote location of Skerries, there is a risk of disruption to travel arrangements due to severe weather conditions. However, for the period between July 2012 and July 2013, only two scheduled sailings were cancelled, one being a Sunday, the other a Saturday, both due to weather.

In the event that the children could not travel home from Lerwick, the children would remain at the Halls of Residence over the weekend, or until travel was possible. Where the children were unable to leave Skerries, Children's Services and the Anderson High School will put in place measures to support learning and teaching for any short period of time away from school. Should travel from Skerries on a Sunday evening not be possible, there is the option of travelling directly to Lerwick on the Monday morning, although it is appreciated that this is

not ideal and would need to be agreed with parents.

No changes are planned to the transport provision for those children travelling home to Whalsay. However, due to very recent changes to the Skerries timetable the service bus, which arrives in Vidlin at 5.50pm, can no longer make the ferry connection as the ferry now departs from Vidlin at 5.30pm. Therefore, children travelling home to Skerries will be transported from the Halls of Residence to Vidlin in a taxi. There is a commitment on the part of the Ferries staff to review the timetable after six months, if not sooner, should there be a desire for the ferry sailing to better align with the public bus service.

Children's Services, Anderson High School and the Halls of Residence have well established practices for arranging support and alternative travel arrangements for all children currently travelling from remote islands. Strong communication links between transport, the school and the Halls of Residence currently exist. Further, Short Message Service, Twitter and email notification systems currently exist and all partners in this proposed arrangement would have access to these systems. Early notification of possible cancellations is given to the manager of the Halls of Residences so that contingency plans can be put in place where at all possible. This may be to send children home early or, alternatively, to keep them in the Halls of Residence.

Given that the Skerries Service operates in non categorised waters, i.e. open sea, and given parents' very real fears about this, it is proposed to employ an escort to accompany the children on the ferry. The escort would be responsible for the successful handover of the children to and from the taxi provider. It is hoped that this may be viewed as a job opportunity for someone from Skerries.

Children's Services is proposing that the following transport arrangements are put in place should the proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department be agreed.

Children would travel out from Skerries on Sunday afternoon, taking the 4.00pm ferry from Skerries to Vidlin. Children would be collected by taxi and taken to the Halls of Residence, arriving at approximately 6.00pm. An alternative crossing would be the ferry departing from Skerries at 7.00pm on Sunday evening. (The preferred sailing would be dependent upon whether or not the escort was resident in Skerries; the 7.00pm sailing would not allow that person to return to Skerries that evening).

For the return journey, pupils would leave Lerwick on Friday from the Halls of Residence by taxi, arriving at Vidlin to meet the ferry which departs for Skerries at 5.30pm.

In the event of a ferry cancellation occurring en route, or being discovered upon arrival at Vidlin, pupils will be taken back to the Halls of Residence and placed in the care of staff there.

The full costs of the transport arrangements will be met by the Children's Services and are included in the revised savings presented in the Financial Response section of this consultation report.

Issue: Quality of Education

Points Made

- Skerries School has had good inspection results.
- Educationally there is nothing wrong with Skerries School.
- It isn't true to list increased curriculum choice as benefit of closure – one ex-pupil had suitable choice at Skerries School but was then forced to take English in Secondary 5 at Anderson High School when they did not need it.
- Academic opportunities might be better in Lerwick but would be at high cost of pupil's home life, time with their families and their emotional wellbeing.
- Homesickness will negatively affect children's ability to learn.
- Ex-pupils at Skerries School have achieved good exam results.
- Attainment at Skerries School is higher than at the Anderson High School.
- One ex-pupil who struggled at Anderson returned to Skerries to take Higher exams and has since attained a university degree.
- Ex-pupils have had bad subject choice at the Anderson High School.
- Local skills – such as mending nets and creels, and fishing – would be lost.
- Staff at Skerries School work hard to give children best education.
- Skerries School Secondary Department offers a wider range of courses than stated in the Proposal Paper.
- There are plans to reduce course choice at the Anderson High School so current comparisons are misleading.
- Flexible arrangements have been made at Skerries School Secondary Department to increase course choice:
 - Use of Video Conferencing;
 - Support from community and volunteers;
 - Help from other schools.
- Skerries School is an example of Curriculum for Excellence in practice.

Response

In the proposal paper at 5.19 (Appendix A, Page 22) Children's Services acknowledges that Skerries School offers a quality education to its children. We also know that all staff in Skerries School work very hard to provide the best education

they can for pupils within the restrictions placed on the service by small numbers and geography.

However, Children's Services does not believe that for the best delivery of secondary education, that educating such tiny numbers of children together offers the best possible educational opportunity. With respect to the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence one of the key drivers is to change the delivery model of education from one that is content driven to one that is based on the development of skills. It is difficult to develop a variety of opportunities for group work, active learning and enquiry if children have no other child in their year group, or even if they have only one other child in their year group.

The purpose of the Broad General Education in Curriculum for Excellence from Secondary 1 to Secondary 3 is to develop the knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities of the four capacities of successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. It should provide breadth and depth of education to develop flexible and adaptable young people with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive now and in the future. It must aim to support young people in achieving and attaining the best they possibly can.

With transfer at the end of Secondary 4, as currently it may be possible that a child will be commencing the Senior Phase on their own, and studying for qualifications on their own, when the courses they are undertaking have emphasis on working with others in groups in their learning. The Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence is to be a flexible three year programme of learning for each young person. It should offer them the option of experiencing a range of opportunities including: access to college courses, work experience, wider achievement activities and volunteering; and the opportunity to study for qualifications over varied amounts of times. With the limits of the geographical location of Skerries and the staffing which can be allocated to the school, it is not possible to fully deliver a child's entitlement to the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence.

Building the Curriculum 3, published by the Scottish Government in 2008, gives the framework for all schools to follow in developing Curriculum for Excellence. Amongst the attributes and capacities which must be developed in each child are:

- Learn independently and as part of a group;
- Link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations;
- Relate to others and manage themselves;
- Communicate in different ways and in different settings;
- Work in partnership and in teams;
- Take the initiative and lead;
- Apply critical thinking in new contexts.

It is these aspects of the requirements of the curriculum which, within a secondary department where there are only one or two other children, and perhaps no one else at all in the year group which Children's Services are concerned about delivering on. We are concerned that the constraints of the setting and the limitations of the staffing restrict the ability of the service which can be offered to ensure children receive fully all of their entitlements under Curriculum for Excellence.

There have been a different variety of subject choices available to Skerries School secondary pupils in the past, as the previous head teacher tried to deliver subjects the

children requested. What a local authority should be doing is offering all its secondary aged children an appropriate range of courses delivered by suitably qualified staff. This is still the position despite the recommendations of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education to look at more creative and innovative ways of delivering the curriculum, which will take time to implement, and involve staff getting professional recognition in additional subjects from the General Teaching Council for Scotland. It would seem feasible in the future that staff may become qualified in one or two additional subjects, but not in the range required to deliver the broad education required by Curriculum for Excellence.

There is more flexibility now with the implementation of the Senior Phase with which subjects children have to undertake in Secondary 5, and there are now examples where students have not had to take English as it they do not require it for their career aspirations.

The example of a child coming out of Skerries School Secondary Department and not being able to continue with their range of subjects, was because the range of subjects being studied was weighted too much in a particular area of the curriculum, something which should be avoided, and which we would not consider best practice.

At this time there are no plans to reduce course choice at the Anderson High School, but if Children's Services is unable to make its required savings through the Blueprint proposals, of which the closure of Skerries School Secondary Department is one part, then there is a danger that the reduction of subjects will be required to make more efficient use of staffing.

Issue: Child Safety

Points Made

- Ex-pupils experienced bullying in the hostel.
- Current pupil who previously attended another school experienced bullying there.
- If pupils live at home there would at least be respite from any bullying at school.
- House parents might not notice if a pupil is unwell.
- There is a lack of supervision in the hostel.
- Children have to adjust to cope with new environment of boarding (in the hostel).
- Ex-pupils have had bad hostel experiences.

Response

The Janet Courtney Halls of Residence (the hostel) has a team of very experienced house parents and a very experienced management team who have all successfully

supported children from other remote isles to live in the Halls of Residence from Secondary 1. House parents have to be qualified to HNC level and also need to have an SVQ Level 3 qualification.

Pupils from Fair Isle and Foula live in the Halls of Residence from Secondary 1 and are unable to get home each weekend, so there is specific support provided for these children throughout the weekends as well. In contrast, Skerries pupils would be able to go home each weekend. Each child in the Halls of Residence has a keyworker, and if children are resident from Secondary 1, they have regular one-to-one meetings with their keyworker from the start to find out how they are getting on, and to provide any additional help which may be needed. From the outset a particular member of staff would get to know each child individually. Regular feedback from these discussions is given to parents.

The Halls of Residence has a range of Committees, all fully involving the children to take their feedback and listen to their view and ensure issues are addressed. Examples include a Residents' Support Group and an Anti-Bullying Committee.

The Halls of Residence conducts annual anti-bullying surveys with children during the second term of the school year. In the most recent one carried out towards the end of 2012, 100% of respondents said that bullying was not a problem in the Halls of Residence and that there had not been a time when they had felt bullied in the Halls of Residence.

There is also an annual survey of parents, which is given out at parents' night. The manager of the Halls of Residence, on average, gets an 80% return rate. In the 2012/13 survey all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the care provided was good, that staff were approachable and helpful, that staff knew their child as an individual, that if their son or daughter was having difficulties that they would be helped, and that their child felt safe and well-looked after.

All of this type of information is fed into the regular Care Inspectorate reports carried out on the Halls of Residence. The Care Inspectorate reports published on the Halls of Residence are consistently of a very high standard and have been so for many years now.

The Halls of Residence meet individual pupils' needs including any special dietary needs.

Issue: Out of School Activities

Points Made

- Some of the extra-curricular activities available in Lerwick will be affected by cuts to Youth Services.
- There are extra-curricular activities in Skerries, just not those organised by Shetland Islands Council.
- Children will lose job satisfaction and income from things like catching lobsters to sell.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skerries people do attend events on Shetland's mainland. • Skerries pupils go to the mainland with their families for swimming.
<p>Response</p> <p>Extra-curricular activities are not run by Youth Services. Youth clubs are run by Youth Services. They will still be available to secondary aged children. The Anderson High School offers a range of clubs, many of which run at lunchtimes. Some children staying in the Halls of Residence have part-time jobs. There is also a wide range of activities available in the Halls of Residence, including regular themed nights, which the children have input into planning. If any child needs support to access an activity in Lerwick, Halls of Residence staff will help them out.</p>
<p>Issue: Peer Interaction</p> <p>Points Made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skerries children learn to interact with people from all age groups, and have interaction with peers their own age with visitors to Skerries and trips outwith the islands. • Social media facilitates peer contact between children based in Skerries and those outwith the islands. • Children's Services show arrogance that they know what is best for Skerries children in saying that a larger peer group is more important than spending their adolescent years with the security of their family.
<p>Response</p> <p>Children's Services entirely accepts that pupils in Skerries interact with all age groups and with peers who visit Skerries and can access the wider world via social media. All other children also have these opportunities. What Children's Services feels it must put forward for all children, though, are the benefits of regular access to others of their own or similar ages. This is so they can play team games, learn in groups, and learn from each other, so that good social skills, in addition to those imparted to them by their family, can be nurtured and developed.</p>
<p>Issue: Community Concerns</p> <p>Points Made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should be able to stay in their communities until they are much older. • Closure will kill off the Skerries community and Shetland Islands Council will follow with other communities.

- More should be done to keep children in rural areas.
- The culture, heritage and unique identity of the island will be lost if the children can't grow up there.
- Shetland's heritage and culture is passed down to children being educated in their own community.
- Transporting children to the mainland means the youth and enterprising spirit of the island will be lost.
- Skerries will become an island of old people if the closure goes ahead.
- Old residents will suffer as they will have reduced contact with younger people.
- Families will leave the island.
- The Community Council is working with other groups to develop tourism.
- Increased tourism would increase opportunities; Skerries people are trying to keep island viable but Council is working against them.
- Skerries is a popular stop for tourists travelling by private yacht.
- The threat of closure has adversely affected one couple's plans to start a family on Skerries.
- We see the children out and about now. There will be nothing to see if they are not on the island.
- Younger couples will be discouraged from starting families on Skerries with the knowledge that children will be forcibly removed at 11 years old.
- Young people help out in the community and spend time with people of all ages.
- Care package service for elderly residents would stop, as the people responsible for this service would leave the island if the secondary department was closed.
- Will Shetland Islands Council provide care in their care homes for elderly residents of the Skerries?
- Fire crew would lose staff in the event of closure.

Response

The principal requirement of the local education authority is to provide adequate and efficient education and it must ensure that this education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child

or young person to their fullest potential.

The Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, published in April 2013, makes the following statement about this aspect of rural schools:

“It is important to recognise that a school’s primary function is to provide pupils with the best possible educational experience.” (Page 30)

Children’s Services does not believe it is delivering these obligations to their fullest extent in Skerries School Secondary Department as the curricular opportunities are limited, access to suitably qualified staff is limited and the children have very limited access to any class mates to learn in groups with, learn from, or play team games with. Opportunities to develop social skills and a suitable wide range of communication skills are inherently limited. Children’s Services is obliged to offer the best possible educational opportunities to its children.

We are committed to offering pre-school education and primary education on all our remote isles and this commitment was agreed at Shetland Islands Council on 20 September 2012.

Some respondents felt that the only support Skerries received from the Council was the ferry, the school and rubbish bags. All of these will remain should the secondary department close. The school will still have a primary department and a nursery department.

In addition the Council has made other important investments in the Skerries community. In 2009, Skerries Co-operative received grants from Economic Development totalling £10,000 to refurbish their diesel pump and to replace the fuel tank. In 2009, Bound Skerries received a grant from Shetland Development Trust of around £31,000 for chalets to accommodate workers, but only claimed £11,000 of this. The Council has also spent over £300,000 on the dredging of the south mouth of the harbour. The Council expects £70,000 of this will be recouped from the European Regional Development Fund which approved support for the project.

The new Community Plan for Shetland 2013-2020 has just been agreed in August 2013. This describes how the public sector will work together with the private and third sector to improve the communities in Shetland. There are commitments in the Plan which are important to securing a sustainable future for all areas of Shetland, and these will be important to Skerries whether or not the Skerries School Secondary Department closes. Outcome 1 is: *“Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities”*; and Outcome 11 is: *“We have a strong voluntary sector and social enterprises, encouraging community enterprise and co-operatives, with increased capacity to deliver services based on needs and aspirations of local communities.”* Within these there are clear objectives: to increase sustainable economic growth; increase the number of business start-ups; secure population growth; increase the role of community enterprise; improve the sustainability of community groups; and involve communities in deciding what is needed to improve their area.

Should the Skerries School Secondary Department close, Shetland Partnership’s relevant Community Planning partners will, on the basis of the newly agreed

Community Plan, provide appropriate support for Skerries ensuring they receive all the community and economic support which is available to them. There would also be a responsibility on the Skerries community to identify their problems and work together with agencies to find solutions.

There are also concerns from respondents about lack of care provision being available to the elderly, if younger adults leave with their children. With respect to Community Care, Shetland Islands Council has a statutory obligation to provide support for anyone with an assessed need. This support is then provided for in the most appropriate way depending on the circumstances of the person. The numbers requiring support in Skerries over the past few years have been very, very small, with no personal care provided in the past two years. The independent socio-economic study carried out for this Proposal (Appendix G) also indicates there has been no real change to the percentage of residents in Skerries of retirement age over the past twelve years. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that the level of need for community care will not change significantly. Shetland Islands Council may in the future need to place elderly residents from Skerries in residential care. This has happened in the past, and as already stated this would have been because of assessed needs. Keeping the secondary department of the school open in case of this requirement in the future is a tenuous argument. Entitlement to care when it occurs will have to be addressed, and past examples indicate that having carers on Skerries does not necessarily stop residents having to move into residential care.

Issue: Housing

Points Made

- Will Shetland Islands Council be able to house all the people who wish to leave Skerries in the event of closure?
- Will the Council build homes for the four pupils that will have to move to the Anderson High School?

Response

The situation with regard to education in Skerries should the secondary department close, does not create statutory homelessness for the families so there is no statutory obligation to provide houses, either temporary or permanent. The Council is responsible for accommodating the children at the place of education – hence Halls of Residence provision.

In relation to families who may wish to move then that is a personal choice and there would be a range of housing options available to them, which may include applying for social rented housing through the Council or through Hjaltland Housing Association. There is then an assessment of housing needs and an allocation process to go through. They would not be prevented from applying for social housing, and although each application is assessed individually, it is unlikely that they would have sufficient priority to compete for allocation in the current areas of high demand. If families are seriously considering moving then they need to consider their current circumstances and make their own decisions on

their personal choices for where they live, but that does not make it the responsibility of the Council to have enough homes to accommodate them.

Issue: Shared Management

Points Made

- Shetland should be looking at shared management across a number of school sites.

Response

Children's Services has also in the past considered shared management for small schools when it has proven difficult to recruit to a teaching Head Teacher post. This has been possible when an opportunity arises through a vacancy and through agreement with Parent Councils. However the shared management model Children's Services operates does not save money, as, by local agreement, each school in a shared management arrangement is allocated a principal teacher, and the principal teacher is allocated management time which in turn must be covered.

Issue: Transition Issues

Points Made

- Ex-pupil who joined Anderson High School at Secondary 5 would not have been emotionally ready to transfer at Secondary 1.
- Transfer to Anderson High School is acceptable, just not at Secondary 1.
- Parents of one pupil gave the child the option to attend Anderson High School but the child wanted to remain at Skerries School.
- In the event of closure, some pupils will be facing three transitions in the first three years of their secondary education.

Response

As there are only three children who will require to transfer to the Anderson High School should Skerries School Secondary Department close, individual transition arrangements will be made for each child. This will be based around their needs and in full consultation with them and their families.

Children's Services appreciates that people in Skerries do not wish their children to leave home at the age of eleven or twelve. We already have this situation for children from our other remote isles. Children from Fair Isle and Foula, in addition, do not get home each weekend. Careful arrangements are made by Halls of Residence staff to support each child, and close contact is maintained with each family. Skerries children will also have the advantage of getting home each weekend.

Issue: Relationships/Friends and Family Life

Points Made

- It is wrong to forcibly move children away from their families.
- Equality and Human Rights Convention gives people the right to a family life.
- Children would only able to spend one full day a week with their family.
- Children should have the right to be nurtured by their family, not ripped away from them.
- Children think better (mentally and physically) if they are brought up by their parents.
- Children who have close family support their development better in every way.
- Family life can't be compressed into one a day a week.
- Children are very impressionable at eleven years old and could develop behavioural problems if removed from their families.
- Parents would have only twenty-five hours and thirty minutes of waking time with their children each week.
- Children aged 11-15 should wherever possible live at home.
- The psychological effects of leaving home at 11 cannot be ignored.
- Eleven years old is too young to leave home - parents' rights and responsibilities are removed.
- Others have had a great childhood in Skerries.
- Children will have nobody to confide in while living in the hostel.
- My child would struggle to make friends.

Response

As previously stated with respect to the Halls of Residence, children there are all allocated a key worker who is one of the house parents. They have regular meetings with children allocated to them, and these meetings are particularly regular for children coming to live in the Halls of Residence from Secondary 1. All parents are contacted following these meetings and any issues of concern are shared. With the school holidays and children from Skerries being able to travel home each weekend, they will still be able to spend one third of each year on Skerries with their families.

The manager of the Halls of Residence, who has worked there for thirty-three years, accepts that moving into the Halls of Residence is a big change for children of all ages, but he does not see that it develops any additional patterns of difficult behaviour in children or that it negatively affects their development in any way. This is because staff are alert to all the children, get to know each one personally and support them appropriately. This is evident in the most recent Care Inspectorate Report on the Halls of Residence which was carried out in November 2012.

We accept that in an ideal world all children would be able to stay at home and travel to a school on a daily basis. Unfortunately the geography of Shetland with remote and sparsely populated islands makes this challenging for the local authority to deliver secondary education fully with the resources it has available. To do this in the best way it can and in the fairest way it can to give children as equal an opportunity it can to a full secondary curriculum, some children have to stay away from home.

With respect to the claims made by respondents about their human rights, all Scottish legislation is subject to a human rights examination before presentation to Parliament this will have been done for the legislation relating to school closures.

However a local authority's actions in respect of the legislation also fall under scrutiny. Usually a challenge would be to the reasonableness of the Council's decision.

Article 8 of the Convention reads:

(1) Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

(2) There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

The format of the Article is to state the basic principle in Paragraph 1 and proceed to allow for exceptions in Paragraph 2. Its intention appears to be to protect the private life of the individual, primarily against arbitrary interference by public authorities. Article 1 provides the individual with protection in four distinct areas: private life, family life, home and correspondence.

Respondents seem to feel that by closing Skerries School Secondary Department and the children necessarily being educated on the mainland that that will have an effect on Private and Family life.

Article 8 is not an absolute prohibition, but a qualified right; Article 8 (2) specifies exceptions to the right guaranteed in the first paragraph. These limitations may only be justified if they are "in accordance with the law" and "necessary in a democratic society".

In Accordance with the law means three things:

- there must be a specific legal rule or regime which authorises the

interference;

- the citizen must have adequate access to the law in question;
- the law must be formulated with sufficient precision to enable the citizen to foresee the circumstances in which the law would or might be applied.

There should not be any controversy in relation to this. The whole scheme applying to school closures is codified in legislation, which, like all other UK legislation, is publicly available through both The Stationery Office and www.legislation.gov.uk. The fact that the procedure we are using is statutory, and not purely arbitrary, has been made known to relevant consultees in the course of the statutory consultation process.

Even if a measure has been taken in pursuit of one of the legitimate interests listed in the second paragraph of Articles 8, the measure must be tested for necessity. The Court has held that the notion of necessity implies two things:

- that an interference corresponds to a pressing social need;
- that it is proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued.

With respect to the proposed closure of Skerries School Secondary Department the pressing social need case is an important part of the argument for closure.

Then in order for a measure to be considered “necessary in a democratic society”, it must respond to a “pressing social need”. This involves the test of proportionality. Ultimately, the courts decide whether the requirement is met by applying a proportionality test to determine whether the interference is justified in the light of particular circumstances of the case.

This is a balancing exercise. At one extreme would be the argument that, to avoid interference with family life, the Council must provide the child with an education in such a way that he is not removed from home; this would result in the Council having to provide a school to every island/area where a daily return to the family home could not be guaranteed. The Council is offering to provide secondary education at Anderson High School instead of at Skerries School.

This measure would not be considered disproportionate if it is restricted in its application and effect, and is duly attended by safeguards in national law so that the individual is not subject to arbitrary treatment. The objective basis for requiring the children to attend school away from home is primarily for:

- economic/financial reasons. Providing secondary education in Skerries is disproportionately costly for such a small number of pupils. The effect on family life would be minimised by the opportunity to travel home every weekend, with no limits on contact. There is no restriction on additional self-funded visits or contact between parent/child.
- social reasons. Children’s Services wishes to permit interaction with other pupils of similar age and ability.

These reasons would provide objective and reasonable justification for the proposal.

Ultimately, if a parent is unconvinced that a move to a mainland school is the best option for the child and the family, it is always open to explore other options, such as home education.

Issue: School Capacity

Points Made

- No secondary schools should be closed until the new Anderson High School is built, as the current school does not have capacity to receive pupils.
- Children's Services should have waited until new Anderson High School was completed before considering the future of the Junior High School system.
- Ensure Anderson High School is big enough for the pupils affected by all proposed closures.
- The capacity of Skerries School Secondary Department cannot be eighteen pupils, as the main secondary classroom is also used as space for head teacher's desk and for access to science and music room.
- The primary department roll will increase if the secondary department remains open.

Response

Within the terms of the Medium Term Financial Plan, an update of which was agreed by Shetland Islands Council on 28 August 2013, Children's Services has to save a further £3.268 million by the end of the financial year 2016/17. The new Anderson High School is due to be open in August 2016. Children's Services have saved £4.2 million since the start of the financial year 2012/13, without making changes to the school estate. It is now in a position where there is very little left to save without affecting the delivery of school education across all of Shetland, unless it is able to make changes to the school estate. There is not enough time to wait for the new Anderson High School to be built for these savings to be made.

The new Anderson High School project is not related to the Blueprint for Education. The aspiration to build a new Anderson High School goes back over twenty years. The project was successful in obtaining financial support from the Scottish Government. This support is based on like for like capacity. The capacity of the existing Anderson High School is calculated as 1180 pupils.

The capacity figure in the Proposal Paper for Skerries School Secondary Department was calculated in the same way as the capacity is worked out for all our secondary departments/school. We adopted the Scottish Futures Trust measurement which is 11m² per child. The available teaching space was divided by this number.

The part-time clerical assistant is not based in the secondary classroom any longer.

Issue: Employment**Points Made**

- Island background meant ex-pupil had access to career in the Merchant Navy.
- Local businesses such as the shops will suffer with fewer people permanently based on Skerries.
- The local salmon farming company, which puts millions of pounds into the local economy, will not be able to run as staff will leave the islands.
- Most of the people trained in Medivac will leave Skerries if the secondary department closes.
- Salmon farm with turnover of £2.2m would be under threat if secondary department closes.

Response

The Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 requires local authorities, in putting forward a closure proposal, to describe the educational benefits of the proposal, and if the school is a rural school, it must give special regard to the three additional factors. One of these additional factors is the potential impact the proposal may have on the community. Children's Services undertook statutory consultation in 2010 with a proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department. Councillors at that time decided to leave the secondary department open for socio-economic reasons. Children's Services are consulting again on the same proposal only three years later because it firmly believes that the secondary education which can be offered on Skerries is not good enough for the obligations it has to provide adequate and efficient education and to ensure that this education is directed to the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child to their fullest potential. We believe this can be provided by the secondary aged children from Skerries attending the Anderson High School through the week and travelling home each weekend.

Skerries School will still be open and it will still provide nursery and primary education and it will still provide jobs for the local community. Children's Services cannot be diverted from the pursuit of the best education it can provide to its children by fear of what may happen to a particular community, if there are clear educational benefits to be gained.

There are ways by which perceived community impacts can be mitigated against, and should the Skerries School Secondary Department close, then these must be worked on in partnership with the people of Skerries. Potential impacts and possible mitigating impacts are described in the Socio-Economic study prepared for this Consultation Report (Appendix G). The same company was used to prepare the socio-economic study as was used for the previous secondary closure consultation on Skerries in 2010.

The new Community Plan for Shetland 2013-2020 has also just been agreed in August 2013. This describes how the public sector will work together with the

private and third sector to improve the communities in Shetland. There are commitments in the Plan which are important to securing a sustainable future for all areas of Shetland, and these will be important to Skerries whether or not the Skerries School Secondary Department closes. Outcome 1 is: *“Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities”*; and Outcome 11 is: *“We have a strong voluntary sector and social enterprises, encouraging community enterprise and co-operatives, with increased capacity to deliver services based on needs and aspirations of local communities.”* Within these there are clear objectives: to increase sustainable economic growth; increase the number of business start ups; secure population growth; increase the role of community enterprise; improve the sustainability of community groups; and involve communities in deciding what is needed to improve their area. There would also be a responsibility on the Skerries community to identify their problems and work together with agencies to find solutions.

When Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department closed, Children’s Services supported staff through the Council’s policies to a number of different futures. Some accepted voluntary redundancy. Some retired. Many were transferred to other posts in Shetland Islands Council. We were able to place a large proportion of the staff into other posts as we have only been filling posts on a temporary basis for some time now.

Issue: Timescale of the Programme

Points Made

- The closure consultation should not go ahead until legislation is changed following the *Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education*.
- The closure consultation should not go ahead until the new financial template is in place.
- The closure consultation should not go ahead until Deputation paper has been properly considered.

Response

The proposal to go to statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Skerries School Secondary Department was agreed on 20 September 2012 by Shetland Islands Council. This is therefore Council Policy and Children’s Services must follow it.

The paper put forward by the Deputation of Parent Councils is not Council Policy. The financial template which will be recommended following the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education’s report is based on Shetland’s one used in its previous consultations in 2011, so we are not concerned about the level of financial information we are including or how it is presented.

The aspects of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 which may be altered by legislative changes following the report of the Commission for Rural Education have just been consulted upon. Responses had to be returned by the 2 September

2013. Any changes to legislation will not be implemented until 2014. Shetland Islands Council has a policy on the Blueprint which it has to follow which was agreed on 20 September 2012. This policy has not changed.

The new Head Teacher of Skerries School was informed of the proposal to close the secondary department once she was appointed.

Responses from previous statutory consultations cannot be taken into account. Concerned respondents must make new submissions outlining their views on a proposal.

Issue: Democratic/Decision making Process

Points Made

- Repeated attempts to close the school have negatively affected the children of Skerries.
- Families who have built houses since the last consultation would not have done so had they known the school's future would fall under uncertainty again.
- Proposal infringes on parents' right to have their views on their children's education respected.
- Proposal infringes on Human Rights Article 8 – Right to family life, right to life with no interference from a public authority.
- Remote teaching has not been explored as a viable alternative to closure.
- After three closure attempts in six years, people feel their voices are not acknowledged.
- Not enough consideration has been given to the long-term future of education provision in Shetland.
 - Why do councillors not see that the time to look at the long-term future of education is now? Look at innovative ways of delivery, rather than chopping bits out of existing structure.
 - There has never been proper consultation on the Blueprint for Education as a whole.
- The proposal is acting against most of the 38 Recommendations in the Commission for Rural Education.
- The Skerries community would flourish if the threat of closure was not there any longer.
- Children, not Shetland Islands Council, should decide when they are ready to "face the world".
- The Fair Isle community chose to give up its secondary school, rather than

having it taken away from them.

- There is more to Shetland than just Lerwick.
- Skerries School exam results should be included in the revised proposal.
- The Local Authority has a moral obligation to support the people of Skerries.
- There is disappointment that the school has not been given a five year “breathing space” between consultations, as is now recommended by Scottish Government.
- The closure proposal lacks vision and courage.

Response

Children’s Services believes that this proposal offers children in Skerries considerable educational benefit. With the current arrangements for secondary education in Skerries we are not in a position to offer children the best possible delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. Building the Curriculum 3, published by the Scottish Government in 2008, gives the framework for all schools to follow in developing Curriculum for Excellence. Amongst the attributes and capacities which must be developed in each child are to:

- learn independently and as part of a group;
- link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations;
- relate to others and manage themselves;
- communicate in different ways and in different settings;
- work in partnership and in teams;
- take the initiative and lead;
- apply critical thinking in new contexts.

It is these aspects of the requirements of the curriculum which, within a secondary department where there are only one or two other children, and perhaps no one else at all in the year group which Children’s Services are concerned about delivering. We are concerned that the constraints of the setting and the limitations of the staffing restrict the ability of the service which can be offered to ensure children receive fully all of their entitlements under Curriculum for Excellence.

Skerries School Secondary Department has made use of remote teaching in the past to deliver one or two courses. As indicated in the Proposal Paper at 5.26 (Page 25) Skerries School network and internet provision is provided through a Pathfinder link. The Pathfinder project ceases in 2014, and this may affect the bandwidth connection available to Skerries. This in turn then, may have a negative effect on the school’s ability to utilise information and communications technology to its fullest extent in learning and teaching. Remote teaching in a setting as small as Skerries School also offers very little scope for efficiencies as presently there is 1.2 full time equivalent teachers in the secondary department, and there would still require to be one teacher with the children.

Children's Services have been working on the Blueprint for Education since 2007. During that time there have been three Shetland-wide community consultations to discuss the overall shape of future education provision in Shetland. In June 2010, a number of strategic proposals were put forward to Shetland Islands Council for the delivery of school education. These proposals were revised in September 2012, following an instruction from the Council to 'refresh the Blueprint'. Again the revised proposals consider school education provision across the islands. Changing secondary education provision in Skerries School remains a priority as Children's Services considers that current arrangements do not serve the children of Skerries best educationally.

Exam results for Skerries School have not been published in the past due to the small numbers with often only one child in a year group. However at the request of some respondents, they have been published on the Council's website as Response 38. We have also included the information as Appendix I.

Due to the very small numbers it is of course impossible to make comparisons with any other school, local overall statistics and national statistics.

Children's Services has a statutory obligation to ensure that the education it provides is adequate and efficient education, and directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential. It does not believe that educating very small numbers of secondary aged children together where they may be the only child in a year group and where there may be only one or two other children in the whole secondary department, is the best way of ensuring children reach their fullest potential. It considers that this is best served where children can access a wider range of courses, be taught by a variety of different staff, learn with a number of others their own age, and be able to interact with them to learn in groups and be part of a team.

The Consultation Report on the proposed closure of Skerries School Secondary Department will go to Education and Families for a recommendation to Shetland Islands Council. It does not fall within the remit of Executive Committee.

With respect to issues about human rights, all Scottish legislation is subject to a human rights examination before presentation to Parliament this will have been done for the legislation relating to school closures.

However a local authority's actions in respect of the legislation also fall under scrutiny. Usually a challenge would be to the reasonableness of the Council's decision, perhaps by judicial review, but the challenge here is based on the European Convention on Human Rights.

Article 8 of the Convention reads:

(1) Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

(2) There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime,

for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

The format of the Article is to state the basic principle in Paragraph 1 and proceed to allow for exceptions in Paragraph 2. Its intention appears to be to protect the private life of the individual, primarily against arbitrary interference by public authorities. Article 1 provides the individual with protection in four distinct areas: private life, family life, home and correspondence.

Respondents seem to feel that by closing Skerries School Secondary Department and the children necessarily being educated on the mainland that that will have an effect on Private and Family life.

Article 8 is not an absolute prohibition, but a qualified right; Article 8 (2) specifies exceptions to the right guaranteed in the first paragraph. These limitations may only be justified if they are “in accordance with the law” and “necessary in a democratic society”.

In Accordance with the law means three things:

- there must be a specific legal rule or regime which authorises the interference;
- the citizen must have adequate access to the law in question;
- the law must be formulated with sufficient precision to enable the citizen to foresee the circumstances in which the law would or might be applied.

There should not be any controversy in relation to this. The whole scheme applying to school closures is codified in legislation, which, like all other UK legislation, is publicly available through both The Stationery Office and www.legislation.gov.uk . The fact that the procedure we are using is statutory, and not purely arbitrary, has been made known to relevant consultees in the course of the statutory consultation process.

Even if a measure has been taken in pursuit of one of the legitimate interests listed in the second paragraph of Articles 8, the measure must be tested for necessity. The Court has held that the notion of necessity implies two things:

- that an interference corresponds to a pressing social need;
- that it is proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued.

With respect to the proposed closure of Skerries School Secondary Department the pressing social need case is an important part of the argument for closure.

Then in order for a measure to be considered “necessary in a democratic society”, it must respond to a “pressing social need”. This involves the test of proportionality. Ultimately, the courts decide whether the requirement is met by applying a proportionality test to determine whether the interference is justified in

the light of particular circumstances of the case.

This is a balancing exercise. At one extreme would be the argument that, to avoid interference with family life, the Council must provide the child with an education in such a way that he is not removed from home; this would result in the Council having to provide a school to every island/area where a daily return to the family home could not be guaranteed. The Council is offering to provide secondary education at Anderson High School instead of at Skerries School.

This measure would not be considered disproportionate if it is restricted in its application and effect, and is duly attended by safeguards in national law so that the individual is not subject to arbitrary treatment. The objective basis for requiring the children to attend school away from home is primarily for:

- economic/financial reasons. Providing secondary education in Skerries is disproportionately costly for such a small number of pupils. The effect on family life would be minimised by the opportunity to travel home every weekend, with no limits on contact. There is no restriction on additional self-funded visits or contact between parent/child.
- social reasons. Children's Services wishes to permit interaction with other pupils of similar age and ability.

These reasons would provide objective and reasonable justification for the proposal.

Ultimately, if a parent is unconvinced that a move to a mainland school is the best option for the child and the family, it is always open to explore other options, such as home education.

Issue: Learning Environment/Resources

Points Made

- Technology must now make virtual education easier to allow education on a remote isle.
- Remote teaching using ICT is a viable alternative to closure.
- Shetland should lead the way in the development of ICT, not dismiss it.
- Skerries could be a model of how to deliver innovative education using ICT.
- Parents and community volunteers currently support the education of their children and are ready and willing to do more.
- School does have sporting facilities through use of public hall, multi-court and play park.
- Education will look very different in ten years time with technological advancements – there is no strategic view of this.

Response

Skerries School Secondary Department has made use of remote teaching in the past to deliver one or two courses. As indicated in the Proposal Paper at 5.26 (Page 25) Skerries School network and internet provision is provided through a Pathfinder link. The Pathfinder project ceases in 2014, and this may affect the bandwidth connection available to Skerries. This in turn then, may have a negative effect on the school's ability to utilise information and communications technology to its fullest extent in learning and teaching. Remote teaching in a setting as small as Skerries School also offers very little scope for efficiencies as presently there is 1.2 full-time equivalent teachers in the secondary department, and there would still require to be one teacher with the children.

We do recognise that school education may look different in ten years' time, but this will not have the effect of changing radically the staffing of Skerries School as the secondary department currently only has 1.2 full-time equivalent staff. One full-time equivalent is the head teacher, and even in ten years' time the school will still require to be managed.

The point made in the proposal paper about sporting facilities is that Skerries School does not have dedicated facilities, and has to hire the public hall for this, including paying a charge for the storage of equipment, which is not best use of public money.

Issue: Financial**Points Made**

- Millions spent on consultations could have supported Skerries School for years.
- Skerries, through its fishing fleet, does make a contribution to the Shetland economy.
- Care for the elderly is provided by younger residents – Shetland Islands Council will have to import care workers if they close the school, or people will have to be placed in hospitals or care homes elsewhere; the costs of care will exceed the savings of school closure.
- The Council can't save much money as they can't sell the school.
- There has never been a proper breakdown of figures for savings.
- The Council is wasting money on services in and around Lerwick but rural areas are expected to go without
- The school and ferry are the only services Skerries receives from the Shetland Islands Council, and both are being cut.
- The closure will not save the proposed amount.
- The socio-economic study in 2010 identified the impact of closure on the

Skerries community.

- Previous socio-economic study said closing the school was of no economic benefit to the Council; the points made remain applicable today.
- Families would have added expense:
 - Cost of parents travelling to visit children during the week;
 - The need to buy “trendy” clothes for children to avoid bullying in the hostel.
- Consultations are entirely financially driven, in breach of the legislation surrounding consultation on school closures.
- The real cost of Skerries School is £55,000; the additional cost of Halls of Residence is £54,000, transport is £6,000 plus cost of supervision on the ferry.
- The Council also has to consider £2.2 million loss from closure of the salmon farm and £50,000 in additional costs for care for the elderly.
- Shetland and Shetland Islands Council will suffer ten times the loss that the closure will save.
- No building costs will be saved – the secondary department of the building cannot be put to any other use.
- Scottish Government helping to fund new hostel is in effect funding school closures.

Response

There is a full breakdown of savings in the Proposal Paper. The template used to present the savings is the one which will be used by all local authorities following on from the recommendations of the Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education.

Since the start of the financial year 2008/09 the total spent on all of the work related to the Blueprint for Education including the consultations is £525,000.

On 28 August 2013 the Council agreed an update to its Medium Term Financial Plan. This reaffirms the indicative target budget for Children’s Services for the financial year 2014/15 as £833,000 less than its budget for 2013/14. Almost all of this money is to come from the Blueprint for Education proposals. By saving almost £5.0 million from its budgets for schools since 2009/10, Children’s Services believes it cannot save any more without affecting the quality of education offered to all Shetland’s children including those attending Skerries School Secondary Department. In addition to the closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and Uyeasound Primary School, the following reductions in service have been made in the schools area of Children’s Services:

- reducing expenditure on In-Service training;
- reducing numbers of central staff;
- reducing money available for supply;
- reducing money available for Continuing Professional Development;
- ending knitting instruction;
- charging for instrumental instruction;
- increasing charges e.g. for school meals;
- reducing operating costs in schools, particularly resources available for learning materials and equipment ;
- moving to national staffing levels in primary;
- reducing numbers of teaching staff in secondary;
- reducing numbers of Catering and Cleaning staff;
- reducing teacher input in nursery;
- securing more efficient use of resources for children and young people with Additional Support Needs;
- reducing music instruction;
- reducing Parent Council Clerks' honorariums;
- reducing school building maintenance.

The closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and the closure of Uyeasound Primary School saved more money than was predicted in the consultation reports on the proposals.

The Council has provided more to Skerries than a school and a ferry. In 2009, Skerries Co-operative received grants from Economic Development totalling £10,000 to refurbish their diesel pump and to replace the fuel tank. In 2009, Bound Skerries received a grant from Shetland Development Trust of around £31,000 for chalets to accommodate workers, but only claimed £11,000 of this. The Council has also spent over £300,000 on the dredging of the south mouth of the harbour. The Council expects £70,000 of this will be recouped from the European Regional Development Fund which approved support for the project.

Children's Services have been given target budgets to meet. These have been agreed by councillors in the Medium Term Financial Plan, updated on 28 August 2013. The target budget set for Children's Services requires a further £3.268 million reduction in spending by the end of the financial year 2016/17. Almost all of this has to come from the schools area of service. We have already saved £4.2 million in the schools area of the budget since the start of the financial year 2012/13, and have done this without making further changes to the school estate. We cannot do much more without considering again how many schools we have and where they are located, otherwise we will begin to erode the quality of education we are able to provide to the children of Shetland, including the Skerries children.

The new Halls of Residence which will go alongside the new Anderson High School is estimated to cost £9.1 million. Shetland Islands Council's contribution to the overall cost of the whole Anderson High School project is now agreed at £14 million. The £9.1 million required for the Halls of Residence will come from Shetland Islands Council's £14 million and so will not be funded by the Scottish Government.

The small number of children that would transfer to the Anderson High School from Skerries, and therefore require accommodation at the Halls of Residence would result in no additional costs in terms of staffing, property or equipment at the Halls of Residence.

The only additional expenditure which has been factored into the financial implications of the proposal is the provision of breakfast, tea and supper within the Halls of Residence (lunch has not been included as pupils have the option of having lunch in the Halls of Residence, in the Anderson High School, or making their own arrangements e.g. 'going to the street' which would either be paid for by the child or met through free school meals). This is estimated to amount to £548 per pupil per annum, therefore, for the three children who would transfer from Skerries this would total £1,644.

Failure to reduce the net ongoing running costs of the Council carries a significant risk of the Council's financial policies not being adhered to and a further draw from Reserves being required. A decision not to recommend or approve this proposal would lead to an additional cost pressure of £6,361 per month for Children's Services, for which an alternative saving would be required to be found to ensure that an additional draw on reserves of £6,361 per month would not be made.

Mareel was a one-off item of expenditure. The main issue is the level of overspending on day-to-day services, which run down the reserves year-in year-out.

A full financial breakdown of the estimated savings achievable by closing Skerries School Secondary Department were included as Appendix 4 (page 41) in the Proposal Paper. The Proposal Paper itself is Appendix A to this consultation report. The estimated savings in the Proposal Paper were £76,336.

The agreement to provide an escort on the ferry for the children is the only change to the savings outlined in the Proposal Paper. The estimated cost of the escort is £2,863. Therefore the revised total estimated savings from the proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department is now £73,473.

Issue: Health

Points Made

- Alcohol, drugs, sex and bullying are more prevalent on the mainland than in communities on the outer islands.
- Children learn bad habits such as drinking and smoking while boarding.

Response

As stated in previous sections of this consultation report the Halls of Residence provides children with a very high level of quality care, as evidenced by Care Inspectorate reports. Specific arrangements are made to support each individual

child, and this includes regular one-to-one meetings with an allocated key worker who is one of the experienced house parents.

The Halls of Residence has an anti-bullying committee and carries out an annual survey of residents about bullying in the Halls of Residence. The most recent available survey was carried out towards the end of 2012. One hundred percent of respondents said that bullying was not a problem in the Halls of Residence and that there had not been a time when they had felt bullied in the Halls of Residence.

A full Health Impact Assessment has been carried out on the proposal and can be found at Appendix E.

10. Summary of Consultation with Children

10.1

Consultation with Skerries School Pupils

Points Made

- It is not fair because if the Secondary shuts in 2013 it would affect the build of my house. In two years the house will be empty.
- It's not fair because we live on an island that is two hours away from the mainland. It would break up a family and I get seasick.
- I think it's not right they are picking on this isle. They do not care as long as they make savings and it doesn't affect them. I know what the Anderson High School is like and you don't get the one-to-one teaching I think helps a lot in my education.
- Disgraceful.
- No I don't think it is a good idea. If the Secondary shuts then there will be only two people in the school.
- I think that the school would be a lot sadder without the secondary children. We will be going home by ourselves. It would be sad not seeing them around.
- I have been at Anderson and I know that one-to-one teaching is better. I speak from an experience of both. It was an experience that I would rather leave in the past.
- It will take me away from my family and destroy my education.

Response

The Council have a policy that they will always provide primary and nursery education on Shetland's remote islands, no matter how few children there are. This does mean very small schools. The Council cannot afford one-to-one teaching for everyone and it is not fair that you are able to have this and other children in Shetland can't. We would like the secondary children of Skerries to have classmates and be taught by a variety of staff.

It will be a big change to leave Skerries School and go to the Anderson High and stay in the Halls of Residence, but you will get all the help you need to make this change. You will meet lots of other children of your own age, and be taught with others in classes delivered by specialist teachers. We think this is better educationally for you.

Consultation with Anderson High School Pupils

Consultation took place with the Student Representative Council

Points Made

- Not that bothered by it, small number of children.
- Not aware that Skerries children were attending earlier on this year.
- Two or three extra children isn't going to stretch the capacity of the school. More as fifty children and we would see the difference.
- Would their teachers come here to work?
- Benefit to the children of coming here and being able to access more specialist teachers.
- What would happen to their Head Teacher?
- How many children are in the primary department? Do the numbers of pupils get bigger over time?
- Consensus of group was that it would have no real impact on education provision at Anderson High School.

Response

All staff at Skerries School Secondary Department affected by the proposal, should the secondary department close, would be supported to suitable future destinations by the policies of Shetland Islands Council. They may be able to get redundancy, be redeployed or transferred or be able to retire.

The numbers in Skerries School are not predicted to change very much over the next few years.

11. Summary of Consultation with Staff

11.1

Meeting with Skerries School Staff

Points Made

- Concerns were raised over future employment for instructor and support staff in Skerries.
- If staff were redeployed, their expenses would cost more than keeping the secondary department open.
- Concerns about future specialist input for children should the school be reduced to primary only.
- Discussion around possible home schooling for children in Skerries and what level of support would be available from the home link teacher.

- There are examples of children thriving following a move to Skerries.
- There is bullying in Anderson High School. The anti-bullying strategies are not always fully effective.
- There were concerns over the transition process especially where the child in question is homesick.
- Children in Skerries do have wide opportunities for both within Skerries and out with the island.
- Anderson High School is not always able to offer the course options requested by young people.
- Would it be possible for Skerries to be a Secondary 1-Secondary 2 school so that young people could leave at age fourteen.
- £13,000 has already been saved in Skerries school. This should be recognised.
- Staff felt it was wrong to use the recent staffing issues as a reason for closure of the secondary department.
- The use of ICT to support delivery of education was discussed. It was noted that reliability and timetabling issues would need to be overcome.
- There was discussion over the consultation timescale.
- There were concerns over travel difficulties related to ferry timetables and poor weather.

Response

If Skerries School Secondary Department were to close Shetland Islands Council have a number of policies in place to support staff in determining their future. It is likely that if the Department did close, fewer instructor hours would be needed. Teaching Unions are in general against the idea of secondary subjects being delivered by anyone other than a suitably qualified teacher.

If parents chose to home educate their children, they need to seek permission from the Director of Children's Services to withdraw their child from school. After that they would get regular support and access to resources from the home-link service.

As stated earlier in the Consultation Report, the Halls of Residence staff are very experienced in supporting children to make the transition to the Halls of Residence. This includes children from the remote isles who cannot get home every weekend. Skerries children would get home every weekend.

The Transition Group which would be set up immediately should a decision be taken to close Skerries School Secondary Department would ensure concerns from children and parents about issues such as bullying were picked up and dealt with.

The proposed closure of Skerries School Secondary Department is not just about financial savings. It is about Children's Services offering the children of Skerries the best possible educational opportunity it can. We do not think that is best served being educated with hardly anyone else, and without the support of a range of suitably qualified teaching staff.

Leaving children in Skerries even for Secondary 1 and Secondary 2 would still mean two years of their broad general education in secondary being delivered with limited resources and opportunities. Technology has been used in the past to help deliver some courses in Skerries, however it is not reliable enough to do this on a regular basis, and the secondary department would still require to have a teacher there, so there is little change from the existing staffing arrangements which could realise any savings.

The young person who could not access all their courses when they came out of Skerries for a while to access education at the Anderson High School, could not do so as it was an unusual grouping of subjects, which did not reflect the best balance the curriculum should offer a young person for their first group of qualifications.

Meeting with Anderson High School Staff

Points Made

- There would be little overall impact on Anderson High School should Skerries Secondary Department close.
- There would be benefits from better use of resources.
- Young people from Skerries would benefit from wider peer interaction.
- Numbers of young people from Skerries staying on for S5/S6 is low is this affecting their opportunity to reach their full potential.
- There was comparison between Skerries and Fair Isle where Fair Isle do not have a secondary department.
- The apparently low level of engagement of elected Members in this issue is disappointing.
- The transition of young people when Scalloway Junior High School secondary department closed was very successful.
- The hostel frequently receives very positive Care Inspectorate reports.
- Funding cuts affect all children in Shetland.

Response

Children's Services agrees that there are a number of positive educational benefits to the children from Skerries School Secondary Department attending the Anderson High School. In addition, we agree that they will be well supported in the Halls of Residence.

12. Education Scotland's Report

- 12.1 In line with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a Report was provided by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the Proposal to discontinue secondary education in Skerries. This Report is attached as Appendix B.
- 12.2 This section details the relevant points raised in the Report by Education Scotland and Children's Services response to these points.

Relevant Point

The Proposal gives insufficient consideration to the benefits to young people of attending the Anderson High School in respect of their entitlements to gain the experiences and outcomes of a broad general education and a senior phase across the four aspects of learning. The proposal does not fully set out gains to young people in raising levels of achievement.

Response

Children's Services does not believe that educating tiny numbers of children together for their secondary education, as they are in Skerries School Secondary Department, offers the best possible educational opportunity to them which we can provide.

With respect to the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence one of the key drivers is to change the delivery model of education from one that is content driven to one that is based on the development of skills. It is difficult to develop a variety of opportunities for group work, collaboration, active learning and enquiry if children have no other child in their year group, or even if they have only one other child in their year group.

The purpose of the Broad General Education in Curriculum for Excellence from Secondary 1 to Secondary 3 is to develop the knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities of the four capacities of successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. It should provide breadth and depth of education to develop flexible and adaptable young people with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive now and in the future. It must aim to support young people in achieving and attaining the best they possibly can.

With transfer at the end of Secondary Four, as currently, it may be very possible that a child in Skerries School Secondary Department will be commencing the Senior Phase on their own, and studying for qualifications on their own, when the courses they are undertaking have emphasis on working with others, working in groups to deliver learning. The range of qualifications on offer in such a small setting will also be limited, and may not be wide enough to meet the aspirations of all learners.

The Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence has to be a flexible three-year programme of learning for each young person. It should offer them the option of experiencing a range of opportunities including: access to college courses, work experience, wider achievement activities and volunteering; and the opportunity to study for qualifications over varied amounts of times. With the limits of the geographical location of Skerries and the staffing which can be allocated to the school, it is not possible to fully deliver a child's entitlement to the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence.

The Anderson High School will give children from Skerries School Secondary Department access to large groups of children their age, with whom they can learn together in reasonably sized class groups. They will be taught by a variety of subject specialist staff not just by one teacher trying to deliver most of the curriculum. They will be able to take part in group learning activities, and play team games to develop their social and communication skills. They will be able to work across subject areas with other children from different classes for interdisciplinary learning projects. They will be able to choose options from a wide range of courses.

The Anderson High School offers a wide variety of courses for formal learning, and a wide variety of opportunities for wider achievement, including for example, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, and John Muir Awards. In addition they are able to offer a range of work experience opportunities.

Skills for learning, life and work are more readily delivered at the Anderson High School by a variety of means to support a wide range of learners' needs. The Anderson High School has easy access to Shetland College for Vocational Pathway Courses and access to a wide range of employers.

Building the Curriculum 3, published by the Scottish Government in 2008, gives the framework for all schools to follow in developing Curriculum for Excellence. Amongst the attributes and capacities which must be developed in each child are:

- Learn independently and as part of a group;
- Link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations;
- Relate to others and manage themselves;
- Communicate in different ways and in different settings;
- Work in partnership and in teams;
- Take the initiative and lead;
- Apply critical thinking in new contexts.

It is these particular aspects of the requirements of the curriculum which, within a secondary department where there are only one or two other children, and perhaps no one else at all in the year group which Children's Services are concerned about delivering on. We are concerned that the constraints of the setting and the limitations of the staffing restrict the ability of the service which can be offered to ensure children receive fully all of their entitlements under Curriculum for Excellence.

Skerries School Secondary Department has one full-time qualified secondary teacher and tiny numbers of children. This means there are no opportunities with attainment results to do any self evaluation activity which larger schools can do easily, such as look at trends over time, compare attainment in one department of a school with another, in order to identify ways to improve. There are no opportunities for effective professional dialogue with other teachers, to reflect on the quality of teaching, to share experiences and seek to learn how to improve. All of these opportunities to raise achievement of children exist at the Anderson High School, as there are large cohorts of children in each year group, and teams of teaching staff led by Principal Teachers.

Children's Services have been working on the Blueprint for Education since 2007. During that time there have been three Shetland-wide community consultations to discuss the overall shape of future education provision in Shetland. In June 2010, a

number of strategic proposals were put forward to Shetland Islands Council for the delivery of school education. These proposals were revised in September 2012, following an instruction from the Council to 'refresh the Blueprint'. Again the revised proposals consider school education provision across the islands. Changing secondary education provision in Skerries School remains a priority as Children's Services considers that current arrangements do not serve the children of Skerries best educationally.

Relevant Point

The Council needs to take account of children's additional support needs such as autism spectrum disorder and dyslexia, and how it plans to reduce barriers to learning that may arise from the learning environment, health and disability issues, social and emotional factors and family circumstances. The Council needs to set out clearly the arrangements for supporting children at Skerries School Secondary Department to make a positive transition to the Anderson High School.

Response

If a decision is taken to close Skerries School Secondary Department, and this decision is able to be implemented, a Transition Group will be set up immediately to plan for the transfer of the children. It will be chaired by the Quality Improvement Officer for Skerries School and will have relevant staff on it from both schools, a representative from the hostel, and representation from both parent councils. It will involve staff from other Council departments and other agencies as required.

This Group will ensure all general practical support arrangements for the children to move are put in place, It will listen to the concerns of the children and parents throughout the process, and any matter raised will be dealt with appropriately. The Group will continue to meet for as long as is felt necessary after the children have transferred. This method has worked well in the past as a means for securing the successful transition of children from a school which has closed on to a receiving school.

In addition, if any child making a transfer from one school to another as a result of a school closure has additional support needs, appropriate enhanced transition arrangements will be put in place. Children's Services has appropriate policy guidance on transitions for children with additional support needs. These are embedded in our Managing Inclusion Guidelines, and are compliant with our statutory obligations within the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004.

Enhanced transition planning would commence immediately a closure decision was able to be implemented. As this change of school would be being initiated by the local authority, the process of review meetings for children with additional support needs would be the mechanism used, and an immediate review meeting would be called. The views of the child and parents are central to this process at all times and would be even more critical in these circumstances.

An enhanced transition plan would be drawn up as a result of this review meeting which would:

- Involve relevant staff from both schools;
- Identify a co-ordinator to ensure the plan is carried forward appropriately, and parents and the child know who they can speak to with any worries;
- Plan out dates for further meetings to review progress – all discussions will involve parents and the child concerned;
- Set out a programme of gradual introduction to the new setting; such a plan will detail exactly what times and dates a child will visit the new setting and what activities they will undertake while they are there, and who will support them on their visits;
- Outline what involvement, if any is required of other agencies;
- Set out how staff from the receiving school will visit the child's current setting to understand how their learning needs are currently being met.

Children's Services also has a mechanism for its staff to meet together to discuss any resourcing issues which may arise from the transfer of child with additional support needs to another school. This will be used if required, if the receiving school considers that they have any resourcing issues arising from the move.

As a transition in these circumstances will involve a move to the hostel, the manager of the hostel or a representative will attend all planning meetings. Any child staying in the hostel with significant additional support needs, in line with Care Inspectorate requirements, has a care plan drawn up for them. This plan will also be prepared in full consultation with the child and their parents.

Planning will be done in the right amount of detail required for a child, including if necessary how they will be supported during social times in school like break-times and lunchtimes.

Relevant Point

The Council should explore more thoroughly the viability of some of the alternatives, including the option of remote teaching.

Response

The principal requirement of the local education authority is to provide adequate and efficient education and it must ensure that this education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential.

The Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, published in April 2013, makes the following statement about this aspect of rural schools:

"It is important to recognise that a school's primary function is to provide pupils with the best possible educational experience." (Page 30)

Children's Services does not believe it is delivering these obligations to their fullest extent in Skerries School Secondary Department as the curricular opportunities are limited, access to suitably qualified staff is limited and the children have very limited access to any class mates to learn in groups with, learn from, or play team games with. Opportunities to develop social skills and a suitable wide range of communication skills are inherently limited. Children's Services is obliged to offer the best possible educational opportunities to its children. These limitations would be in

place whether Skerries School Secondary Department was delivering Secondary 1 and Secondary 2 only, or Secondary 1 to Secondary 3 only; and whether or not the school has different management arrangements. Key entitlements of Building the Curriculum 3 to:

- Learn independently and as part of a group;
- Link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations;
- Relate to others and manage themselves;
- Communicate in different ways and in different settings;
- Work in partnership and in teams;
- Take the initiative and lead;
- Apply critical thinking in new contexts.

cannot be adequately facilitated in a very remote island community, with tiny numbers of children.

Children's Services remains committed to offering pre-school education and primary education on all our remote isles and this commitment was agreed at Shetland Islands Council on 20 September 2012.

With respect to the option of remote teaching, the Proposal Paper and this Consultation Report highlight that the national Pathfinder funding comes to an end in 2014 and therefore the Information Technology capacity in Skerries School may be further limited than it is at present. Early exploration of a remote teaching option has indicated that it would not be reliable and thus be too fragile an option for pupils to rely on for their secondary education. Even if more use were still be made of remote teaching, there would still require to be a teacher with the children as it is such a small school. There is currently 1.2 full-time equivalent of teachers allocated to the secondary department, so this option generates very limited further efficiencies.

Links in Shetland are also not reliable enough to support children's learning on regular basis. One of the schools on the Shetland Mainland tried to access a course in Shetland College recently and had to give up, with the children ending up travelling to the College. Two islands schools tried to share the delivery of English via videoconferencing, as they shared an English teacher who had to undertake frequent travel between the islands. They also had to give up as the links were not reliable enough, and teacher reverted to travelling. These fallback options would not be available in Skerries and you cannot plan children's education properly in advance if you do not know whether resources are going to be available.

Remote teaching would not provide the children in Skerries with direct access to a teacher for immediate feedback on work, and would not generate contact with other class mates to learn from and be motivated by. Good direct timely feedback and motivation to learn are two widely researched factors which maximise learners' achievements.

Relevant Point

The Proposal needs to consider ways to maximise young people's time on the island at weekends to benefit family life.

<p>Response</p> <p>The Ferries Service is committed to an ongoing dialogue with Children's Services and the community of Skerries over the ferry timetable. It is planned that the current timetable will be reviewed in six months' time.</p>
<p>Relevant Point</p> <p>The Council has not clarified to parents the responsibilities of staff on the ferry towards their children in terms of safety and duty of care.</p>
<p>Response</p> <p>Given that the Skerries Service operates in non categorised waters, i.e. open sea, and given parents' very real fears about this, it is proposed to employ an escort to accompany the children on the ferry. The escort would be responsible for the successful handover of the children to and from the taxi provider. It is hoped that this may be viewed as a job opportunity for someone from Skerries.</p> <p>Children's Services is proposing that the following transport arrangements are put in place should the proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department be agreed.</p> <p>Children would travel out from Skerries on Sunday afternoon, taking the 4.00pm ferry from Skerries to Vidlin. Children would be collected by taxi and taken to the Hostel, arriving at approximately 6.00pm. An alternative crossing would be the ferry departing from Skerries at 7.00pm on Sunday evening. (The preferred sailing would be dependent upon whether or not the escort was resident in Skerries; the 7.00pm sailing would not allow that person to return to Skerries that evening).</p> <p>For the return journey, pupils would leave Lerwick on Friday from the Hostel by taxi, arriving at Vidlin to meet the ferry which departs for Skerries at 5.30pm. In the event of a ferry cancellation occurring en route, or being discovered upon arrival at Vidlin, pupils will be taken back to the hostel and placed in the care of staff there.</p> <p>The full costs of the transport arrangements will be met by the Children's Services and are included in the revised savings presented in the Financial Response section of this consultation report.</p>
<p>Relevant Point</p> <p>The Council has not considered the full impact of the closure on family life and the long term future of the community of the closure of a remote rural school like Skerries School Secondary Department.</p>
<p>Response</p> <p>Taking on board the depth of community concerns about the impact closure of Skerries School Secondary Department might have, Children's Services commissioned a Socio-Economic Study to be carried out. One was done previously for the last proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department in 2010.</p> <p>Steve Westbrook, Economist, Nairn, in partnership with Sandy Anderson, were</p>

commissioned by the Director of Children's Services, to undertake a Socio-Economic Study on the potential impacts on the community of Skerries of the Proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department, should it go forward. The full text of the study can be found as Appendix G. The same company carried out the Socio-Economic Study for the previous closure proposal.

The terms of reference for the study were to:

- identify changes to the total economic output from Skerries;
- identify changes to the workforce requirements of businesses based in Skerries;
- identify the direct and known impacts of closing the secondary department;
- identify the potential impacts should families leave Skerries because they are not prepared for their children to travel to Lerwick for schooling;
- investigate possible mitigating effects, such as the prospect for additional private and public sector employment in Skerries and the scope for attracting new residents.

The main conclusions from the socio-economic study are that:

- Skerries continues to be a fragile community but there has been progress through younger families committing to settling there by building new housing and starting families;
- The main drivers of the Skerries economy remain fishing and aquaculture;
- Public sector employment has reduced, with the withdrawal of the fire service and no current social care clients;
- The retail sector in Skerries is fragile, with reduced turnover since 2010;
- There is almost full employment in Skerries;
- Most full time jobs are held by men, often carrying out additional part-time jobs;
- Women are most often in part time work, often with a number of different jobs in different sectors;
- All sectors of the Skerries economy are experiencing difficulties in recruitment and this is affecting economic output;
- Closure of the school's secondary department might lead to two families leaving Skerries and other families with young children considering their future;
- Should these families decide to leave, there would be a severe impact on the balance of the population in Skerries and its economy, including reducing the viability of the primary school and the employment it provides, unless those families could be replaced relatively quickly;
- Employers are concerned that loss of the secondary department would make it even more difficult to recruit staff to live and work in Skerries;
- The community has worked with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Shetland Islands Council to begin to produce a development plan which could create a path for the future that would sustain and increase the total population, the proportion of young people in the community, employment and output;
- A relatively stable educational environment will be important in maintaining community confidence and retaining the younger people necessary for development plans for the future of Skerries to be successful.

The development potential of Skerries would be stronger with the secondary department retained as there would otherwise be a constraint on family residence. Thus, a larger population with an increased proportion of working age people (some with current or future children) would provide more pupils both for the

secondary department and the primary department, increasing the school's cost effectiveness and retaining (or increasing) education related employment in Skerries.

The new Community Plan for Shetland 2013-2020 has also just been agreed in August 2013. This describes how the public sector will work together with the private and third sector to improve the communities in Shetland. There are commitments in the Plan which are important to securing a sustainable future for all areas of Shetland, and these will be important to Skerries whether or not the Skerries School Secondary Department closes. Outcome 1 is: *"Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities"*; and Outcome 11 is: *"We have a strong voluntary sector and social enterprises, encouraging community enterprise and co-operatives, with increased capacity to deliver services based on needs and aspirations of local communities."* Within these there are clear objectives: to increase sustainable economic growth; increase the number of business start ups; secure population growth; increase the role of community enterprise; improve the sustainability of community groups; and involve communities in deciding what is needed to improve their area.

Should the Skerries School Secondary Department close, Shetland Partnership's relevant Community Planning partners will, on the basis, of the newly agreed Community Plan, provide appropriate support for Skerries ensuring they receive all the community and economic support which is available to them. There would also be a responsibility on the Skerries community to identify their problems and work together with agencies to find solutions.

In addition, Children's Services have carried out an Integrated Impact Assessment on the proposal, with support from the Council's Improvement Service. The outcome of the Integrated Impact Assessment is attached to this Report as Appendix F. It identifies possible negative impacts of the Proposal and mitigating actions.

A Health Impact Assessment was also carried out on the Proposal by NHS Shetland. The Health Impact Assessment is attached to this Report as Appendix E. It identifies and outlines possible actions which could be taken to mitigate against potential health impacts of the Proposal identified by concerned consultees on Skerries.

All of this information will be made available to Community Planning partners should the Skerries School Secondary Department close. All of the information can be used to inform actions for agencies who will need to support the community of Skerries to remain sustainable. The new Community Plan, approved in August 2013, makes a clear commitment to empower communities to ensure their aspirations can be achieved.

13. Review of the Proposal to discontinue education at Skerries School Secondary Department

- 13.1 Children's Services has reviewed the Proposal taking into account relevant written and oral representations and the report from Education Scotland.

14. Integrated Impact Assessment

14.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and then reviewed in the light of the responses received during the statutory consultation period. A summary of the findings of the assessment is presented below. The full text of the Integrated Impact Assessment can be found as Appendix F.

14.2 There were sixty-four possible areas/groups assessed for impact. The impact from the intended outcome has been recorded as either:

- Positive;
- Negative;
- Neutral with no impact;
- Neutral because of both Positive and Negative impacts.

A note was given for each answer. Further mitigation was then recorded for all Negative impacts.

14.3 In the Integrated Impact Assessment for the proposed closure of Skerries School Secondary Department the intended outcome of school closure will have:

- eight Positive impacts
- thirteen Negative impacts
- forty groups/areas experiencing no impacts. These are recorded in the document as “Neutral – n/a”.
- three groups/areas experiencing both Positive and Negative impacts. These are recorded in the document as “Neutral”, with Notes given to explain both the Positive and the Negative impact, with the Negative impacts receiving further mitigation

14.4 The Positive impacts can be summarised as follows.

The outcome will ensure better access to a wider range of educational opportunities for the secondary aged children of Skerries. They will have greater access to cultural activities within the Lerwick region, access to a wider curriculum, taught by specialist staff and access to a peer group. The intended wider education opportunities should have a positive impact for professional development.

The Skerries School itself will still be open for primary and nursery children so community access to its facilities will remain. There will be less energy consumption in the secondary department. Skerries School will require fewer resources if it is only delivering primary and nursery education. Closure will make an ongoing saving in the Council's revenue budgets. Failure of the Council to reduce budgets will cause reputational damage.

14.5 The Negative impacts can be summarised as follows.

Some respondents feel that Skerries children will not be able to access community events as they will be away through the week. The closure of the Skerries School Secondary Department will result in the loss of some part-time public sector jobs and a full-time secondary Head Teacher post.

There will be more transport. A taxi will be used to transport secondary children to and from the ferry. Children will no longer be able to walk or cycle to school. If Skerries School Secondary Department closes, Skerries people who have fought to keep it open will feel their views have been ignored. Closing schools is not popular in affected communities.

Respondents to the consultation on Skerries feel that:

- if the secondary department closes, families who would be economically active will leave Skerries. However they are likely to remain in Shetland;
- if families leave the island, no one will be available to work in Bound Salmon, so its future will be threatened;
- young people will leave the isle and not return again to work there;
- families will leave Skerries if the secondary department closes and the secondary children will no longer be around in the community and this will affect the fragile local economy of Skerries;
- Skerries provides a very supportive environment for children with additional needs. They also feel it important for those additional needs that children of secondary age are able to go home at night;
- children will be exposed to more alcohol and drug use on the mainland of Shetland.

14.6 Mitigation for Reducing Negative Impacts can be summarised as follows.

There will be a range of after school activities available to the children, including activities provided by the Halls of Residence. The Anderson High School will provide two periods of specialist physical education, which is not available in Skerries.

Children will travel home every weekend. Skerries Secondary pupils are small numbers. Exploration will take place on offering more frequent opportunities for transport home. Transport will as far as possible link in to public transport. A Strategic Environmental Assessment gateway screening of the Blueprint For Education was undertaken in 2011 and confirmed the Blueprint For Education is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

Specific transition arrangements have to be put in place for children with additional needs under the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004. These will be carefully monitored. The Halls of Residence has specific supported accommodation for children with additional needs. Personal and social education will be provided at the Anderson High School. House-parents provide one-to-one pastoral support in the Halls of Residence. Curriculum for Excellence Senior Phase should enable work placement opportunities in the isles to complement the school further education and employer opportunities that will be developed in Lerwick.

The Council's relevant policies for redundancy, redeployment, transfer and retirement will be used to support affected staff into positive futures. Children's Services will work with other Council services and other community planning partners to support Skerries. In line with the new Community Plan, partners will work with community groups to ensure they are involved in local matters where they can make a difference.

15. Socio-Economic Study

- 15.1 In response to previous concerns expressed during statutory consultation periods about the potential socio-economic impacts closure proposals may have on remote rural communities in Shetland, Children's Services now commission socio-economic impact studies be carried out on all closure proposals. Although a socio-economic study was carried out for the previous statutory consultation on Skerries School Secondary Department in 2010, another one was commissioned for this proposal.
- 15.2 Steve Westbrook, Economist, Nairn, in partnership with Sandy Anderson, were again commissioned to undertake the socio-economic study on the potential impacts on Skerries of the Proposal to close Skerries School, Secondary Department should it go forward. The full text of the study can be found as Appendix G.

16. Health Impact Assessment

- 16.1 Children's Services commissioned a Health Impact Assessment to be undertaken on the potential impacts of the proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department. The Health Impact Assessment was conducted by NHS Shetland in June 2013.
- 16.2 A Health Impact Assessment aims to identify and consider actual and potential health and equality impacts on a population. It also presents ways to minimise or mitigate negative impacts.
- 16.3 The Health Impact Assessment was conducted using the following methods: review of Blueprint for Education documentation, review of Community Development data, survey of local community, individual and group interviews with community members, visit to Skerries school, independent assessment of receiving school and Halls of Residence, general interest based literature in line with concerns raised. A Health Impact Assessment Tool was used and the findings and recommendations presented.
- 16.4 The concerns raised by parents and community members were explored and assessed with conclusions and recommendations made. The main health impacts identified which will be further considered and mitigated where possible are as follows:
 - Ferry concerns relating to travel and safety;
 - Potential socio-economic impact on Skerries if young people moved away from the island.

17. Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 17.1 Shetland Islands Council as responsible Authority carried out under Section 8 of The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, a Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway screening of the Blueprint for Education.
- 17.2 The determination by Shetland Islands Council under Section 8(1) of the Act is that the Blueprint for Education is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

- 17.3 Before making this determination, Shetland Islands Council sent a summary of its views as to whether or not the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects to Consultative Authorities (Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency) via the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway. Shetland Islands Council noted that the Consultation Authorities agreed with the view that the Blueprint for Education was unlikely to have significant environmental effects and made the determination to that effect under Section 8 (1) of the Act. In making that determination Children's Services applied criteria in Schedule 2 of the Act.
- 17.4 Shetland Islands Council notified the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway Manager and the Consultative Authorities of this decision. A public notice was also published in the local media on Friday 15 April 2011.
- 17.5 Further information and the responses of the Consultative Authorities can be found at www.shetland.gov.uk.
- 17.6 A copy of the Screening Determination is found at Appendix H.

18. Omissions or Inaccuracies

- 18.1 Two inaccuracies in the Proposal Paper were been brought to the attention of Children's Services in a written response. Children's Services accepts these inaccuracies. In accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the details and the actions of Shetland Islands Council will be set out here.
- 18.2 It was pointed out to Children's Services in a written response that the population of Fetlar was 81 not 86, and the number of children in Fetlar Primary School was seven not six.
- 18.3 These matters were corrected at the start of the two public meetings held in respect of the proposal at Skerries Public Hall on 7 June 2013, and Anderson High School on 28 May 2013. The transcripts of these public meetings have now been published on the Council's website.

19. Compliance with Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

- 19.1 Throughout this consultation Children's Services has given special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.
- 19.2 Skerries School is designated as a very remote rural school. In terms of Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Shetland Islands Council has given regard to the three required factors as follows:

Factor Any viable alternative to closure	Response <p>The alternative options for the future provision of education for pupils in Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 at Skerries School would be to:</p> <p>(a) Maintain the status quo: retain Secondary 1 to Secondary 4</p> <p>This option does not advance Children's Services pursuit of a better educational experience within Curriculum for Excellence for the children of Skerries School Secondary Department. It does not increase the number of specialist staff, resources and subjects available to pupils. This option does not give the best possible transition for pupils entering the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence. It does not meet Shetland Islands Council's agreed priorities of operating within Council budgets and providing equal opportunity for all pupils. To increase curricular opportunities would incur additional expenditure at a time when there is a requirement to make savings.</p> <p>(b) Reduce provision to Secondary 1 to Secondary 3</p> <p>This option does not increase the curricular opportunities for pupils. It does not increase the number of specialist staff, resources and subjects available to pupils. It does not meet Shetland Islands Council's agreed priorities of operating within Council budgets and providing equal opportunity for all pupils, as it would generate increased inefficiencies in staffing. Although transition to the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence would be more appropriate than at present, it does not allow flexibility of transition based upon the individual needs of pupils. During the Blueprint for Education informal consultation in 2009 and again in response to the Blueprint Next Steps proposals in 2013, the majority of pupils, staff and parents did not consider this acceptable as a way forward for the school estate.</p> <p>(c) Increase provision to Secondary 1 to Secondary 6</p> <p>The current staffing arrangement for Skerries School Secondary Department does not have the capacity to offer an appropriate Senior Phase experience for pupils. Any increase in staffing would be contrary to the agreed Principles for Education of the Council and would add to inefficiencies. The Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence is to be flexible three year programme of learning for each young person, offering them the option of experiencing a range of opportunities including: access to college courses, work experience, wider achievement activities and volunteering; and the opportunity to study for qualifications over varied amounts of times. With the limits of the geographical location of Skerries and the staffing which can be allocated to the school, this option is not viable.</p> <p>(d) Remote teaching</p> <p>As mentioned earlier in the report the national Pathfinder funding comes to an end in 2014 and therefore the Information Technology capacity in Skerries School may be further limited. Early exploration of a remote teaching option has indicated that it would not be reliable and thus be too</p>
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fragile an option for pupils to rely on for their secondary education. Even if more use were still be made of remote teaching, there would still require to be a teacher with the children as it is such a small school. There is currently 1.2 full-time equivalent of teachers allocated to the secondary department, so this option generates very limited further efficiencies.

Links in Shetland are not reliable enough to support children's learning on a regular basis. One of the schools on the Shetland Mainland tried to access a course in Shetland College recently and had to give up, with the children ending up travelling to the College. This fallback would not be an option in Skerries and you cannot plan children's education properly in advance if you do not know whether resources are going to be available.

Remote teaching would not provide the children in Skerries with direct access to a teacher for immediate feedback on work, and would not generate contact with other class mates to learn from and be motivated by. Good direct feedback and self-motivation are two of the keys to raising achievement widely identified in education research, including Education Scotland's 2012 Raising Attainment publication.

As outlined in the Proposal Paper, over the last decade Children's Services has conducted a number of reviews and consultations with the key aim of providing an education model for Shetland that is sustainable and ensures best value in the use of public funds. The reviews have seen the following changes to the school estate:

- closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department (June 2011);
- closure of Uyeasound Primary School (December 2011).

Children's Services has also implemented the following alternatives to school closures:

- reducing expenditure on In-Service training;
- reducing numbers of central staff;
- reducing money available for supply;
- reducing money available for Continuing Professional Development;
- ending knitting instruction;
- charging for instrumental instruction;
- increasing charges e.g. for school meals;
- reducing operating costs in schools, particularly resources available for learning materials and equipment ;
- moving to national staffing levels in primary;
- reducing numbers of teaching staff in secondary;
- reducing numbers of Catering and Cleaning staff;
- reducing teacher input in nursery;
- securing more efficient use of resources for children and young people with Additional Support Needs;
- reducing music instruction;
- reducing Parent Council Clerks' honorariums;
- reducing school building maintenance.

The savings measures already implemented within Schools/Quality Assurance section of Children's Services as detailed above, have resulted in a reduction in

expenditure between 2009/10 and 2012/13 of over £5 million.

Children's Services has also in the past considered shared management for small schools when it has proven difficult to recruit to a teaching Head Teacher post. This has been possible when an opportunity arises through a vacancy and through agreement with Parent Councils. However the shared management model Children's Services operates does not save money, as, by local agreement, each school in a shared management arrangement is allocated a principal teacher, and the principal teacher is allocated management time which in turn must be covered.

From a financial perspective, Children's Services therefore believes that the only alternative to closure of Skerries School Secondary Department would be to maintain secondary stages of education at Skerries School, however this option perpetuates the limits on the education able to be offered to children within Curriculum for Excellence, and therefore does not generate any educational benefit.

Factor

The likely effect on the local community in consequence of the Proposal (if implemented) with particular reference to:

1. The sustainability of the community;
2. The availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community.

Response

1. The implication of a school closure cannot be addressed in isolation. There are a number of complex socio-economic issues that influence remote rural areas, such as Skerries. These issues are addressed as fully as is possible at this time by Children's Services in the response to the Impact on the Community Concerns section of this Consultation Report.

Taking on board the depth of community concerns about the impact closure of Skerries School Secondary Department might have, Children's Services commissioned a Socio-Economic Study to be carried out. One was done previously for the last proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department in 2010.

Steve Westbrook, Economist, Nairn, in partnership with Sandy Anderson, were commissioned by the Director of Children's Services, to undertake a Socio-Economic Study on the potential impacts on the community of Skerries of the Proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department, should it go forward. The full text of the study can be found as Appendix G. The same company carried out the Socio-Economic Study for the previous closure proposal.

The terms of reference for the study were to:

- identify changes to the total economic output from Skerries;
- identify changes to the workforce requirements of businesses based in Skerries;
- identify the direct and known impacts of closing the secondary department;
- identify the potential impacts should families leave Skerries because they are not prepared for their children to travel to Lerwick for schooling;
- investigate possible mitigating effects, such as the prospect for additional private and public sector employment in Skerries and the scope for attracting new residents.

The main conclusions from the socio-economic study are that:

- Skerries continues to be a fragile community but there has been progress through younger families committing to settling there by building new housing and starting families;
- The main drivers of the Skerries economy remain fishing and aquaculture;
- Public sector employment has reduced, with the withdrawal of the fire service and no current social care clients;
- The retail sector in Skerries is fragile, with reduced turnover since 2010;
- There is almost full employment in Skerries;
- Most full time jobs are held by men, often carrying out additional part-time jobs;
- Women are most often in part time work, often with a number of different jobs in different sectors;
- All sectors of the Skerries economy are experiencing difficulties in recruitment and this is affecting economic output;
- Closure of the school's secondary department might lead to two families leaving Skerries and other families with young children considering their future;
- Should these families decide to leave, there would be a severe impact on the balance of the population in Skerries and its economy, including reducing the viability of the primary school and the employment it provides, unless those families could be replaced relatively quickly;
- Employers are concerned that loss of the secondary department would make it even more difficult to recruit staff to live and work in Skerries;
- The community has worked with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Shetland Islands Council to begin to produce a development plan which could create a path for the future that would sustain and increase the total population, the proportion of young people in the community, employment and output;
- A relatively stable educational environment will be important in maintaining community confidence and retaining the younger people necessary for development plans for the future of Skerries to be successful.

The development potential of Skerries would be stronger with the secondary department retained as there would otherwise be a constraint on family residence. Thus, a larger population with an increased proportion of working age people (some with current or future children) would provide more pupils both for the secondary department and the primary department, increasing the school's cost effectiveness and retaining (or increasing) education related employment in Skerries.

The new Community Plan for Shetland 2013-2020 has also just been agreed in August 2013. This describes how the public sector will work together with the private and third sector to improve the communities in Shetland. There are commitments in the Plan which are important to securing a sustainable future for all areas of Shetland, and these will be important to Skerries whether or not the Skerries School Secondary Department closes. Outcome 1 is: *"Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities"*; and Outcome 11 is: *"We have a strong voluntary sector and social enterprises, encouraging community enterprise and co-operatives, with increased capacity to deliver services based on needs and aspirations of local communities."* Within these there are clear objectives: to increase sustainable economic growth; increase the number of business start ups; secure population growth; increase the role of community enterprise; improve the sustainability of community groups; and involve communities in deciding what is needed to improve their area.

Should the Skerries School Secondary Department close, Shetland Partnership's relevant Community Planning partners will, on the basis, of the newly agreed Community Plan, provide appropriate support for Skerries ensuring they receive all the community and economic support which is available to them. There would also be a responsibility on the Skerries community to identify their problems and work together with agencies to find solutions.

2. Skerries School will remain open for the delivery of primary and nursery education. Therefore the current use the community makes of the school can continue exactly as at present.

Factor

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the Proposal (if implemented) with reference in particular to:

1. The effect caused by such travelling arrangements including (in particular), that on the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities and any environmental impact;
2. The travelling arrangements are those to and from the school of (and for) the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities.

Response

Currently Skerries School Secondary children can walk or cycle to school every day. If they transferred to the Anderson High School, they would stay in the Halls of Residence which is adjacent to the school building.

Due to the remote location of Skerries, there is a risk of disruption to travel arrangements due to severe weather conditions. However, for the period between July 2012 and July 2013, only two scheduled sailings were cancelled, one being a Sunday, the other a Saturday, both due to weather.

In the event that the children could not travel home from Lerwick, the children would remain at the Halls of Residence over the weekend, or until travel was possible. Where the children were unable to leave Skerries, Children's Services and the Anderson High School will put in place measures to support learning and teaching for any short period of time away from school. Should travel from Skerries on a Sunday evening not be possible, there is the option of travelling directly to Lerwick on the Monday morning, although it is appreciated that this is not ideal and would need to be agreed with parents.

No changes are planned to the transport provision for those children travelling home to Whalsay. However, due to very recent changes to the Skerries timetable the service bus, which arrives in Vidlin at 5.50pm, can no longer make the ferry connection as the ferry now departs from Vidlin at 5.30pm. Therefore, children travelling home to Skerries will be transported from the Halls of Residence to Vidlin in a taxi. There is a commitment on the part of the Ferries staff to review the timetable after six months, if not sooner, should there be a desire for the ferry sailing to better align with the public bus service.

Children's Services, Anderson High School and the Halls of Residence have well established practices for arranging support and alternative travel arrangements for all children currently travelling from remote islands. Strong communication links between transport, the school and the Halls of Residence currently exist. Further, Short Message Service, Twitter and email notification systems currently exist and all partners in this proposed arrangement would have access to these systems. Early notification of possible cancellations is given to the manager of the Halls of Residence so that contingency plans can be put in place where at all possible. This may be to send children home early or, alternatively, to keep them in the Halls of Residence.

Given that the Skerries Service operates in non categorised waters, i.e. open sea, and given parents' very real fears about this, it is proposed to employ an escort to accompany the children on the ferry. The escort would be responsible for the successful handover of the children to and from the taxi provider. It is hoped that this may be viewed as a job opportunity for someone from Skerries.

Children's Services is proposing that the following transport arrangements are put in place should the proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department be agreed.

Children would travel out from Skerries on Sunday afternoon, taking the 4.00pm ferry from Skerries to Vidlin. Children would be collected by taxi and taken to the Halls of Residence, arriving at approximately 6.00pm. An alternative crossing would be the ferry departing from Skerries at 7.00pm on Sunday evening. (The preferred sailing would be dependent upon whether or not the escort was resident in Skerries; the 7.00pm sailing would not allow that person to return to Skerries that evening).

For the return journey, pupils would leave Lerwick on Friday from the Halls of Residence by taxi, arriving at Vidlin to meet the ferry which departs for Skerries at 5.30pm.

In the event of a ferry cancellation occurring en route, or being discovered upon arrival at Vidlin, pupils will be taken back to the Halls of Residence and placed in the care of staff there.

The full costs of the transport arrangements will be met by the Children's Services and are included in the revised savings presented in the Financial Response section of this consultation report.

Environmental Impact

Shetland Islands Council as the Responsible Authority carried out under Section 8 of The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, a Strategic Environmental Assessment screening of the Blueprint for Education in 2011.

The determination by Shetland Islands Council under Section 8(1) of the Act is that the Blueprint for Education is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

Before making this determination, Shetland Islands Council sent a summary of its views as to whether or not the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects to Consultative Authorities (Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland and the

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency) via the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway. Shetland Islands Council noted that the Consultation Authorities agreed with the view that the Blueprint for Education was unlikely to have significant environmental effects and made the determination to that effect under Section 8 (1) of the Act. In making that determination Children's Services applied criteria in Schedule 2 of the Act.

This assessment remains pertinent to this proposal and therefore does not need to be updated.

20. Representations to the Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15 (4) of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

- 20.1 The Scottish Ministers have six weeks to decide whether or not they are going to issue a call-in notice to Children's Services. The six weeks begins on the day Shetland Islands Council takes their final decision to implement a Closure Proposal.
- 20.2 There is a three-week period during which anyone can make representations to the Scottish Ministers requesting that they call-in Shetland Islands Council's decision. This three week period begins on the day Shetland Islands Council takes their final decision to implement a Closure Proposal.
- 20.3 Therefore, anyone who wishes to make representations to Scottish Ministers can do so until 31 October 2013. The Scottish Ministers will have until 21 November 2013 to take a decision on the call-in of the Closure Proposal.
- 20.4 If anyone would like to make a representation to Scottish Ministers requesting them to call-in a local authority decision to close a school then they are asked that they please send an email, clearly setting out which of the criteria they believe are grounds for the case to be called in, and provide specific evidence to support their request, to the following addresses: schoolclosure@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
- or post to: The Scottish Government, School Infrastructure Unit, 2A (South), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ.
- 20.5 There is a section of the Scottish Government website which includes this information and the process:
- www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/Buildings/changestoschoolestate
- 20.6 Shetland Islands Council cannot therefore implement its final decision until the six week period has elapsed, unless Scottish Ministers have earlier informed the Local Authority that they do not intend to call-in the decision.

21. Conclusion

- 21.1 In recognition of the importance of school education to communities in Shetland, the required Refresh of Blueprint for Education involved further informal consultation across Shetland during the summer of 2012. This was in addition to the information collected through extensive community-wide informal consultations carried out in 2008 and 2010. All our consultations have endeavoured to share with stakeholders the challenges Shetland Islands Council faces in trying to secure a sustainable

school estate for the future whilst continuing to deliver high quality education. This aim has even greater focus in 2013 with the financial position Shetland Islands Council faces and the resultant target savings Children's Services must make to meet these targets. It is Shetland Islands Council policy, through the Medium Term Financial Plan, that Children's Services saves a further £3.268 million over the next three years. Almost all of this money is to come from the Blueprint for Education proposals.

- 21.2 Formal proposals were developed from the outcomes of all the informal consultations and on 20 September 2012 Shetland Islands Council agreed a Statement for Education in Shetland 2012-17; Commitments for Education in Shetland 2012-17 and a Plan for delivering these. The Plan contained a number of proposals which require Children's Services, under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to undertake a number of statutory consultations. This proposal to discontinue education at Skerries School Secondary Department is one of these consultations.
- 21.3 Throughout this consultation Children's Services has given special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of The Schools(Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.
- 21.4 The statutory consultation process was robust and provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to identify key issues of concern. These issues have been fully considered and Children's Service's response is detailed in earlier sections of this report.
- 21.5 To ensure we fulfilled the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 in their fullest regard, we commissioned a socio-economic study on this proposal and a health impact assessment. We also carried out an Integrated Impact Assessment.
- 21.6 The Standards in Schools (Scotland) etc Act 2000 requires local authorities *"to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential"*.
- 21.7 Education Scotland visited Skerries School to speak to parents, pupils and staff. They had the opportunity to view the proposal paper and all written responses.
- 21.8 In summary, the report by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal recognises:
- that the proposal offers some educational benefits to young people directly affected by the Proposal and more widely across Shetland Islands Council;
 - the Council has set out a reasonable case for the likely educational benefits to be gained by transferring the young people to a larger school;
 - that the secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from an increase in curricular opportunities;
 - that the secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from an improved access to a wide range of subject teachers across all curriculum areas;
 - that the secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from access to a wider range of the teaching staff together with more promoted staff and types of specialist support staff;

- that the secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from access to greater resources across the school in respect of ICT, clubs and societies;
- that the secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from a wide range of sports and leisure facilities;
- that the secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from access to a wider and more diverse group of young people on an individual, group or team basis;
- that the Council has presented clear arguments for the benefits likely to accrue to the wider educational community from savings resulting from the proposed closure;
- that the Proposal would contribute to the Council's duties to secure best value and contribute in part to an aim linked to equality of opportunity across the islands.

21.9 The principal requirement of the local education authority is to provide adequate and efficient education and it must ensure that this education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential.

21.10 Children's Services does not believe it is delivering these obligations to their fullest extent in Skerries School Secondary Department as the curricular opportunities are limited, access to suitably qualified staff is limited, and the children have very limited access to any class mates to learn in groups with, learn from, or play team games with. Opportunities to develop social skills and a suitably wide range of communication skills in line with the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence are inherently limited.

21.11 It is incumbent upon Children's Services to offer the best possible educational opportunities to all of the children in Shetland. Children's Services does not believe that educating tiny numbers of children together offers the best possible educational opportunity for those children for their secondary education. The shortcomings in this model are highlighted more starkly now with the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence, and the entitlements for all children within that framework.

21.12 There remains huge resistance within the community of Skerries to closing their secondary department. Children's Services accepts this, but considers the imperative to deliver a better education to the children of Skerries to be an outcome it must continue to pursue. All of the information, views and concerns gathered during the consultation period, provides relevant community planning partners in Shetland with all the information they need to support Skerries to continue to thrive as a community, should the secondary department close.

21.13 For critical educational reasons heightened by the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, the secondary aged children from Skerries School should be educated in the Anderson High School. They will receive a very high quality education there, will have access to a range of specialist teachers, and be able to socialise and learn with groups of children their own age. They will be very well supported in the Halls of Residence and will be able to travel home each weekend.

21.14 Of the thirty-eight written responses received during the consultation, 60% disagreed with the proposal, 24% agreed with the proposal and 16% did not express an opinion.

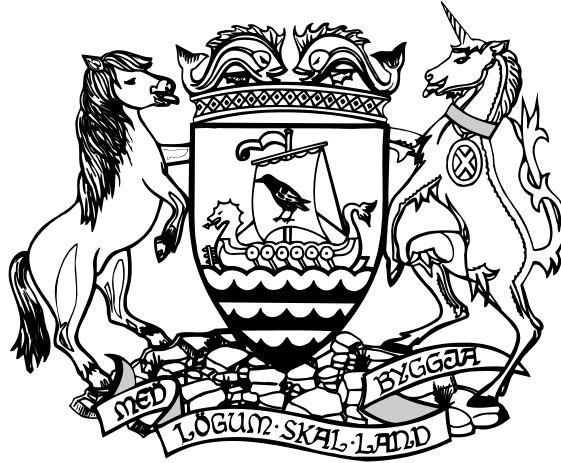
21.15 This proposal, if implemented has the potential to provide recurring savings to Shetland Islands Council of £76, 336. This amount will be reduced to £73,473 by providing an

escort on the ferry to accompany the children. This proposal makes an ongoing contribution to Children's Services meeting its target budget agreed in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

22. Recommendation

Children's Services therefore recommends that:

- 22.1 education provision at Skerries School Secondary Department be discontinued with effect from 4 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- 22.2 the pupils of Skerries School Secondary Department continue their education at the Anderson High School from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- 22.3 the catchment area for Anderson High School be altered to include the current catchment area for Skerries School Secondary Department.



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

Appendix A – Proposal Paper



Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services
Proposal Paper
May 2013

The following Schools are affected by this Proposal:

- **Skerries School**
- **Anderson High School**

This Proposal Paper has been issued by Shetland Islands Council Children's Services in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Contents

	Section Name	Page Number
1.	The Proposal	3
2.	Summary of the Process for this Proposal Paper	4
3.	Background Information	8
4.	Present Position	13
5.	Educational Benefits Statement	20
6.	Consideration of Factors Affecting Rural Schools	29
7.	Other Issues	33
8.	Conclusion	37
	Appendices	38

NB: Services Committee was replaced in part by Education and Families Committee in May 2011.

Schools Service, Education and Social Care was replaced by Schools/Quality Improvement, Children's Services in May 2011.

These terms are used somewhat interchangeably throughout this document.

Shetland Islands Council

Children's Services

THIS IS A PROPOSAL PAPER

1. THE PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Proposal Paper has been prepared by the Children's Services in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (the Act).
- 1.2 The Act sets out a consultation procedure which a Local Authority must follow for certain proposals affecting schools in their area. The current proposal is for the discontinuation of a stage of education and is therefore subject to the consultation procedure.
- 1.3 The first step of the consultation procedure is the publication of the Proposal Paper. The Proposal Paper sets out the details of the relevant proposal and contains the Educational Benefits Statement in respect of the proposal.

Detail of the Proposal:

That subject to the outcome of this proposal exercise and statutory consultation process as set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010:

1. Education provision at Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
2. The pupils of Skerries School Secondary Department continue their education at the Anderson High School from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter and
3. The catchment area for the Anderson High School be altered to include the current catchment area for Skerries School Secondary Department.

PROPOSED DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL

- 1.4 The proposed date for the implementation of the Proposal is 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter.

2. SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS FOR THIS PROPOSAL PAPER

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Proposal Paper Published

2.1 The Proposal Paper will be available for inspection, free of charge, at Skerries School, Skerries, the Anderson High School, Lovers' Loan, Lerwick, at the Shetland Library, Lower Hillhead, Lerwick, and published on the Shetland Islands Council website: www.shetland.gov.uk.

2.2 Copies of this Proposal Paper are also available on request from:

Children's Services
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
Shetland
ZE1 0QD

2.3 This Proposal Paper is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to:

Children's Services
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
Shetland
ZE1 0QD

Telephone 01595 744000 or

email: blueprintforeducation@shetland.gov.uk

2.4 Information on the proposal will be made available, free of charge, to the consultees listed as follows:

- the Parent Councils of the affected schools;
- the parents of the pupils of the affected schools;
- the parents of any children expected by the Children's Services to attend the affected schools within two years of the date of the publication of the Proposal Paper;
- the pupils at the affected schools in so far as the Children's Services considers them to be of a suitable age and maturity;
- the staff (teaching and other) at the affected schools;
- any trade union which is a representative of the staff;
- the Community Councils of the affected areas;
- Shetland Partnership (the Community Planning Partnership);
- any other users of the affected schools that the Children's Services considers relevant;
- the constituency Member of the Scottish Parliament;
- the constituency Member of Parliament;
- the List Members of the Scottish Parliament.

Advertisement in Local Media

- 2.5 An advertisement will be placed in the relevant local media on Friday 10 May 2013, giving the dates for the consultation period and public meetings.

Consultation Period

- 2.6 The consultation for this proposal will run from Tuesday 14 May 2013 and will end on Friday 28 June 2013. This period allows for the statutory minimum of 30 school days.

Public Meetings

- 2.7 Public meetings will be held on:

Tuesday 28 May 2013
Anderson High School
Lerwick
7.00 pm to 9.00 pm

and

Friday 07 June 2013
Skerries Hall
Skerries
12.00 to 2.00 pm

A record will be taken at the meeting of questions, responses and views. This record will be published on the Shetland Islands Council website and a copy will be made available on request.

Meetings with Pupils and Staff

- 2.8 Meetings will be held with pupils (who are considered to be of a suitable age and maturity) and staff in the affected schools. A record will be taken of questions, responses and views. This will be published in the Consultation Report.

RESPONDING TO THE PROPOSAL

- 2.9 Interested parties are invited to respond to the Proposal by making written or electronic submissions on the Proposal to:

Children's Services
 Blueprint for Education (Skerries School Secondary Department
 Consultation)
 Hayfield House
 Hayfield Lane
 LERWICK
 ZE1 0QD

or

email: blueprintforeducation@shetland.gov.uk

- 2.10 A response form is available from Children's Services, Hayfield House, Hayfield Lane, Lerwick, ZE1 0QD, or online at www.shetland.gov.uk for the convenience of those wishing to respond electronically. Its use is not compulsory.

If you wish to respond by letter or electronically you are invited to state your relationship with the school – for example, “pupil”, “parent”, “grandparent”, “former pupil”, “teacher in school”, “member of the Community” etc. Responses from Parent Councils, staff and Pupil Councils are particularly welcome.

Please be aware that the content of your response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If you do not wish the content of your response to be made publicly available, you should clearly state: “I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Councillors and council officers of Shetland Islands Council.” Otherwise, it will be assumed that you agree to the content of your response being made publicly available.

No personal information provided as part of a response will be made publicly available.

All written responses must be received by the last day of the consultation period, 28 June 2013.

INVOLVEMENT OF EDUCATION SCOTLAND (previously HMle)

- 2.11 When the Proposal Paper is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland by Shetland Islands Council. Education Scotland will also receive a copy of written representations received by Shetland Islands Council from any person during the consultation period or, if Education Scotland agree, a summary of them. Education Scotland will be invited to the public meetings. Education Scotland will further receive a summary of any oral representation made to the Council at the public meetings that will be held and a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the Proposal not later than three weeks after Shetland Islands Council has sent them all representations and documents

mentioned above or within such longer period as is agreed between them. As a result of the summer holiday period, Children's Services has agreed with Education Scotland that the three-week period will commence on Monday 26 August 2013.

In preparing their report, Education Scotland may enter the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries of such people there as they consider appropriate and may make such reasonable enquiries of such other people as they consider appropriate.

FIRST REVIEW PERIOD

- 2.12 Once the consultation period has ended, Shetland Islands Council will review the Proposal having regard to the report by Education Scotland, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. Children's Services will then, on behalf of Shetland Islands Council, prepare a Consultation Report.

CONSULTATION REPORT

- 2.13 The Consultation Report will be published in electronic and printed formats. It will be available on the Shetland Islands Council website, from Hayfield House, the Shetland Library, as well as the affected schools, free of charge.

Anyone who made written representations during the Consultation Period will also be informed about the Consultation Report. The Consultation Report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the Consultation Period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meetings, as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the report by Education Scotland, the Authority's response to that report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled.

The Consultation Report will also contain a statement explaining how it complied with the requirement to review the Proposal in light of the report by Education Scotland and representations (both written and oral) that it received.

SECOND REVIEW PERIOD

- 2.14 The Consultation Report will be published and available for further consideration for a period of three weeks, before it is presented to Education and Families Committee.

SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL DECISION

- 2.15 The Consultation Report, together with any other relevant documentation, will then be considered by Education and Families Committee, who will make a

recommendation. This recommendation is then subject to Shetland Islands Council approval.

SCOTTISH MINISTERS CALL-IN

- 2.16 As set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Authority is required to notify the Scottish Ministers of the decision made by Shetland Islands Council, and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Paper and Consultation Report.

The Scottish Ministers have a six-week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the Proposal. Within the first three weeks of that six-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the six-week call-in process has been notified to Shetland Islands Council, the Council will not proceed to implement the decision made as regarding the Proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the Proposal they may refuse to consent to the Proposal or grant their consent to the Proposal, subject to conditions, or unconditionally.

NOTE ON CORRECTIONS

- 2.17 If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this Proposal Paper, either by Shetland Islands Council or any person, Shetland Islands Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or there has been an inaccuracy. It will then take appropriate action which may include the issue of a correction or the re-issuing of the Proposal Paper, or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland will be advised.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In June 2007, Children's Services was given a remit by Shetland Islands Council, through the Corporate Plan, "to develop a modern blueprint for the shape of the service across Shetland for 10 years time". Children's Services has been working on developing a Blueprint for Education since being given this remit. Some of the key milestones are set out below.
- 3.2 In November 2007, the Services Committee of Shetland Islands Council considered a report "Developing a Blueprint for the Education Service". Following consideration of the report, Councillors agreed that:
- the key drivers should be to provide the best quality educational opportunities and best quality learning environment for all;
 - in so doing, the opportunity for savings to bring budgets to a sustainable level should be considered; and
 - the final Blueprint was presented to Services Committee with an action plan to look at all schools, internal management, the necessary investment required, quality of education, new ways of delivering education and the potential for each school within a realistic timescale.

- 3.3 Membership of a Member/Officer Working Group was agreed in early 2008 in order to help take forward the development of a Blueprint for Education.
- 3.4 As a result of the issues emerging from the Working Group, Shetland Islands Council gave approval for Children's Services to undertake a community-wide informal consultation consisting of a widely distributed questionnaire and comprehensive series of meetings in order to inform the direction of the Blueprint for Education. Following analysis of the consultation outcomes Councillors approved the following Principles for Education in March 2009:
- to ensure strategic planning, effective leadership and quality assurance to bring about improvement;
 - to ensure effective partnership working;
 - to ensure that all families have access to quality early education and childcare provision;
 - to ensure all schools deliver Curriculum for Excellence, specifically, a broad curriculum, a breadth of experience, social interaction and learning experiences;
 - to ensure all learners experience smooth transitions between stages of learning, supported by the highest possible professional standards;
 - to ensure all learners in Shetland have equal opportunity throughout their educational experience to enable them to achieve their full potential;
 - to ensure that these principles are delivered within Shetland Islands Council's budget.

These principles are Shetland Islands Council policy and underpin the development of the Blueprint for Education.

- 3.5 Children's Services undertook work on various aspects of education service delivery. Informed by this work it was agreed by Shetland Islands Council that Children's Services undertake a consultation process to gather information on options for change across all schools in Shetland. This informal consultation took place between January 2010 and the end of March 2010. Further information can be found at www.shetland.gov.uk
- 3.6 Following an evaluation of the informal consultation, nine proposals were presented to Services Committee on 17 June 2010.
- 3.7 Services Committee and subsequently Shetland Islands Council agreed to take forward the Blueprint for Education Primary Proposal 2 and Secondary Proposal 2.
- 3.8 Secondary Proposal 2 included:
- "Formal consultation would begin for the closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and Skerries School Secondary Department."
- 3.9 Primary Proposal 2 included:
- "Formal consultation would begin for the closure of Uyeasound Primary School, Burravoe Primary School, North Roe Primary School, Olnafirth Primary School and Sandness Primary School."

- 3.10 Between August 2010 and May 2011, Children's Services undertook Statutory Consultation on the Proposals in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. As a result of these consultations and subsequent approval from Shetland Islands Council and the Scottish Minister, education provision was discontinued at Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and at Uyeasound Primary School.
- 3.11 The planned Statutory Consultation on education provision at Olnafirth Primary School due to take place in August 2011 was deferred following the implementation of a national year-long Moratorium on Rural School Closures in June 2011. A Commission on the Delivery of Rural School Education was also established and has now reported. The key recommendations made by the Commission have been considered during the development of this report.
- 3.12 In February 2012 Councillors asked Children's Services to "undertake a refresh of the Blueprint for Education using existing information, taking account of the outcome of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural School Education deliberations and guidance, when available, considering the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, the Senior Phase, the National Qualifications range and links with further education/other learning settings and based on the underpinning principles of the Blueprint for Education project of equality, quality and value for money, and taking account all new learning methods and Information Communication Technology links and facilities".
- 3.13 Children's Services reported back to Councillors on 20 September 2012 and they approved the following:
- Shetland Islands Council's Statement for Education 2012-2017
 "We will ensure the best quality education for all our pupils to enable them to become successful learners, who are confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. We will achieve this through the highest standard of teaching and learning delivered in modern, well equipped school buildings which are financially sustainable".
 - Shetland Islands Council's Commitments for Education 2012-2017. These commitments were made taking account of the Principles of Education agreed by Councillors in March 2009. See 3.4.
 - Primary Education: we will provide primary education in all our remote isles with pre-school provision as and when required. We will organise primary education in establishments which are viable both educationally and financially.
 - Secondary Education: we will organise education to provide the breadth of curriculum to best develop a young person's skills and particular interests in viable establishments/schools.
 - Childcare: it will be developed in line with the Childcare Strategy. We will work with voluntary and private sector providers to secure more integrated and flexible services that meet local need.

- Youth Strategy: we will develop a Youth Strategy for Shetland which encapsulates activities children and young people are involved in across Shetland.
- Catchment Areas: we will consult on any change to a school's catchment area as part of any future statutory consultation process.
- Travel Times: we will organise transport to ensure that, as far as possible, pupils will not travel for longer than the current maximum single journey time in 2011/12.
- Transport: we will ensure School Transport is given high priority.
- Community involvement in Schools: we will work to ensure that: children's community identity is protected, opportunities are put in place for them to be participating in any new school community they are part of and the Youth Strategy is developed to enhance young people's participation in the communities they are part of.
- Use of Buildings: we will ensure that the potential use of school buildings will be part of the statutory consultation process.

- Shetland Islands Council's Plan for Delivering Education 2012-2017

Phase 1

Closure Proposal	Receiving School	Statutory Consultation	Proposed Transfer Date
Aith Junior High School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2013	August 2014
Skerries School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2013	August 2014
Olnafirth Primary School	Brae High School Primary Department	2013	August 2014
*Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2013	August 2016

Phase 2

Closure Proposal	Receiving School	Statutory Consultation	Proposed Transfer Date
Burravoe Primary School	Mid Yell Junior High School Primary Department	2014	August 2015
North Roe Primary School	Ollaberry Primary School	2014	August 2015
Urafirth Primary School	Ollaberry Primary School	2014	August 2015
Urafirth Primary School Nursery Department	Ollaberry Primary School	2014	August 2015

Phase 3

Closure Proposal	Receiving School	Statutory Consultation	Proposed Transfer Date
Whalsay School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2015	August 2016
Sandness Primary School	Happyhansel Primary School	2015	August 2016

*The statutory consultation regarding the proposed closure of Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department was moved from Phase 3 to Phase 1 following requests from Sandwick Parent Council. This was approved by Education and Families Committee on 23 January 2013 and Shetland Islands Council on 18 February 2013.

- 3.14 As stated above, consultation was undertaken between August 2010 and May 2011 on closing Skerries School Secondary Department. The outcome of that Proposal was that a majority of Councillors voted for Skerries School Secondary Department to stay open at that time. The reason for re-visiting this proposal so soon is principally due to concerns about educational sustainability, including concerns about future teacher recruitment for a three-pupil secondary school department. The proposal to revisit Skerries School Secondary Department has been widely publicised locally, along with the other Blueprint Proposals, since mid-2012 and a Parent Council (not Skerries) has asked for and been granted an altered timeline within the overall Blueprint scheduling.
- 3.15 On 20 September 2012, the Medium Term Financial Plan was approved by Shetland Islands Council. This included an identified saving of £3.249 million from the implementation of the Blueprint for Education.

4. PRESENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Shetland Partnership Community Plan 2012 – 2020 has a purpose “to work together and with communities to make Shetland a place where people want to live, because of our quality of life, employment opportunities, our strong sense of community and our stunning environment”.
- 4.2 It sets out its commitments in relation to priority areas:
- Equalities “we will actively monitor equal opportunities and adhere to statutory duties”.
 - Sustainability “we will make sustainable decisions and work to ensure that our actions meet our present needs without impinging on future generations”.
 - Community Engagement “we will support the development of strong, active and inclusive communities that are involved in decision-making”.
 - Prevention and Early Intervention “we will work together to prevent problems for individuals arising in the first place and to stop problems becoming more serious than are already evident”.
- 4.3 The Community Plan 2012 – 2020 sets out specific priorities. One of these priorities relates to learning and support. The local outcomes associated with this priority are defined as:
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens;
 - We have improved the life choices for children, young people and families at risk.

Children’s Services is strongly committed to the Community Plan and in particular to this section. Children’s Services is leading on some of the key workstreams, including fully implementing Curriculum for Excellence. This Proposal concerning Skerries School Secondary Department supports the first outcome detailed above by increasing opportunities and increased peer interaction for pupils.

The Community Plan also articulates a priority for communities to be wealthier and fairer, with one of the key outcomes relating to public sector financial sustainability which this Proposal also supports.

- 4.4 The multi-agency Single Outcome Agreement 2012/13, led by the Local Authority, reiterates the commitments set out in the Community Plan in relation to both learning and support and wealthier and fairer. This Proposal is thus also in line with the Single Outcome Agreement.
- 4.5 Shetland Islands Council’s priorities were approved within the Medium Term Financial Plan on 20 September 2012 by Shetland Islands Council. The core themes set out as Council priorities were:
- a soundly-led and managed council, living within its means;
 - focussed on delivering essential services efficiently and effectively, particularly those critical services for children and the elderly, and transport;
 - being mindful of how change could affect the vulnerable and

disadvantaged;

- conscious that a healthy economy and strong communities underpin Shetland's long-term viability;
- awareness that we must all work together across the Council and with all our partners to achieve the best results.

This Proposal supports these priorities, in particular the first two. An updated Council Corporate Plan is currently in draft form and, whilst the Plan has not yet been submitted for approval, it is expected that it will be developed using the above priorities and including the key Council plans and actions set out in the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement. That being the case, this Proposal will also be in line with the upcoming Corporate Plan.

- 4.6 The Proposal to discontinue secondary education at Skerries School is one part of a group of proposals agreed by Shetland Islands Council on 20 September 2012.
- 4.7 The Blueprint for Education is a management project with significant changes to determine the future of education in Shetland, remitted by Shetland Islands Council Services Committee in June 2007. At the time, the principle drivers were, given the projected decline in the pupil population across Shetland, to create an educationally and financially sustainable model of education for the future.
- 4.8 Shetland Islands Council now faces significant strategic challenges and the Blueprint for Education must be considered in this context. The Blueprint for Education is a management project with significant changes which addresses strategic priorities, allocation of resources, a Best Value Option Appraisal, and choices over value for money.
- 4.9 In presenting the Blueprint for Education Proposals to Shetland Islands Council Services Committee in June 2010 Children's Services presented Councillors with a number of strategic proposals for the future of education in Shetland. All of these took account of the outcomes of a number of community consultations and provided options for increasing levels of change. They also took account of the implications of Curriculum for Excellence for Shetland's school estate and presented significant levels of savings in Children's Services revenue budgets.
- 4.10 Up until recently, Shetland Islands Council has been in a position to use reserves to support the school estate within this community in terms of the numbers of schools and the levels of staffing within them. As a result, Shetland provides high-quality education to all its pupils as evidenced in almost all reports by Education Scotland. However due to spare capacity and high levels of staffing, this comes at a significantly higher cost per pupil than the Scottish average. The national figures for 2013/14 are not available. The latest published figures are for 2011/12 and show that the average cost per secondary pupil in Shetland is £9,517 and in Scotland is £5,681.
- 4.11 Overall, across Shetland, the secondary school estate is only 71% occupied. There are 2411 pupil places available in secondary schools in Shetland and in May 2013, only 1437 of those pupil places were occupied.

- 4.12 In 2009 the Scottish Government also articulated its vision for the future school estate in Scotland, in 'Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future'. Local Authorities are required to take account of these aspirations in planning changes to their school estate, namely:
- all children and young people will be educated in, and community users will use, schools that are 'fit for purpose' in terms of condition, suitability and sufficiency;
 - schools are well-designed, accessible, inclusive learning environments that inspire and drive new thinking and change and which support the delivery of high quality educational experiences through Curriculum for Excellence;
 - schools are integral parts of the communities they serve, with pupils making use of community facilities and communities accessing school facilities;
 - schools accommodate and provide a range of services, activities and facilities that make a difference to people's health and wellbeing, to sustaining economic growth and to the strength and vibrancy of communities;
 - a sustainable school estate whose design, construction and operation is environmentally and energy efficient; contributes directly to delivering the year-on-year reductions in greenhouse gas emissions introduced by The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, which is resilient to the impact of climate change and which leads by example in matters of environmental performance;
 - a school estate that is efficiently run and that maximises value for money;
 - a school estate which is flexible and responsive — both to changes in demand for school places and to learners' and teachers' requirements and wishes, and where the beneficial impact of change is maximised by thorough consultation and engagement with users and stakeholders.
- 4.13 Shetland Islands Council must take account of all of these aspirations in making changes to the school estate.
- 4.14 In addition, Education Scotland, an executive agency of the Scottish Government, continues to provide external evaluations of the quality of education in Scottish schools through their regular cycle of school inspections.
- 4.15 The last school inspection report for Skerries School was published on 30 August 2005. The key strengths identified by the inspectors were:
- the friendly, welcoming ethos and the strong sense of identity and pride in the school;
 - very close relationships between the school and the local community;
 - high quality accommodation and provision of resources for learning;
 - polite, very well-behaved and motivated pupils;
 - commitment of all staff to the care and educational experiences of each pupil;
 - the hard work and flexible approach of the Head Teacher and her staff in providing a broad and balanced curriculum at all stages.

4.16 The last inspection report for Anderson High School was published on 28 February 2012. The key strengths identified by the inspectors were:

- well-behaved, responsible young people who are keen to learn and actively support their school and community;
- a safe, caring, supportive and inclusive environment for all young people;
- high quality support from specialist staff for young people with particular learning needs;
- staff's enthusiasm and dedication to enhancing experiences for young people;
- the strong lead and direction from the Head Teacher, ably supported by the Depute Head Teachers.

Skerries School Secondary Department

4.17 Skerries School serves the islands of Out Skerries as shown in Appendix 1, and provides education for all the children on the isles up to and including Secondary 4. Following Secondary 4, pupils transfer to the Anderson High School in Lerwick where they live in the Halls of Residence during the school week, returning to Skerries at weekends.

4.18 Skerries School was built in 1966 and an extension added circa 2000. In the current session, there are three pupils on the Skerries School Secondary Department roll. The projected trend is for the roll to remain steady with two or three pupils for the coming years.

4.19 The Secondary Department has a capacity of 18 pupils, therefore currently it is operating at 17% occupancy. For the current session, there were no placing requests for pupils from Skerries School to attend other schools including the Anderson High School and no placing requests for pupils to attend Skerries School Secondary Department.

4.20 In terms of the Scottish Government Condition Core Fact, the building has been assessed as Condition B (Satisfactory).

4.21 In terms of the Scottish Government Suitability Core Fact, the building has been assessed as Condition A (Good).

Anderson High School

4.22 The Anderson High School is a six year secondary school and provides education for pupils from Secondary 1 to Secondary 6. Pupils from the associated schools of Bell's Brae Primary, Sound Primary, Bressay Primary, Fetlar Primary, Foula Primary, Fair Isle Primary, Scalloway Primary, Hamnavoe Primary, Tingwall Primary, Whiteness Primary and Nesting Primary transfer to the Anderson High School at the end of Primary 7. The catchment area is shown as Appendix 2.

4.23 Pupils from Baltasound Junior High School, Mid Yell Junior High School, Whalsay School, Skerries School, Aith Junior High School and Sandwick Junior High School transfer to the Anderson High School at the end of

Secondary 4.

- 4.24 Halls of Residence accommodation is provided for pupils transferring from Fetlar Primary School, Foula Primary School, Fair Isle Primary School, Baltasound Junior High School, Mid Yell Junior High School, Whalsay School, Skerries School and some secondary pupils from remote mainland areas on the west side of Shetland.
- 4.25 In the current session, 843 pupils are enrolled at the Anderson High School. This includes a number of placing requests from schools outwith the catchment area. The number of placing requests to the Anderson High School dropped significantly following the closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department.

2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 (to date)
24	32	12	6	7

- 4.26 The Anderson High School's current pupil roll is 843. This is projected to increase to 902 in 2013/14, decreasing to 845 in 2014/15 and increasing to 857 in 2015/16. This projection does not include any potential placing requests.
- 4.27 In terms of the Scottish Government Condition Core Fact, the building has been assessed as Condition B (Satisfactory).
- 4.28 In terms of the Scottish Government Suitability Core Fact, the building has been assessed as Condition B (Satisfactory).

ATTAINMENT

Skerries School

- 4.29 Skerries School provides education for pupils until the end of Secondary 4.
- 4.30 The number of pupils taking formal examinations in any one year in Skerries School is too small to produce attainment data that can be compared to national or local statistics. Often there is one child in a year group and therefore it is inappropriate to publish detailed attainment records in this Proposal Paper.
- 4.31 Staff at Skerries School Secondary Department, seek to offer a personalised curriculum for Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils. This curriculum is limited in that access to subject resources and qualified teachers is restricted. This is particularly relevant in some practical courses and subjects such as Modern Foreign Languages.

Anderson High School

- 4.32 The Anderson High School provides education for pupils until the end of Secondary 6. The attainment figures for pupils achieving awards as part of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) for the last four

years are listed below:

- 4.33 Percentage of the S4 year group achieving five or more awards at SCQF Level 3 (Standard Grade, Foundation Level or equivalent) or better.

	% of S4 Roll					
By end of S4	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Anderson High School	91%	94%	96%	99%	91%	93%
Shetland Islands	95%	95%	97%	97%	94%	94%
Scotland	91%	91%	91%	92%	93%	94%

- 4.34 Percentage of the S4 year group achieving five or more awards at SCQF Level 4 (Standard Grade, General Level or equivalent) or better.

	% of S4 Roll					
By end of S4	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Anderson High School	83%	88%	89%	94%	88%	87%
Shetland Islands	88%	90%	90%	91%	88%	87%
Scotland	76%	76%	78%	78%	79%	80%

- 4.35 Percentage of the S4 year group achieving five or more awards at SCQF Level 5 (Standard Grade, Credit Level or equivalent) or better.

	% of S4 Roll					
By end of S4	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Anderson High School	37%	43%	40%	50%	45%	47%
Shetland Islands	42%	49%	46%	47%	58%	53%
Scotland	33%	34%	35%	36%	36%	37%

STAFFING

- 4.36 Skerries School Secondary Department currently has the full-time equivalent of 1.2 teaching staff and a number of other support staff. Skerries School is a small remote all-through school and so a number of staff are used across all the departments, i.e. nursery, primary and secondary.

Skerries School Staff Full-Time Equivalent	
Primary Teaching Staff	1.4
Secondary Teaching Staff	1.2
Support Staff (Whole School)	0.7
Cleaning Staff	0.25
Total	3.55

- 4.37 The Anderson High School currently has 74.3 full-time equivalent secondary teachers, 25.2 Additional Support Needs staff and a number of support staff.

Anderson High School Staff Full-Time Equivalent	
Teaching Staff (minus Additional Support Needs)	74.3
Additional Support Needs Staff (under central cost centre)	34.33
Support Staff	11.2
Staff whose base school is Anderson High School (2 music instructors)	2
Catering and Cleaning Staff	14.1
Total	136

5. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

Introduction

- 5.1 The Educational Benefits Statement has been prepared by Children's Services in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 5.2 In preparing an Educational Benefits Statement, The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires Local Authorities to take account of a number of factors and evidence how it has done this. These are:
- current and future pupils of the affected schools;
 - current and future users of the facilities of the affected schools;
 - how the Local Authority will minimise any adverse impacts arising from the Proposal;
 - the likely effects on other pupils in the Local Authority.
- 5.3 The Act does not limit or list the matters which need to be included in an Educational Benefits Statement. However Statutory Guidance does highlight to Local Authorities that it must demonstrate in their Educational Benefits Statement how a proposal will:
- improve the quality of the curriculum and create positive environments for more effective learning and teaching better matched to the needs of learners;
 - improve the depth, breadth, coherence, relevance, challenge and enjoyment provided by the curriculum;
 - provide more opportunities for greater personalisation and choice in learning and improved progression which will enhance children's experiences; this will include the use of information and communications technology and arrangements for assessing and planning learners' progress;
 - impact on the overall ethos of the school, including the care and welfare of pupils and their personal and social development;
 - improve equality of opportunity for all within an inclusive educational experience, in the widest sense, for pupils and achievement, and for interdisciplinary learning and beyond.
- 5.4 The Statutory Guidance on the Act also provides Local Authorities with a number of other issues which may be relevant to the educational benefits of a proposal. These are:
- the condition and suitability of the school buildings and facilities (and where a proposal would involve pupils moving from one school to another, the relative condition of both);
 - changing patterns of demand for school places if there is a growing mismatch between supply and demand;
 - the travel and transport context and implications of a proposal if, for instance, they would impact differently on pupils' broader social experiences and opportunities to participate in and benefit from out-of-hours learning;
 - financial and budgetary considerations may also be relevant in situations

where disparities in the costs of the delivery of education may have grown, to the detriment of the greater good, at least to the point where an authority considers that they require to be reviewed.

- 5.5 The Educational Benefits Statement is also the place for the Local Authority to set out the relationship between a proposed change and their education-related statutory duties and how the proposal fits with the continued fulfilment of these other obligations.
- 5.6 The key statutory duties for a Local Authority in relation to the delivery of school education are:
- **The Education (Scotland) Act 1980**, which requires authorities to secure for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education and the provision of sufficient school accommodation;
 - **The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000**, which requires Local Authorities to endeavour to raise standards and secure improvement in the quality of school education provided in their schools; to ensure that the education it provides is directed to the development of the personality, talents and the mental and physical abilities of the children or young people to their fullest potential;
 - **The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland) Act 2009**, which requires authorities to identify and provide support for any children with additional support needs and prepare co-ordinated support plans for those with the most extensive needs.

Educational Benefits of the Proposal

- 5.7 As outlined in the Background Information and in the Present Position contained in this Proposal Paper, the Proposal to discontinue secondary education in Skerries School is a proposal which following the Moratorium on Rural School Closures was further considered by Shetland Islands Council on 20 September 2012. It was agreed to progress the Proposal in 2013.
- 5.8 The Blueprint for Education is a significant strategic piece of work to determine the future of education in Shetland, remitted by Shetland Islands Council Services Committee in June 2007 and again by Education and Families Committee in February 2012. The principal drivers are to create an educationally and financially sustainable model of education for the future.
- 5.9 Children's Services has a duty to deliver a service which meets the criteria for best value, in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, economy and equal opportunities.
- 5.10 Children's Services is able to demonstrate that it delivers a good quality service overall, evidenced through good attainment and achievement results and the outcomes of Education Scotland inspections.
- 5.11 However, Shetland Islands Council's current model cannot demonstrate equality of opportunity or efficiency in delivery.

- 5.12 The Proposal to discontinue secondary education in Skerries School is one element of the Blueprint for Education proposals which address issues around equality of provision for all pupils in Shetland and seek to achieve a more efficient, cost effective and sustainable model of delivery.
- 5.13 The Anderson High School offers a better quality physical learning environment, with a wide variety of modern spacious classrooms and a number of dedicated social spaces. There are also outdoor sporting facilities.
- 5.14 Transferring pupils from Skerries School Secondary Department will offer the opportunity for pupils to be part of more viable cohorts for a variety of activities, including taking part in team events and sporting competitions. It will mean there is access to a larger peer group of a similar age, stage and gender for learning.
- 5.15 All the children currently attending Skerries School Secondary Department could move to Anderson High School without the need for any increase in teaching staff numbers.
- 5.16 The Proposal has the potential to save a significant amount of the staffing costs currently incurred at Skerries School, and slightly reduce the cost per pupil at the receiving school.
- 5.17 Both schools affected by this Proposal are staffed by experienced teaching staff. The Head Teacher post at Skerries School recently had to be advertised three times before a suitable appointment could be made.
- 5.18 One of the Agreed Principles for Education in Shetland is to ensure smooth transitions which Children's Services has interpreted to include minimising the number of transitions a child experiences in their school education. Currently children, who attend Skerries School, if they remain in school education up to the end of Secondary 6, and if they have attended pre-school education, will have experienced one transition. Moving the pupils to Anderson High School will mean that there is still only one transition but it is at an earlier stage.
- 5.19 Children's Services recognises that Skerries School offers a quality education to its pupils. This was confirmed by Education Scotland in the Report on the school published on 30 August 2005. The same was true of the Anderson High School when Education Scotland published their report on 28 February 2012. However, this comes at a high unit cost. Skerries School Secondary Department is operating at 17% capacity. Anderson High School is operating at 70% capacity.

Curriculum

Skerries School

- 5.20 Skerries School is implementing Curriculum for Excellence. Pupils taught in Skerries School Secondary Department have the majority of the curriculum delivered by the Head Teacher. There are challenges in maintaining the core curriculum due to the number of subjects a secondary teacher is qualified to

teach. Currently, a visiting teacher delivers Music and Religious and Moral Education one day a week to all pupils in the school, and instructors living locally assist in the delivery of Secondary 1 to Secondary 2 Home Economics and Art.

Pupils in Skerries School Secondary Department are taught together usually in the same classroom and by the same teacher for a large proportion of the school week. It is difficult to maintain a curriculum for pupils based on following a standard staff to pupil ratio in such a small department.

The access to continuing professional development and peer interaction is significantly limited for professional staff in Skerries.

Pupils transferring to the Anderson High School would have access to a wider range of teaching expertise. This would result in greater subject choice and increased access to qualifications at different levels.

Skerries School Secondary Department offers the following courses:

<i>Level</i>	<i>Number of Courses</i>
<i>Intermediate 2</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Standard Grade</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Intermediate 1</i>	

Anderson High School

5.21 Anderson High School offers the following courses:

<i>Level</i>	<i>Number of Courses</i>
<i>Advanced Higher</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Higher</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Intermediate 2</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Standard Grade</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Intermediate 1</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Access 2</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Access 3</i>	<i>3</i>

A transferring pupil would be able to access a number of courses that are not currently available at Skerries School due to a lack of specialist staff and resources. These include Craft and Design and Graphic Communication. Some of these subjects may be relevant to employment opportunities in the

area. Pupils would also have access to qualified teachers in all subject areas chosen, including Modern Foreign Languages and Physical Education. The current arrangement leads to inequality of opportunities for the young people in Skerries.

The Anderson High School delivers Curriculum for Excellence, offering a broad general education from Secondary 1 to Secondary 3, with pupils transferring to the Senior Phase at the beginning of Secondary 4 in 2013.

Pupils transferring to the Anderson High School would be able to participate fully with peers of similar age, stage and gender in a broad general education and then enjoy the flexibility of accessing the Senior Phase at the most appropriate time. The current transfer point from Skerries School is Secondary 4, one year into the Senior Phase. This limits the opportunities more able pupils will have in Skerries School Secondary Department to access the Level 4 Curriculum for Excellence outcomes at an appropriate stage, owing to the lack of access to appropriately qualified specialist teachers.

Pupils attending the Anderson High School are taught in subject, stage and age appropriate classes. Pupils attending the Anderson High School have the opportunity to access a much wider and varied peer group. Pupils in Skerries School Secondary Department have limited opportunities during the school week to interact with peers and would benefit from the positive social interaction experienced by pupils in larger settings.

Learning Environment / Resources

- 5.22 Secondary pupils at Skerries School would benefit from access to a much wider range of facilities available at the Anderson High School. These include specialist classrooms and teaching areas in Music, Technologies, Computing, Physical Education, Home Economics, Sciences, Modern Foreign Languages and library facilities. The majority of secondary subjects at Skerries School are taught in one classroom.
- 5.23 Pupils would benefit from access to sporting facilities, i.e. a games hall, gymnasium, weight training room and outdoor sports courts. They would also be able to use the Clickimin Leisure Complex which has games halls, running track, sports pitches and a 25-metre swimming pool. The island of Skerries has no dedicated and purpose-built sport and leisure facilities available for school use.
- 5.24 Pupils would also benefit from a wider range of different teaching opportunities and would have the opportunities to work with others in group learning and active learning tasks.

Information Communication Technology

- 5.25 Glow is available within all Shetland schools. Glow is the Scottish national intranet for education and gives access to information and activities including interactive educational games, revision papers, links to other sites and news features. It also includes e-mail and basic video conferencing facilities and provides facilities for pupils and staff to collaborate remotely. The effectiveness of its use depends on the equipment and bandwidth available in the school and also the level of staff expertise in this area.

Skerries School

- 5.26 At present, the school has network and internet provision through a 12 megabit (Mb) Pathfinder link. However, the Scottish Government-funded Pathfinder project ceases in March 2014 and Shetland Islands Council may not be able to maintain a high bandwidth network connection to Skerries. The proposed replacement solution will limit bandwidth for internet connectivity to approximately 1Mb. This may well affect the school's capacity to utilise information and communications technology to its fullest extent in learning and teaching as well as in other areas.

There are twelve computers in the school and there is also a server. Ten of the computers are laptops and two are desktop computers.

Anderson High School

- 5.27 The Anderson High School had an upgrade of its information communication technology resources. This included an upgrade of the servers and infrastructure, including wireless networking, and high speed internet connections. Pupils in the Anderson High School have access to the following educational resources:

- networked desktop computers;
- networked laptops and Netbooks;
- Colour laser printers throughout the school;
- Interactive whiteboards in the majority of classrooms and in all subject areas;
- Digital projectors;
- Portable multi-media resources;
- WOW Room with video conferencing, High Definition film and television facilities and world class sound facilities.

Additional Support Needs

- 5.28 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 both place statutory responsibilities on Local Authorities and on schools in respect of supporting all pupils with additional support needs. All schools in Shetland are resourced in order to meet the needs of pupils with additional support needs. The Managing Inclusion Guidelines ensure appropriate interventions are in place for all pupils with additional support needs.

In a rural Local Authority there are challenges associated with providing targeted and joined-up support for children and young people with more complex additional support needs. Drawing together the necessary support systems in order to meet the needs of a child or young person with additional support needs in this position can present significant challenges.

Skerries School

5.29 Additional Support for pupils is provided as required.

Anderson High School

5.30 The Anderson High School is fully inclusive and has the facilities to cater for the needs of all children, including those with complex additional support needs.

It has 34.33 full time equivalent Additional Support Needs staff able to provide support for teaching staff and pupils. It has an Additional Support Needs Department (Gressy Loan) as an integral part of the school with teaching staff, auxiliary support and a wide range of resources. These facilities enhance the learning and teaching experiences of all young people attending the Anderson High School.

Secondary pupils from Skerries School, if attending Anderson High School, would have access to a learning environment that allows greater inclusion and which would provide opportunities to participate with peers of a similar age, stage and gender in a wider range of educational experiences. Pupils would have access to after-school activities that they do not have currently. This includes sports clubs and teams, after-school study groups and a number of clubs and societies.

Living in the Halls of Residence during the week, pupils would also have access to after-school study opportunities and additional clubs and planned activities.

The 2006, HMle inspection of school care accommodation services highlighted the warm, friendly ethos and positive relationships between pupils and staff as one of the key strengths of the Halls of Residence.

The Anderson High School has qualified teaching staff in all curricular areas, including Pupil Support teachers responsible for the assessment and planning of each individual learner's progress. By providing a more sustainable and wider educational experience, the Anderson High School would allow young people transferring from Skerries School Secondary Department to further develop as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Capacity

Skerries School

- 5.31 The Skerries School Secondary Department has a current roll of three pupils. The secondary department has capacity for 18 pupils. This means it is currently running at 17% capacity.

Anderson High School

- 5.32 The present users of the Anderson High School, and all of its facilities, will not be disadvantaged in any way by the addition of young people from Skerries School Secondary Department to the school roll. The Anderson High School has a current school roll of 843 pupils. The capacity of the Anderson High School is 1209 pupils and is therefore currently operating at 70% capacity.

Extra Curricular Activities, School Trips and Exchanges

Skerries School

- 5.33 Currently there are no extra curricular activities underway at the school. Club Golf is being introduced for six weeks in the near future.

Anderson High School

- 5.34 Secondary pupils from Skerries School, if attending Anderson High School would have access to a wide range of activities that include sporting, drama and music groups. Lunch-time activities include sports, computers and board games. The Anderson High School has a long running Christian Union, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and a successful Young Enterprise scheme.

The Anderson High School has well established school exchange programmes for pupils of different ages with schools in Germany, France, Japan and South Africa. The Anderson High School is part of the Global Classroom with partner schools in Sweden, Czech Republic, Germany, Australia, USA, New Zealand and South Africa.

Staff Transfer

- 5.35 Any staff transfers and alternative arrangements for staff resulting from the closure of Skerries School Secondary Department will be conducted according to the appropriate human resource policies and agreements. Shetland Islands Council has recently approved the following policies:

- early retirement;
- voluntary redundancy;
- organisational review;
- transfer for teachers.

- 5.36 The Proposal would have implications for teaching and support staff. All staff will be properly consulted about their future, as will relevant trade unions. The individual wishes of each member of staff will be taken into consideration within the context of appropriate Shetland Islands Council policies and agreements.

Likely Effect on the Local Community

- 5.37 It is believed that there would be no resource impact on the community, as the Skerries School Primary and Nursery Departments would remain open and so access to the school's facilities would remain in place.
- 5.38 Other factors affecting the local community are looked at in more detail under Consideration of Factors Affecting Rural Schools.

Summary of Educational Benefits

- 5.39 Closing Skerries Secondary Department and moving the pupils to the Anderson High School would provide the following educational benefits to Skerries Schools secondary pupils:

- a significant increase in curricular opportunities at all levels and stages;
- increased access to a wide range of subject specialist teachers;
- more staff, including Principal Teachers, offering a wide range of expertise and allowing better and consistent quality assurance of an individual learner's progress;
- improved access to resources, including specialist subject resources, information communication technology, physical education, sports and leisure, after-school activities, library, social groups, clubs and societies and school trips and exchanges;
- the best possible timing of transition from a broad general education to the Curriculum for Excellence Senior Phase;
- access to a larger peer group of similar age, stage and gender;
- access to a larger teaching staff group who are able to work collaboratively to benefit each pupil's learning;
- larger staff provision which creates more collegiate time to commit to the school improvement agenda;
- staff who have better access to continuing professional development and peer interaction;
- more efficient use of financial resources.

- 5.40 Closing Skerries School Secondary Department and moving the pupils to Anderson High School would provide the following benefits to all pupils in Shetland:

- a more efficient and cost-effective model of school education delivery, thus contributing to the sustainability of the excellent quality of education provided to all pupils in Shetland in the current challenging financial climate;
- greater equality of opportunity;
- more efficient use of financial resources.

6. CONSIDERATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING RURAL SCHOOLS

- 6.1 In terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Skerries School is a rural school. Consequently, special regard has been given to the following factors in the preparation of this Proposal Paper.

Viable Alternatives to Closure

- 6.2 The alternative options for the future provision of education for pupils in Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 at Skerries School are to:

(a) Maintain the status quo: retain Secondary 1 to Secondary 4

This option does not increase the curricular opportunities for pupils. It does not increase the number of specialist staff, resources and subjects available to pupils. This option does not give the best possible transition for pupils entering the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence. It does not meet Shetland Islands Council's agreed priorities of operating within Council budgets and providing equal opportunity for all pupils. To increase curricular opportunities would incur additional expenditure at a time when there is a requirement to make savings.

(b) Reduce provision to Secondary 1 to Secondary 3

This option does not increase the curricular opportunities for pupils. It does not increase the number of specialist staff, resources and subjects available to pupils. It does not meet Shetland Islands Council's agreed priorities of operating within Council budgets and providing equal opportunity for all pupils, as it would generate increased inefficiencies in staffing. Although transition to the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence would be more appropriate than at present, it does not allow flexibility of transition based upon the individual needs of pupils. During the Blueprint for Education informal consultation in 2009 the majority of pupils, staff and parents did not consider this acceptable as a way forward for the school estate.

The current staffing arrangement for Skerries School Secondary Department does not have the capacity to offer an appropriate Senior Phase experience for pupils. Any increase in staffing would be contrary to the agreed Principles for Education of the Council (see 3.4) and would add to inefficiencies.

(c) Increase provision to Secondary 1 to Secondary 6

This option would reduce the number of subjects and areas of the curriculum available for pupils in Skerries School at the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence. It does not meet Shetland Islands Council agreed priorities of operating within Council budgets and providing equal opportunity for all pupils. This option would have a detrimental effect on opportunities for positive destinations for school leavers. It would be likely to impact on future employment.

(d) Remote teaching

As mentioned earlier in the report the national Pathfinder funding comes to an end in 2014 and therefore the Information Technology capacity in Skerries School may be further limited. Early Exploration of a remote teaching option has indicated that it would not be reliable and thus be too fragile an option for pupils to rely on for their secondary education. For these reasons this option has not been explored in detail.

- 6.3 These options are therefore not considered to be viable.
- 6.4 Over the last decade Children's Services has conducted a number of reviews and consultations with the key aim of providing an education model for Shetland that is sustainable and ensures best value in the use of public funds. The reviews have seen the following changes to the school estate:
- closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department (June 2011);
 - closure of Uyeasound Primary School (December 2011).
- 6.5 Children's Services has also implemented the following alternatives to school closures:
- reducing expenditure on In-Service training;
 - reducing numbers of central staff;
 - reducing money available for supply;
 - reducing money available for Continuing Professional Development;
 - ending knitting instruction;
 - charging for instrumental instruction;
 - increasing charges e.g. for school meals;
 - reducing operating costs in schools, particularly resources available for learning materials and equipment ;
 - moving to national staffing levels in primary;
 - reducing numbers of teaching staff in secondary;
 - reducing numbers of Catering and Cleaning staff;
 - reducing teacher input in nursery;
 - securing more efficient use of resources for children and young people with Additional Support Needs;
 - reducing music instruction;
 - reducing Parent Council Clerks' honorariums;
 - reducing school building maintenance.
- 6.6 The savings measures already implemented within Schools/Quality Assurance section of Children's Services as detailed above, have resulted in a reduction in expenditure between 2009/10 and 2012/13 of over £5 million.
- 6.7 Children's Services has also in the past considered shared management for small schools when it has proven difficult to recruit to a teaching Head Teacher post. This has been possible when an opportunity arises through a vacancy and through agreement with Parent Councils. However the shared management model Children's Services operates does not save money, as,

by local agreement, each school in a shared management arrangement is allocated a principal teacher, and the principal teacher is allocated management time which in turn must be covered.

- 6.8 From a financial perspective, Children's Services therefore believes that the only alternative to closure of Skerries School Secondary Department would be to maintain secondary stages of education at Skerries School. However this option does not address the anticipated pupil benefits as set out in 5.39 and 5.40.

Likely Effects on the Local Community

- 6.9 Skerries School will remain open and continue to provide education for nursery and primary pupils with a teaching Head Teacher. Other community users of the school will continue to have access to the current facilities. The closure of the secondary department would potentially provide additional space for community use. Development Directorate and Children's Services will engage with the community to assess how the existing use of the school could be utilised to meet community needs. It should be noted that Skerries has a well equipped modern public hall that is considered a significant community asset. The school currently makes use of this asset and will continue to do so if the secondary department is closed.
- 6.10 With particular reference to the sustainability of the local community, it is believed that there will be no detrimental effect. The majority of existing employment opportunities, with the exception of a secondary school teacher, will remain as the school will continue with nursery and primary provision. The pupils will return to Skerries every weekend and thus remain active members of the community.
- 6.11 There is a belief in the community that the closure of the Secondary Department would have a detrimental effect on future island pupil and population numbers. Despite the presence of a Secondary Department in Skerries School, the pupil roll shows "almost continuous decline since the 1970s" (Shetland Population and Migration Study, 2008). It is not believed that the closure of the Secondary department would result in a further decline in the existing, very small, school roll. This can be evidenced by Fetlar, Fair Isle and Foula which have populations of 86, 69 and 32 respectively and primary school numbers of: Fetlar 6, Fair Isle 6 and Foula 3.
- 6.12 Any negative effect would be offset by the increase in opportunity to access greater educational provision and choice, together with the maintaining of employment opportunities, provides the potential for the community to adapt.

Likely Effects on the Wider Community

- 6.13 As described in the Background section, the wider strategic driver for this proposal is Shetland's current context within which it must deliver education. There is already a significant surplus of vacant school places. In addition, Shetland Islands Council faces a requirement to make a significant reduction in its spending. This is, in part, due to the current economic picture, and the

reduction in central government grant, but also as a result of its own policy to protect the Shetland Islands Council's reserves.

- 6.14 In order to preserve a minimum level of Council Reserves, and eradicate the structural deficit that has been created, savings of £38.6 million are required between 2012/13 and 2016/17. Shetland Islands Council needs to achieve these savings to become sustainable. In approving the 2013/14 budgets on 20 February 2013 the Council will be over 70% of the way there by the end of the year. The Blueprint for Education is critical in the coming years to achieving the remaining 30% of savings required.
- 6.15 This Proposal will contribute towards Shetland Islands Council achieving a more efficient school estate, by reducing the number of surplus secondary places, and allowing financial savings to be made. This reflects the duty on all Local Authorities to secure efficient provision of school education and provide best value in the delivery of services. It will also assist achieving an equality of provision across the school estate.

Likely Effect Caused by Different Travelling Arrangements that may be Required in Consequence of the Proposal.

- 6.16 Skerries School is located on the Out Skerries islands and so pupils will use a ferry and taxi to travel to the Anderson High School and Halls of Residence. There are already well-established arrangements in place for transporting pupils in Secondary 5 and Secondary 6.
- 6.17 In session 2014/15, three pupils would attend Skerries School Secondary Department.
- 6.18 With this Proposal, these pupils would attend the Anderson High School and would be accommodated at the Halls of Residence for session 2014/15. This would mean that they would have to travel to Lerwick on a Sunday and return home on a Friday.
- 6.19 The Proposal is that these three pupils would travel from Skerries on Sunday by ferry and then by taxi to Lerwick. The return journey from Lerwick would be by taxi and ferry.
- 6.20 There is a cost to this Proposal for travel which would be £2,508 per year.
- 6.21 Pupils who currently walk to Skerries School would have to take a much longer ferry and bus journey twice a week. However, as set out in the Educational Benefits Statement, pupils transferring to the Anderson High School would experience greatly enhanced sporting and physical exercise opportunities during the school day and after school.
- 6.22 Due to the remote location of Skerries, there is a risk of disruption to travel arrangements due to severe weather conditions. In 2009 (the most up-to-date data available) the Skerries ferry was cancelled due to weather on 19 separate days and a further three days due to breakdowns. Of the 22 days lost, seven were Fridays and three were Sundays, the planned days for travel for pupils transferring to the Anderson High School. Children's Services, Anderson High School and the Halls of Residence have well established

practices for arranging accommodation and alternative travel arrangements for all pupils currently travelling from remote islands.

- 6.23 An effect of the different travel arrangements would be that pupils have to travel on a Sunday and Friday for approximately two hours. During the school week pupils would walk the short distance from the Halls of Residence to the school within the school grounds. Pupils who currently walk to Skerries School would benefit from enhanced physical activities and sport facilities during the week that they do not have access to at Skerries School.

7. OTHER ISSUES

Management of Proposal

- 7.1 It is intended that pupils from Skerries School Secondary Department will be integrated within the Anderson High School, and the Janet Courtney Halls of Residence, from the start of the 2014/15 school session, which commences on Wednesday 18 August 2014. This will allow Children's Services time to conduct the necessary consultation in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 7.2 It is acknowledged that, should the Proposal be approved and implemented, careful forward planning will be required from Children's Services to support the transition of the pupils. The Anderson High School is a very different environment from Skerries School. Following the departure of the previous Head Teacher, two of the young people came to the Anderson High School for a short period of time.
- 7.3 A Transition Support Group will be set up immediately, after a decision is made by Shetland Islands Council if it agrees to close Skerries School Secondary Department. This group will be chaired by the Quality Improvement Officer for Skerries School, and will include relevant school staff, Parent Council representation, pupil representation from both establishments and from the Halls of Residence. The role of this group will be to plan the effective transition of pupils. It will ensure pupils are supported in getting used to the new school environment at the Anderson High School and to the Halls of Residence.
- 7.4 The Proposal will also have implications for teaching and support staff. All staff will be properly consulted about their future, as will relevant trade unions. The individual wishes of each member of staff will be taken into consideration within the context of appropriate human resource policies and agreements.

Legislation

- 7.5 The key statutory duties for a Local Authority in relation to the delivery of school education are:
- **The Education (Scotland) Act 1980**, which requires authorities to secure for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education; and the provision of sufficient school accommodation;

- **The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000**, which requires Local Authorities to endeavour to raise standards and secure improvement in the quality of school education provided in their schools; and to ensure that the education it provides is directed to the development of the personality, talents and the mental and physical abilities of the children or young people to their fullest potential;
- **The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland) Act 2009**, which requires authorities to identify and provide support for any children with additional support needs and prepare co-ordinated support plans for those with the most extensive needs.

Equal Opportunities Legislation: Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.6 An assessment has been carried out on this Proposal and it is believed that introducing this proposed change will not have an adverse impact on the following groups: age, gender, religion, racial group, disability and sexual orientation. The Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed in light of all responses received during the Consultation Period. This review will also include consideration of other factors, such as health, social exclusion and rurality, as an integrated impact assessment. This review will build on previous work, such as the Blueprint for Education Rapid Health Impact Assessment.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 7.7 Shetland Islands Council as responsible Authority carried out under Section 8 of The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, a Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway screening of the Blueprint for Education.
- 7.8 The determination by Shetland Islands Council under Section 8(1) of the Act is that the Blueprint for Education is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.
- 7.9 Before making this determination, Shetland Islands Council sent a summary of its views as to whether or not the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects to Consultative Authorities (Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency) via the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway. Shetland Islands Council noted that the Consultation Authorities agreed with the view that the Blueprint for Education was unlikely to have significant environmental effects and made the determination to that effect under Section 8 (1) of the Act. In making that determination Schools Service applied criteria in Schedule 2 of the Act.
- 7.10 Shetland Islands Council notified the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway Manager and the Consultative Authorities of this decision. A public notice was also published in the local media on Friday 15 April 2011.
- 7.11 This assessment remains pertinent to this Proposal and therefore does not need to be updated.

- 7.12 Further information and the responses of the Consultative Authorities can be found at www.shetland.gov.uk.

Financial Considerations

- 7.13 Shetland Islands Council's approved Medium Term Financial Plan 2012-2017 sets out the roadmap for Shetland Islands Council to achieve financial sustainability over the term of this Council and to align resources in accordance with the priorities of Members.
- 7.14 Aligning resources to Councillors' priorities ensures that Shetland Islands Council maximises the use of resources at its disposal.
- 7.15 Children's Services has been prioritised in the Medium Term Financial Plan, so its target budgets are protected as far as possible from the full extent of the cuts required.
- 7.16 Shetland Islands Council approved its budget for 2013/14, on 20 February 2013. The budget set adheres to the Medium Term Financial Plan, and therefore contributes to the strategic aim of realigning more available resources towards Children's Services, Community Care and Transport, so that a larger percentage of Shetland Islands Council's budget will be spent in those areas by the end of the Council term. In addition, it ensures that Shetland Islands Council continues to provide the best funded services in Scotland, whilst maintaining the fourth lowest Council Tax (which has been frozen for the sixth consecutive year).
- 7.17 In 2013/14, Children's Services budget was approved at £41.262 million, which equates to 36% of the total Shetland Islands Council General Fund budget. By the end of this Council term, Children's Services will receive 38.6% of the total budget.
- 7.18 The cost of providing education in Shetland is significantly higher than the Scottish average. It is estimated that in 2013/14, the total cost per pupil at Skerries School Secondary Department will be £36,398 and the total cost per pupil at the Anderson High School will be £6,247. National figures for 2013/14 are not available, the latest published figure in 2011/12 for average cost per secondary pupil in Scotland is £5,681. The latest published figure in 2011/12 for average cost per secondary pupil in Shetland is £9,517.

Financial Implications

- 7.19 The current cost of Skerries School Secondary Department and the financial impact of the preferred option as set out in this Proposal Paper is summarised below:

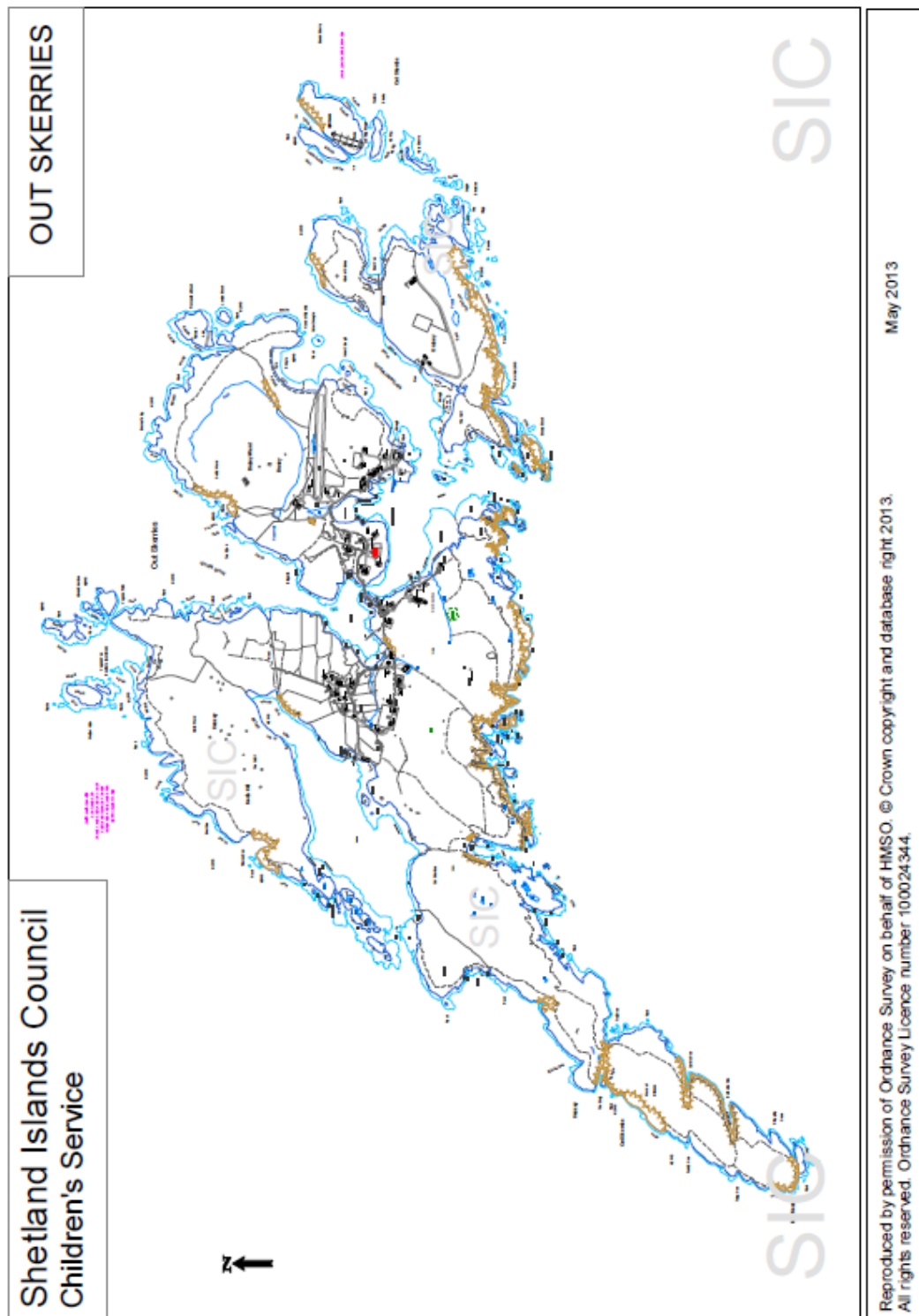
	2013/14
	Budget
	£
Skerries School Secondary Department	109,195
Additional Costs at	
Anderson High School	177
Additional Costs for Skerries Primary Department	5,606
Costs Transferred Across the Estate:	22,924
Additional Halls of Residence Costs	1,644
Additional Transport Costs	2,508
Total Saving	76,336

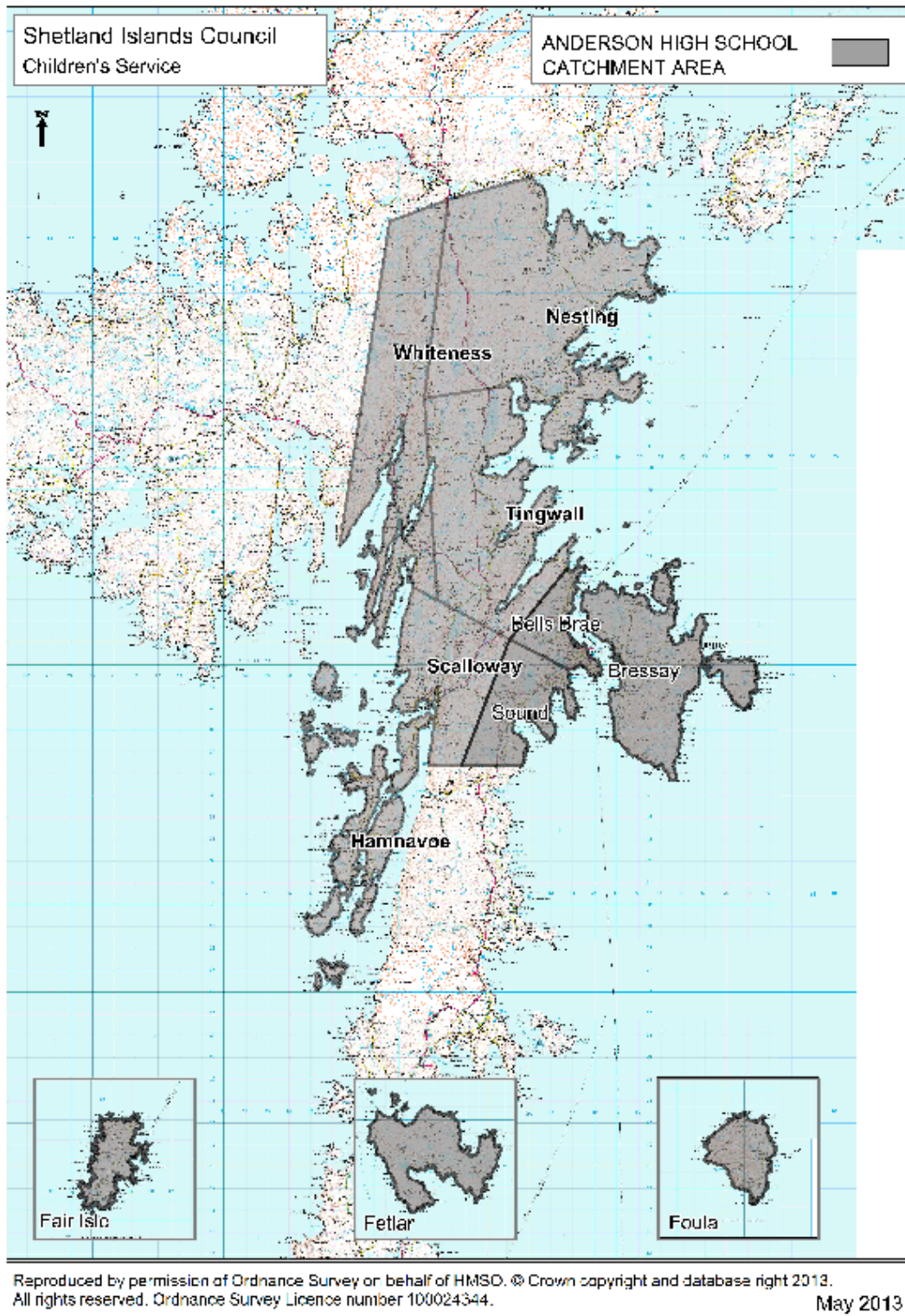
- 7.20 This information is based upon the budgeted School Estates Review for 2013/14. See Appendix 4 for a full financial breakdown.
- 7.21 The total estimated ongoing annual savings made from the closure of Skerries School Secondary Department is £76,336. These savings will go some way towards meeting the total savings which require to be delivered as part of the Blueprint for Education.
- 7.22 There will be minimal impact on Anderson High School. Budget for learning materials, meal supplies and school meals income would transfer, overall this would amount to a total of £177.
- 7.23 Recharges in to the Skerries School for support provided by the Quality Assurance, Schools Executive Manager and Devolved School Management services would be transferred across the remaining schools within the estate. However, any savings found within these areas would result in an overall reduction in these recharges.
- 7.24 Additional transport costs of £2,508 and additional Halls of Residence costs of £1,644 have been allowed for in the estimated total savings of £76,336.

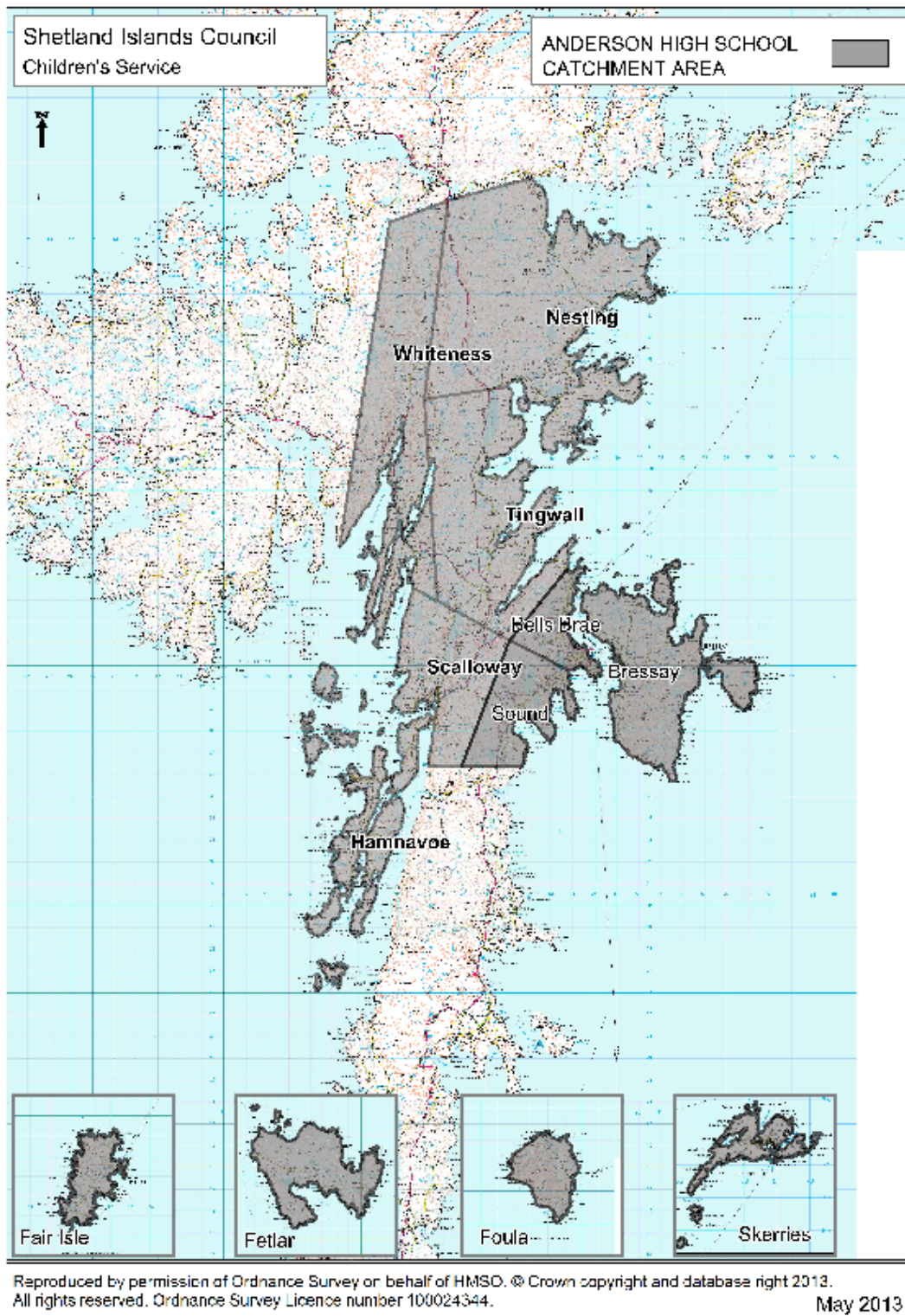
- 7.25 The closure proposal will have no impact on Grant Aided Expenditure. For secondary schools, an adjustment is made based on the difference in average cost per pupil between island (Shetland, Orkney, Eilean Siar) and mainland authorities, and has been fixed since 2001/02.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 strengthens the statutory consultation practices and procedures that Local Authorities must apply to their handling of all Proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools. It ensures that the consultation process is robust, open, transparent and fair.
- 8.2 The required Proposal Paper, of which this is one, forms the basis of any such statutory Consultation Process. Thereafter, during the statutory Consultation Period set out in this Proposal Paper, Children's Services invites responses to its Proposal to discontinue education at Skerries School Secondary Department.
- 8.3 The Proposal is that Skerries School secondary pupils transfer to Anderson High School.
- 8.4 All views, comments and questions will be considered for the Consultation Report which will follow this consultation period.

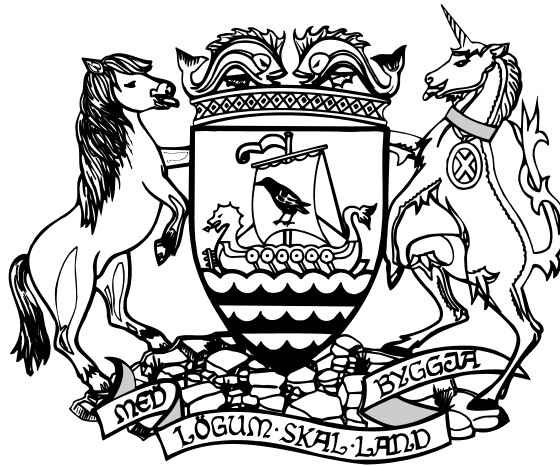
Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Appendix 3

Appendix 4

Skerries School Secondary Department	2013/14 Budget £	Costs Transferred Across Estate £	Impact on Anderson High School £	Impact on Skerries School Primary Dept £	Total Costs Transferred £	Annual Saving £
Employee Costs (incl Visiting Staff)	70,973	0	0	(7,892)	(7,892)	78,865
Liability Insurance	226	0	0	0	0	226
Water & Sewerage Rates	140	0	0	140	140	0
Hire of Property	2,000	0	0	2,000	2,000	0
Repair & Maintenance	4,489	0	0	4,489	4,489	0
Electricity	3,634	0	0	3,634	3,634	0
Cleaning Contractor	2,988	0	0	2,988	2,988	0
Property Insurance	354	0	0	354	354	0
Learning Materials	1,574	0	543	0	543	1,031
Catering Contract	0	0	570	0	570	(570)
Direct School Costs	86,378	0	1,113	5,713	6,826	79,552
Phone & Photocopy Reimbursement	(107)	0	0	(107)	(107)	0
Sale of Meals - Pupils	0	0	(936)	0	(936)	936
Sale of Meals - Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0
Direct School Income	(107)	0	(936)	(107)	(1,043)	936
Controllable Costs	86,271	0	177	5,606	5,783	80,488
Quality Assurance	22,583	22,583	0	0	22,583	0
DSMO	199	199	0	0	199	0
Schools Executive Manager	142	142	0	0	142	0
Recharges	22,924	22,924	0	0	22,924	0
Non Controllable Costs	22,924	22,924	0	0	22,924	0
TOTAL COST	109,195	22,924	177	5,606	28,707	80,488
Additional Transport Costs						2,508
Additional Hall of Residence Costs						1,644
Total Savings						76,336



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

**Appendix B – Education Scotland's Report on the
Proposal**

Consultation proposal by Shetland Islands Council

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal to discontinue education provision at Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) with effect from 4 July 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter; to continue the education of young people of Skerries School Secondary Department at Anderson High School from 18 August 2014 and to alter the catchment area for Anderson High School to include the current catchment area of Skerries School Secondary Department.

Context

This report from Education Scotland is required under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act. The purpose of this report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of the council's consultation proposal. Section 2 of this report sets out the views expressed by consultees during the initial consultation process. Section 3 sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal and the views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include a copy of this report and must contain an explanation of how it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

Introduction

Shetland Islands Council proposes to discontinue education provision at Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) with effect from 4 July 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter; to continue the education of young people of Skerries School Secondary Department at Anderson High School from 18 August 2014; and to alter the catchment area for Anderson High School to include the current catchment area of Skerries School Secondary Department.

1.1 HM Inspectors undertook the following activities in considering the educational aspects of the proposal:

- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;
- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal;
- consideration of further information on all schools affected; and

- visits to the site of Anderson High School and Skerries School, including discussion with the headteacher of Anderson High School, the headteacher of Skerries School and young people, parents, chair of Parents' Council, staff and members of the community of Skerries.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area.
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- benefits which the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school as defined in the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of:

- viable alternatives to the closure of Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4).
- the likely effect on the local community with regard to sustainability and on the community's access to the buildings, grounds and facilities if the school were to close, and
- the likely effect of different travelling arrangements on the environment and on children and young people and other school users occasioned by the closure.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Shetland Islands Council undertook the initial consultation on its proposals with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

Parents and other members of the local community strongly oppose the proposal. They feel that Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) provides high-quality learning experiences for their children. They feel that young people enjoy good choices in their curriculum, make very good progress and are successful learners. Parents expressed their satisfaction and pride in the levels of achievement in National Qualifications gained by the young people in the Secondary Department in recent years. Parents feel that a major contributory factor is the personalised approach offered by the school. They feel that the school is helping their children to develop as confident individuals. Parents have concerns about the possible impact to family life should the Secondary Department close. They are

worried that their children will leave the family at too early an age to board in the hostel in Lerwick while attending Anderson High School. Parents feel that their children living in the hostel in Lerwick will have fewer opportunities to develop appropriate skills for island life. Parents and other members of the community have concerns about the possible impact to island life should the Secondary Department close. They feel that following the closure of the Secondary Department confidence in the island's sustainability as a community will decrease and that population will fall. They are concerned over proposed transport arrangements and, particularly, about aspects of ferry journeys between Skerries and mainland Shetland. They feel that the proposed transport arrangements do not maximise time for young people to be with their families on the islands at the weekends. They are unsure of responsibilities of council staff for their children while they travel. Parents do not feel that the council has fully considered all viable alternatives to the closure of the school. They think that the proposal does not give full consideration of the benefits of remote learning. Parents feel the appointment of the new headteacher in August 2013, will extend curricular opportunities for their young people and that this should be given further consideration by the council.

2.2 About twenty per cent of the 39 consultees agree with the council's proposal. Some of these comments mention concerns about financial costs associated with the school. These comments are drawn from the wider community across Shetland Isles.

2.3 Staff at Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) are not in favour of the proposal. They feel that the school provides very good learning experiences and that young people and staff get on very well together. Staff view themselves as being very responsive to young people's subject choices and their learning needs. They see the local community as contributing positively to the education of young people in the school. Almost all in the local community offer strong support to the school. Staff have developed very strong links with the local and wider communities and these benefit children. They were unclear about the overall socio-economic impact of the closure of the Secondary Department upon the island community of the Skerries. They welcomed the appointment of the new headteacher in August 2013 and the positive changes now being planned for and taking place.

2.4 Young people are not in favour of the proposal to close the Secondary Department. They like the one-to-one support they receive and the personalised approach from staff. They expressed concern over the time they would spend travelling to and from the island at the weekend as a result of this proposal. They felt it would only give them one full day at home at weekends. Young people had experience of attending Anderson High School and living in the hostel in Lerwick.

3. Educational aspects of the proposal

3.1 Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) has a roll of two young people. The roll has fluctuated between two and seven over the last ten years and is expected to remain at around two for the next three years. The school is a single storey building comprising of rooms for nursery and primary

classes, and several rooms that offer provision for secondary class teaching, science, music, home economics and arts and craftwork as well as facilities for information and communications technology (ICT). Overall, the condition of the school is satisfactory. The primary department of Skerries School has a roll of three children and on the island at present there are a further five young children yet to start pre-school. Anderson High School has a roll of 900 young people. It is a six-year secondary school. The school's buildings are a mixture of styles and ages from 19th century to 1990s. Overall, the condition of the building is assessed as satisfactory. Halls of Residence accommodation is provided for young people attending the school from remote island communities such as Fetlar, Foula and Fair Isle. At present, among those using the hostel there are 12 young people from the islands accommodated at the hostel.

3.2 The council has identified educational benefits which it believes would arise as a result of its proposal. Overall, the proposal addresses issues around equality of provision for all young people in Shetland and seeks to achieve the council's aim of a more efficient, cost effective and sustainable model of delivery. The council feels that children currently at Skerries School Secondary Department would benefit from being educated in the six-year secondary Anderson High School. The council recognises that Skerries School offers a quality education to the young people attending. At Skerries School, young people gain from the personalising of learning and support. The headteacher and staff are responsive to most of the needs of learners.

3.3 The council's statement of educational benefit sets out a number of specific gains that will occur on implementation of the proposal. The council is of the view that Anderson High School offers a better quality physical learning environment. The secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from an increase in curricular opportunities, an improved access to a wide range of subject specialist teachers across all curriculum areas, access to a wider range of the teaching staff together with more promoted staff and types of specialist support staff. In addition, young people will benefit from access to greater resources across the school in respect of ICT, clubs and societies, a wider range of sports and leisure facilities and access to a more diverse group of young people on an individual, group or team basis. The proposal clearly identifies benefits to young people of a broader range of opportunities for them to achieve and develop their skills. Young people have entitlements within Curriculum for Excellence. The proposal gives insufficient consideration to the benefits to young people of attending Anderson High School in respect of their entitlements to gain the experiences and outcomes of a broad general education and a senior phase across the four aspects of learning. The proposal does not fully set out gains to young people in raising levels of achievement. Young people attending Skerries School Secondary Department all generally gain awards at SCQF level 4, the majority attain at Level 5 gaining five or more awards at this level. In taking forward the proposal, the council now needs to set out more clearly the benefits on levels of achievement, including staying on rates and positive destinations as appropriate.

3.4 The proposal sets out clearly the potential improvements to the learning environment and in the range of resources including teaching expertise that young

people may benefit from at Anderson High School should the proposal go ahead. The proposal clearly states the benefits of extensive extra-curricular activities, school trips and exchanges available to young people at Anderson High School. The new headteacher has begun a number of extra-curricular activities together with the community on Skerries. The proposal offers access to a wider range of activities that include sporting, drama and music groups. Young people at Anderson High School have opportunities for well-established school exchange programme needs. Young people may benefit from access to upgraded ICT facilities at Anderson High School. The proposal needs to consider how technology in schools could support young people's communication back to the island through video-conferencing facilities.

3.5 At Skerries School, young people receive a high degree of personalised support from staff. The ethos of the school is friendly and welcoming. The proposal highlights the benefits of the inclusive nature of the provision at Anderson High School. The safe, caring supportive and inclusive environment at Anderson High School was recognised as a key strength in the recent inspection report of February 2012. In addition, the high quality support from specialist staff for young people with particular needs was recognised also. The proposal does not fully recognise the quality of personalised support already available at Skerries School. In taking forward the proposal, the council now needs to take account of children's additional support needs such as autism spectrum disorders and dyslexia. It also needs to consider how the council plans to reduce barriers to learning that may arise from the learning environment, health and disability issues, social and emotional factors and family circumstances. The proposal also needs to consider the personal targeted support at transition for young people attending Skerries School Secondary Department.

3.6 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school as defined in the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, HM Inspectors took into account a number of other considerations. In its proposal, the council has given consideration to some alternatives to closing the school. Overall, however, the council should explore more thoroughly the viability of some of the alternatives. In taking forward the proposal, the council needs to ensure it has fully explored the viability of these alternatives. Three of the options in the proposal relate to provision for different forms of secondary stages. The council is clear that in these options curricular opportunities do not increase and therefore difficulties arise in implementing Curriculum for Excellence in line with national priorities whether in respect of transition to a Senior Phase or provision of a Senior Phase. The proposal also mentions the impact of equal opportunities. A fourth alternative is mentioned of remote teaching and this option has not been explored in detail.

3.7 The proposal considers the likely effects on the local community and commits the Council's Development Directorate and Children's Services to engage with the community to assess how the existing use of the school could be further developed to meet community needs. The council believes that there will be no detrimental effect on the sustainability of the island community of Skerries, and plans to carry out further assessment to identify the likely effects on the community of the proposal.

3.8 The proposal considers the likely effect caused by different travel arrangements that may be required as a result of the proposal. For young people living on the Out Skerries, travel is proposed by ferry to mainland Shetland and taxi from ferry terminal to Halls of Residence in Lerwick. The proposal notes that they would have to travel to Lerwick on a Sunday and return home on a Friday. The proposal needs to further consider ways to maximise young people's time on the island at weekends to benefit family life. The council has not clarified to parents the responsibilities of staff on the ferry towards their children in terms of safety and duty of care. In addition the proposal considers the effects of severe weather conditions based on one year. The proposal needs to consider the number of Fridays and Sundays that the Skerries ferry was cancelled over longer periods of time to give parents, young people and the community a clearer picture of the likely effect of severe weather conditions or ferry breakdowns. The journey time from the ferry terminal on Skerries to Lerwick is over two hours and on other occasions the journey may take longer. The proposal does not fully identify the costs, journey times and likely effects of travelling by taxi from Lerwick then ferry from Vidlin or Laxo or by plane from Tingwall to the Out Skerries.

3.9 The proposal considers other issues linked to the closure of the Skerries School Secondary Department. The council proposes to set up a Transition Support Group. Anderson High School offers transition arrangements, additional to that usually available, for young people with additional support needs. The council needs to clarify how as part of an effective transition, young people will gain their entitlements to support in line with best practice for Curriculum for Excellence. This group needs to give consideration to ensuring that health and well-being of the young people including their social, emotional and mental well-being is effectively addressed in the move to the new school environment at the Anderson High School and to the Halls of Residence. Further issues are yet to be reviewed.

4. Summary

4.1 The proposal from Shetland Islands Council to close Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) and transfer children to Anderson High School with effect from August 2014, offers some educational benefits to the young people directly affected by the proposal and more widely across Shetland Islands Council. The council has set out a reasonable case for the likely educational benefits to be gained by transferring the young people to a larger school. The secondary-aged young people at Skerries School would benefit from an increase in curricular opportunities, an improved access to a wide range of subject specialist teachers across all curriculum areas, access to a wider range of the teaching staff together with more promoted staff and types of specialist support staff. In addition, the council expect young people will benefit from access to greater resources across the school in respect of ICT, clubs and societies, wide range of sports and leisure and access to a wider and more diverse group of young people on an individual group or team basis.

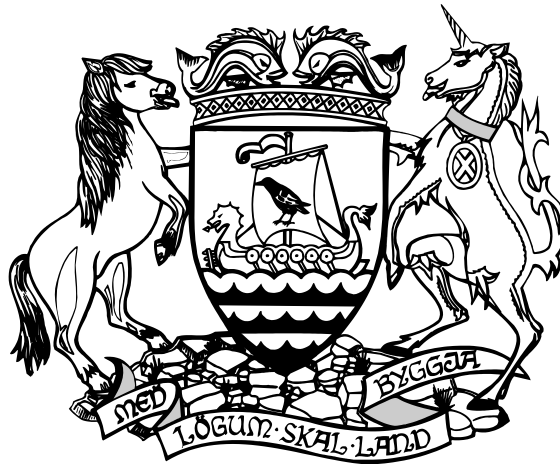
4.2 The council has presented clear arguments for the benefits likely to accrue to the wider educational community in the council from savings resulting from the proposed closure. This proposal would contribute to the council's duties to secure

best value and contribute in part to an aim linked to equality of opportunity across the islands.

4.3 The parents of the two young people currently at Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) are not in favour of the proposal to close the Secondary Department. They do not accept the argument that education in a larger school is necessarily better for their children. They view the personalised support available to their children as a key benefit of a small island school. This view is shared by the young people themselves and by many members of the community of the Out Skerries. Parents and members of the island community do not feel that the council has considered the full impact of the closure of the school on family life and the long term future of the community of the closure of a remote rural school like Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4). In a number of areas the council's proposal paper does not set out sufficiently clearly the arrangements for supporting children at Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) to make a positive transition to Anderson High School. Given the strength of the opposition to the proposal, the council needs to ensure that the necessary arrangements are planned and implemented in good time for children to be effectively supported in their learning, support needs and well-being during the time of transition.

4.4 In taking forward its proposal, the council needs to address the concerns of parents, young people and the community, fully explore the viability of alternatives, communicate with parents, staff and young people to alleviate some of their concerns and to ensure effective supported transitions within the entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence for young people from Skerries School Secondary Department (Secondary 1 to Secondary 4) to Anderson High School and continue to consult with parents, young people, and staff of Skerries School and the wider community of Out Skerries to engage them fully in the implementation of its proposal.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
September 2013**



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

**Appendix C – Transcript of the public meeting held
at Anderson High School on Tuesday 28 May 2013**



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Impact of Skerries Secondary Pupils Attending the Anderson High School from S1



Tuesday 28 May, 7pm, Anderson High School Hall

- Chairperson – Councillor Vaila Wishart
- Lead Officer – Helen Budge, Director of Children's Services
- Other Officers – Jerry Edwards, Quality Improvement Officer and Shona Thompson, Executive Manager (Schools)
- Public attendees – 4
- Note Takers – Katie Kent and Marianne Gordon

Good evening everyone and welcome to this public meeting.

This public meeting is being held under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Its purpose is to give interested parties the opportunity to ask questions and air their views on the Proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department and transfer Skerries pupils to the Anderson High School from S1.

My name is Councillor Vaila Wishart and I will Chair tonight's meeting. The others on the Panel are: Helen Budge, Director of Children's Services; Jerry Edwards, Quality Improvement Officer for Skerries School and Anderson High School; and Shona Thompson, Executive Manager (Schools)

Tonight's meeting will last for two hours and will open with a short presentation on the process we are engaged in, and an outline of the Proposal for discussion. Thereafter the meeting will be opened to the floor for questions and views.

As referred to in the Notice for this meeting, the proceedings at this public consultation meeting are being recorded by note takers. The transcript of this meeting will be published in due course on the Council's website, and will form part of the Consultation Report. It would therefore be useful if, when you speak, you first give your name, if you feel comfortable doing that, and state what your relationship is with the Anderson High School, for example, parent, pupil, grandparent, member of public, etc. Any questions on that?

Helen Budge extended apologies on behalf of Cllr. George Smith who is attending another public meeting and is unable to be here.

Helen Budge explained that normally the proposed school for closure public meeting would take place before the receiving school public meeting, however in consultation with the Skerries community, 07 June 2013 was agreed for the meeting in Skerries.



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Impact of Skerries Secondary Pupils Attending the Anderson High School from S1



Question Number	Name of Speaker	Note of Question Asked / Note of Reply
1	Councillor Duncan	<p>The report will go to Committee and then on to Full Council. Is there any reason why the Consultation Report does not go to Executive Committee?</p> <p>Helen Budge: In previous cases reports went to Committee and were then taken as items at Full Council. Brief conversations have taken place with Legal and Administration regarding the possibility of sending the report to Executive Committee and a response from the Convenor regarding Shetland Islands Council is expected soon. This will be explored further.</p>
2	Councillor Duncan	<p>Are the statistics you quoted available in the brochure which Shetland Islands Council makes available each year through Economic Development?</p> <p>Helen Budge: The information is taken from various sources and following this meeting will be available on the Blueprint webpage</p>
3	Councillor Duncan	<p>What is the total cost of the consultation process – this time from beginning to end? Where is the budget for it? Do you have costs for the last consultation process and if so what are they?</p> <p>Helen Budge: This has been asked at various times during the process and there is a separate budget for the consultation. It is difficult to say what this process will cost, at the moment as the whole process is not complete yet. There are costs yet to be determined for example it is not known how many people will be travelling to Skerries for the meeting there. Also the offer of crèche facilities at meetings was not taken up tonight which meant that staff are not necessary. When the consultation process is complete there will be accurate figures and a running total will be kept throughout.</p>
4	Councillor Duncan	<p>What was the total cost of the last consultation process?</p> <p>Helen Budge: There are different definitions of the last process. Two consultations took place at the same time: Scalloway Junior High School secondary department and Skerries School. At the same time the Anderson High School re-location proposal was consulted on followed by four others. Annual costs can be provided, however overall costs cannot be provided yet. In some respects the process is carried forward from last year's consultation as is the case of Olnafirth which was part of the previous proposal and is ongoing.</p> <p>Can you ensure that the annual cost information is sent out to all</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Impact of Skerries Secondary Pupils Attending the Anderson High School from S1



		<p>Elected Members?</p> <p>Helen Budge: Certainly</p> <p>At least we can get the cost figures into the public domain to show that nothing is being held back. This is very important.</p>
5	Jeremy Sansom, Parent and Member of the Junior High School's Parent Council's Group	<p>What is the current primary roll at Skerries School?</p> <p>Helen Budge: Three. There will be a nursery child joining the school in December.</p> <p>As far as you know are there young families on the island with children not yet of school age? The population is declining generally?</p> <p>Helen Budge: The roll is quite static and has been for some time. There are two to three in the primary and secondary departments and this trend is likely to continue.</p> <p>It is unlikely then that if the school going population doubled it would half the pupil costs within the islands. An increase in pupil numbers is unlikely?</p> <p>Helen Budge: There is nothing to indicate a large increase in pupil numbers. Next year there will be only two</p>
6	Jeremy Sansom, Parent and Member of the Junior High School's Parent Council's Group	<p>The travel costs are based on weekly ferry trips and taxis. The crossing is quite unpredictable. The situation where comparatively young children (11 years old), could easily be marooned due to adverse weather conditions is possible. Would flying them in/out be an option? Considering the possible adverse impact of children being away from families for prolonged periods of time. This would affect the proposed costings given here.</p> <p>Helen Budge: Currently there are young people from Fair Isle who, from 11 years old onwards attend Anderson High School and who fly in and out, but only every third weekend. The proposal for Skerries is that pupils would travel in and out every weekend facilitated by the ferry crossing. Usually, if the weather prevents the ferry from crossing, there is every chance that the plane would not be taking off either. Regarding travel distance, and time, there are young people from Skerries who have made the journey (S5 and S6) for a number of years. If the proposal is accepted, the first year of Skerries pupils affected would be two young people in fourth year (fifteen to sixteen age groups) and one young person of eleven.</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Impact of Skerries Secondary Pupils Attending the Anderson High School from S1



7	Jeremy Sansom, Parent and Member of the Junior High School's Parent Council's Group	<p>The additional Halls of Residence costs (table page 36) are approximately £1,500. The figure we understand as the current Hostel costs is £18,000 per year. If these are the costs until the new Hostel is in place, the three pupils will impact on the levels of savings you are proposing.</p> <p>Helen Budge: The staffing ratios and resources situation in place at the Halls of Residence are such that three young people would have a minimal impact and the additional cost reflects this.</p>
8	Jim Anderson, Ex Pupil	<p>Is there any reason why the Skerries pupils would get home three times more often than Fair Isle pupils?</p> <p>Helen Budge: This is because the Skerries pupils can travel by ferry. The Fair Isle pupils did not get home nearly as much as they do now and the timetable was arranged to accommodate this. The Skerries ferry is a regular, scheduled service and has been used for a considerable time.</p> <p>Would putting the Skerries pupils home less often, every third weekend be more of a saving? Are you proposing the more onerous of the two options</p> <p>Helen Budge: Absolutely. This point will be noted.</p>
9	Jeremy Sansom, Parent and Member of the Junior High School's Parent Council's Group	<p>The Fair Isle school did volunteer to have their secondary department withdrawn many years ago when Foula, Fair Isle and Skerries were offered the opportunity. The families who have moved in to Fair Isle subsequently over the years know the consequence of living in Fair Isle and accept this. Skerries at that time chose to retain their secondary department which is now being taken away from them so it is more onerous for them.</p> <p>Helen Budge: I will need to check that. I am not sure that is my understanding of the situation.</p> <p>There is a lot of history to absorb. My understanding is that the Fair Isle parents are in a different position because they know the difficulties involved whereas Skerries parents do not and are having the secondary taken away from their young people.</p> <p>Helen Budge: We do not feel that we provide the same quality of education to those young people on Skerries that we provide to other young people in Shetland.</p> <p>I can fully understand that reasoning but what if some of those pupils are unable to cope with adjusting to the mainland and to</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Impact of Skerries Secondary Pupils Attending the Anderson High School from S1



		<p>the Anderson High School? What would be the support for those pupils?</p> <p>Helen Budge: We would like to see all young people leave school able to cope with, not just, Lerwick and Shetland but with the wider world also. We would like to prepare young people for an adulthood where they can flourish. In order to do that we feel, educationally, it would benefit these young people to experience a broader education than that which we offer on Skerries.</p> <p>I can understand that as an aspiration, however there will be those from the more rural areas who will find it very difficult. In the wider context: if the junior high schools or secondary provision disappears from the rural areas, it will be the first time in Shetland's more recent history that there has been no secondary provision for those pupils who do struggle, to fall back on. We are making the assumption that those pupils will all thrive when the reality is some will not. My concerns are for those who will not.</p> <p>Helen Budge: We would like to think that all schools across Shetland provide the appropriate support to enable pupils to become the citizens of the future and I have every belief that schools are perfectly capable of providing that level of support to our young people. All of your comments are taken on board and when we travel to Skerries we will hear some of these concerns again. We will answer these concerns, clearly in the consultation report and as we progress through the process.</p>
10	Councillor Duncan	<p>Are there any pupils from Skerries attending Anderson High at fifth and sixth years?</p> <p>Helen Budge: No.</p> <p>You should be aware that if any Skerries pupils have to move, travelling to Skerries by plane there is a load restriction on the aircraft – four people at one time. With a full passenger load of eight, four would be dropped off at Whalsay while the remaining four were dropped to Skerries. A second trip would be made for the four passengers left on Whalsay. It is important when referring to “travel” in whatever form to note that these restrictions are in place.</p> <p>Helen Budge: Thank you.</p>
11	Councillor Duncan	<p>Regarding tonight's meeting, I see there is no media presence. Will there be a report to the media on this meeting? Attendee</p>

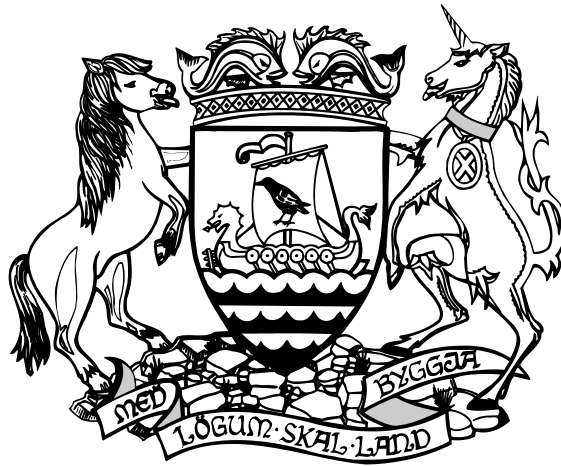


Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Impact of Skerries Secondary Pupils Attending the Anderson High School from S1



		<p>numbers etc.?</p> <p>Helen Budge: There is no statutory obligation to issue reports to the media about these meetings. There is an obligation to include in the consultation report how many people attend each meeting and how many responses are received. The media have been informed that this meeting is taking place and the others planned. There is interest from the local media in travelling to Skerries and this has been arranged. It is for them to choose whether they attend meetings or not.</p> <p>You will not be issuing a communications statement?</p> <p>Helen Budge: No. We have not done this in the past.</p>
12	Jim Anderson, Ex Pupil	<p>Assuming the proposal is not approved by council or the Scottish Executive, what is the impact if closure does not go ahead?</p> <p>Helen Budge: At the moment, the Medium-term Financial Plan explains that the £1 million would need to be found from within Children's Services. If the £76,000 is not found, our budget allocation would mean £3.249 million savings over the three years of the Blueprint would need to be found elsewhere in Children's Services.</p>
	Councillor Duncan	<p>Would you go into the reserves?</p> <p>Helen Budge: Not personally. A report would go to council who would decide. The council has agreed the Medium-term Financial Plan within which £3.249 million is to be found in schools and quality improvement. Should this not be found, it would be for council to decide if this should come from reserves. At the moment the financial plan states it comes from Children's Services.</p> <p>Has the Medium-term Financial Plan not been broken already with Shetland Arts, Mareel and in other areas? Does that not put our Plan "up the Swanee"?</p> <p>Helen Budge: At the moment Children's Services is adhering to the Mid-term Financial Plan.</p>



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

**Appendix D – Transcript of the public meeting held
at Skerries School on Friday 07 June 2013**



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



Friday 07 June 2013, 1200, Skerries Public Hall

- Chairperson – Councillor Vaila Wishart
- Lead Officer – Shona Thompson, Executive Manager, Schools
- Other Members of the Panel – Councillor George Smith, Jerry Edwards, Quality Improvement Officer, Chris Horrix, Education Support Officer, Additional Support Needs, Janice Thomason, Management Accountant
- Public attendees – 28 + 3 Councillors
- Note Takers – Heather Summers and Katie Kent

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to this public meeting.

This public meeting is being held under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Its purpose is to give interested parties the opportunity to ask questions and air their views on the Proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department and transfer Skerries pupils to the Anderson High School from S1.

My name is Councillor Vaila Wishart and I will Chair today's meeting. The others on the Panel are: Councillor George Smith, Vice-Chair Education and Families Committee, Shona Thompson, Executive Manager - Schools and Jerry Edwards, Quality Improvement Officer for both Skerries School and the Anderson High School.

Today's meeting will last for two hours and will open with a short presentation on the process we are engaged in, and an outline of the Proposal for discussion. Thereafter the meeting will be opened to the floor for questions and views.

As referred to in the Notice for this meeting, the proceedings at this public consultation meeting are being recorded by note takers. The transcript of this meeting will be published in due course on the Council's website, and will form part of the Consultation Report. It would therefore be useful if, when you speak, you first give your name, if you feel comfortable doing that, and state what your relationship is with the Skerries School, for example, parent, pupil, grandparent, member of public, etc. Any questions on that?

Councillor George Smith: I would like to add my welcome to that of Councillor Wishart's and begin by confessing that this is my first time visiting Skerries. I live in Sandwick where the secondary department is also likely to be affected by consultation on potential closure. I come here this afternoon with some understanding of how you might be feeling about this. It is not an easy time for any community when there is a threat to facilities which they value. I certainly hear this from my own constituents. I would encourage you all to be as open and honest as you can, as we are here to listen. I don't have any fixed views other than what I think we all would like to have – the best possible education for all the bairns in Shetland. I am expecting to hear some strong arguments as to why you want to keep what you have and I look forward to hearing them.



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



Shona Thompson pointed out two corrections within the Proposal Paper at 6.11: the number of residents in Fetlar is not 86 it is 81 and the number of pupils is seven and not six.

Question Number	Name of Speaker	Note of Question Asked / Note of Reply
1	Gibby Arthur	<p>We have been through this before and I don't think there was much attention paid to what we said then. I have no faith that any attention will be paid now.</p> <p>Councillor Vaila Wishart: I can assure you that people will listen to what you have to say. That is what we are here for.</p>
2	Mellany Gorman, Skerries Resident	<p>We have just recently built a house and started a family. I am wondering if the comments gathered from all the consultations in the past will be included in this consultation or does everyone have to re-say everything again for the millionth time? Can you not just go over the comments from the past and put them into this new consultation? We have done this so many times and so close together that those comments are still valid. Not a lot has changed.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>Councillor Vaila Wishart: This is a separate consultation.</p> <p>It's the same position.</p> <p>Councillor Vaila Wishart: Not the same people will be making the decisions. There is a new Council and a different Education Committee. It would be good if you could repeat what you have to say.</p> <p>After saying the same things four or five times you feel like you are bashing your head off a brick wall. As Gibby said you feel like you are not being paid attention to. Can you not use the valid comments from even the last consultation, not long ago, towards this consultation?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: I don't think we can use the comments made before, however we can recognise the information which has been gained from previous consultations. I think a lot has been learned about travel etc. during the previous exercises. We cannot feed in the comments we received the last time into this exercise. The legislation would not allow us to do that.</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



3	<p>Denise Anderson</p> <p>Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent</p>	<p>I would like to ask you why you think that bairns have a better education in Lerwick than they do in Skerries secondary.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>Jerry Edwards: The key problem, in terms of education in secondary, is down to the staffing issues. We can have a generalist teacher who can provide English, Maths and some Foreign Languages for example, however when it comes to the broad general education which covers eight different curricular areas including technologies and sciences, it is impossible to provide equality between what the bairns in Skerries receive compared with those at Anderson High School.</p> <p>We had the case recently where a Skerries pupil attended Anderson High School and the subjects which this pupil chose to do at Skerries were not available at Anderson. The pupil missed out as you were not able to provide the subjects.</p> <p>Jerry Edwards: That was due to the way in which the timetable was set up at Anderson High School and the grouping of subjects rather than subjects availability.</p> <p>The pupil would not have been able to choose those subjects at the Anderson High School.</p> <p>Jerry Edwards: I take your point.</p>
4	<p>Denise Anderson</p> <p>Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent</p>	<p>The staffing situation in Skerries at the moment is very unfortunate and we are having relief, stand-in teachers coming in. This is an unusual circumstance. We did appoint a Head Teacher. Has she been contacted and informed about the secondary school closures? All the times we have advertised for teachers we have had interest so it's not a staffing issue.</p> <p>Jerry Edwards: Yes she has. In this past week I can tell you that we have received clearances for the Head Teacher and we have spoken with her about housing and other matters. She will hopefully be taking up post in August.</p> <p>That is good news. So therefore, at the moment we don't have any staffing issues?</p>
5	<p>Denise Anderson</p> <p>Skerries Parent</p>	<p>I have information here which says that school children do better in small classes with one-to-one teaching. I can give you copies of the points which I have written down here. Regarding subjects which you say cannot be delivered here; we have internet and good resources which should support staff who are</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



	Council Chair and Parent	<p>not specialist to deliver the courses.</p> <p>Jerry Edwards: Thank you.</p>
6	Muriel Anderson Parent of Ex-Pupil	<p>My daughter attended Skerries School and took Art when there was no specialist teacher. She achieved a one getting help from instructors and ex-pupils and only a couple of visits from the Scalloway teacher. She managed very well like this and I don't see the problem if someone is willing to help supervise, bairns can do very well.</p> <p>In terms of Health and Wellbeing. Children taken from their parents at eleven years old, who do not want to go would find it very traumatic and I don't suppose they would learn very much. I attended school during the 60's when the only secondary education was in Lerwick. I did not want to go to Lerwick and continued my education in Whalsay. I therefore received no O Levels. By closing the Junior Highs throughout Shetland, this scenario will happen more often and a lot of bairns will miss out on qualifications because they cannot leave home. I had five bairns and some would have been perfectly able to go to Lerwick – in fact one did. I am not the kind of parent who would force my bairns to go on a ferry and to stay away for a whole week, maybe two depending on the weather.</p> <p>Applause</p>
7	Brenda Hay Community Council, Parent and employee at Skerries School	<p>In the report you do not mention the past qualifications which pupils have received. Years ago we said that we wanted the exam results published because they were always good. You said this could not be done as it could identify individual pupils. We have spoken with all the pupils and they are very happy for their exam results to be known. We would like the whole of Shetland to know the results which come out of Skerries School.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>Shona Thompson: We will consider this point. We have not felt that we have been able to do this in times past because of identification purposes and will consider this for the next consultation report.</p>
8	Denise Anderson Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent	<p>I would like to pick up your point that the bairns in Shetland do not have access to sports clubs and teams, after school study groups and a number of clubs and societies. I would like you to know that my children have personal swimming lessons at weekends and they also play for the Burra and Scalloway football team.</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



		Councillor Vaila Wishart: Thank you.
9	Ryan Arthur Parent	<p>When the Scalloway school consultation came back on to the table, Councillor Gary Robinson said 'the Council's administrative regulations clearly state that once a decision has been taken it cannot be re-visited in this way', Jonathan Wills went on to say 'as well as all the worry and confusion for pupils and parents, this is putting serious stress upon teachers', Gussie Angus said at the time 'I'm saddened that some Members should seek to overturn a democratic decision of the Council, taken after extensive consultation and debate. I question whether this procedure is competent'. I believe these statements apply in our case as well as the Scalloway case.</p> <p>Applause</p>
10	Denise Anderson Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent	<p>I would like to speak about the ferry journeys and travelling time which the bairns will have to endure.</p> <p>Councillor Alan Wishart: The situation at the moment is that the ferries consultation has been extended. There has been some correspondence with the Community Council. Some issues had been raised on risk assessment and the reports from the last consultation. These have been revisited and renewed and a report will be going to Full Council on Wednesday 12 June. The report and papers are all online from yesterday. The recommendation is still the same – that the ferry should be based in Whalsay, however there is still work to be done on adjusting the timetables and that consultation is ongoing. There is a lot of anxiety about taking Tuesday journeys out. There are four options to look at how that might be covered, but it may mean reduced travel at the weekends.</p> <p>We want to know about the safety for bairns of 11 years on a ferry in open seas for an hour and a half without anyone there to care for them.</p> <p>Councillor Alan Wishart: I do think this is something which will be taken account of in the consultation for schools. The age of the passengers and how they are looked after would not lie with the transport side of things.</p> <p>You say that you can only get access to information on ferry journey sailing disruptions and cancellations for 2009, when we have managed to get information for 2012. Why is this?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: I have asked for the information and I have not received it yet.</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



11	<p>Denise Anderson</p> <p>Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent</p>	<p>I found a document about distances travelled by children, on the Scottish Government website. (Ryan Arthur continued) The document in summary said that difficult and long journeys (of less time than the Skerries ferry journey) can result in stress and problem behaviour in children. This information came from the Scottish Government Review on Research in School Travel.</p> <p>Councillor Alan Wishart: Can I ask what was determined as a 'long journey' in that document?</p> <p>I don't know just yet. I only saw the document this morning.</p> <p>Councillor Alan Wishart: I think the whole question of transport is very valid as far as this Committee is concerned. I am obviously concentrating more on the timetable. The concerns for Skerries ferries is about the timetable and not having trips on Tuesdays, which is something I am trying to address. At the end of the day there has to be a reduction in trips and when this is more suitable for you. There is ongoing discussion around this and we do not want to rush into adjusting the timetables. It would not be right for Councillors to decide this on their own without input from you.</p> <p>If we do not have a last run going out for the bairns on Sunday this will cut their hours for being on Skerries to 44.5 hours not including when they sleep and 123.5 hours would be spent in Lerwick. If the ferry is cut back this could be even less.</p> <p>Councillor Alan Wishart: I did notice in the report that the Sunday afternoon trips for pupils are taken into consideration in the report which will be coming back through the Community Council.</p> <p>You cannot guarantee our ferry service at the moment or that our bairns will get out to Lerwick school if this closure goes ahead. There is no way of knowing how much school and educational time they would be missing. Also the journey times – for example the service time on Thursdays is 150 minutes back to Skerries.</p> <p>Councillor Alan Wishart: There is a combination of events between Education and Transport which need to be taken into account. Although I am not on the Education Committee it is all part of the scene for Skerries and I do want to hear your views. Whatever the decision is on 12 June, the detail of the actual timetable will be left open.</p>
12	Denise	What is your policy on school travel time? At one point it was put



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



	<p>Anderson</p> <p>Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent</p>	<p>about that children should not travel for more than 1.5 hours per day.</p> <p>Councillor Vaila Wishart: That's daily.</p> <p>Yes, It is a day.</p> <p>Shona Thompson: I think the point is it's not every day but once a week.</p> <p>Twice per week.</p> <p>Shona Thompson: I take your point.</p> <p>It has been said that the last ferries would go to Whalsay, meaning another ferry run for the bairns from Whalsay to Laxo and a taxi journey. This is a very long time for an eleven year old to travel and to be unsupervised and would include waiting for 1hr 20mins for the Whalsay ferry. This is not included in your proposal is it?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: I take your point and will consider it when we look at the new report.</p> <p>Councillor Alan Wishart: I think it is very important to hear these kinds of details and for both issues to be considered together by the Transport Committee and the Education Committee. The report on the website does contain four options for timetables which have already been discussed. We would welcome any comments or suggestions from you on how we can get the best combination of crossings which suits the consensus on the island.</p> <p>Councillor George Smith: I think Alan is correct in the sense that we should be looking at how things join up and not in isolation. I cannot see the value of considering ferries in isolation to any other service we deliver. As Councillors we should be looking at the whole picture and not one part one day, and another part another day. I want to see sense in terms of how services are delivered.</p> <p>In Skerries everything is connected, school, ferry, plane.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>Councillor Alan Wishart: By way of reassurance, there is quite a lot of discussion between Education and Transport on this issue. We are trying to get the best we possibly can.</p>
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Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



13	Ryan Arthur Parent	<p>Will the socio-economic study be repeated this time round?</p> <p>Councillor Vaila Wishart: it will be updated.</p> <p>When is this due to happen?</p> <p>Councillor Vaila Wishart: Not sure.</p> <p>Shona Thompson: It is being organised at the moment – for Skerries, Olnafirth, Aith and Sandwick.</p> <p>Will the same company be doing this at the last time?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: I am not sure about that.</p>
14	Ryan Arthur Parent	<p>I am going to go through some figures, most of which come from the Council in one way or another. You will correct me when I am wrong.</p> <p>Currently the hostel costs £900,000 per year to run. Is this correct?</p> <p>Councillor Vaila Wishart: Yes, something like that.</p> <p>This works out as £18,750 per pupil between 48 pupils. At one time Hayfield quoted the additional cost of taking three Skerries pupils at £2.75 per day. Is that still the case?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: As far as I know yes. This is because the staff are in situ and no more resources would be needed.</p> <p>Surely the £900,000 would need to be divided amongst 51 pupils – the per head figure.</p> <p>Janice Thomason: The £2.75 figure would be the additional cost</p>
15	Ryan Arthur Parent	<p>The proposed closure in real terms will cost one teacher's salary. Nothing will be saved on the building costs. Fixed costs and heating electricity will remain. A primary teaching head will still be needed, so all that you're really going to save is a secondary teacher. Can you tell me what a secondary teacher costs these days?</p> <p>Janice Thomason: The anticipated saving is £76,336. It is not as simple as one teacher's pay.</p> <p>What else is there?</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



		<p>Janice Thomason: It is detailed in appendix 4 which explains exactly where the savings would be made. Basically this table shows what the budgets are for this financial year and where costs are transferred across the estate, the impact on Anderson High, the impact on the primary in Skerries, adds up the additional costs and the last column shows the savings. All the employee costs including visiting staff are looked at.</p> <p>The school's budget in 2009 was £36,000. This is down to £6,000 this year which is a reduction of over 83%.</p> <p>Janice Thomason: these budgets have been cut across the whole of Shetland for a number of years. Every school has been cut.</p>
16	Ryan Arthur Parent	<p>What happened to all the staff out of Scalloway once the school closed?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: There were a number of posts which were held temporarily in other settings. These temporary contracts were ended and redeployment options were offered to those staff from Scalloway. Some folk opted for early retirement and voluntary redundancy. Everyone was accommodated in one way or another according to their particular wishes. We have done this for a number of years – holding jobs in temporary contracts.</p> <p>Are there not a lot of staff in Anderson High School who were in Scalloway before?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: There are a few but there is staff in other schools also, not just Anderson High.</p>
17	Ryan Arthur Parent Denise Anderson	<p>During the ferry trip Denise referred to, who will be responsible for the bairns from when they leave the isle until when they reach the hostel?</p> <p>Jerry Edwards: We would not intend to put escorts on, if that's what you mean. This is not done on any other form of school transport.</p> <p>So who's responsible? They will be travelling to your establishment. We will not be with them.</p> <p>Shona Thompson: For example pupils travelling on a bus, if there are issues of a pupil(s) behaving badly the driver would deal with this initially and it would be reported back to the school to be dealt with appropriately. I would imagine the arrangement</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



	<p>Mellany Gorman</p> <p>Denise Anderson</p>	<p>for the ferries would be similar, however we will clarify this in the consultation report following discussions with Transport and with Ferries.</p> <p>What about in the case of an emergency rather than misbehaving? The crew are not in the saloon the whole time. A bairn feeling sick, going out for some air and injuring himself is different to a bus driver looking in the rear view mirror.</p> <p>Shona Thompson: The staff on the ferries are trained in First Aid.</p> <p>The ferry situation is very different and you cannot expect a man who is employed to do a ferry job to sit and baby sit bairns.</p> <p>Shona Thompson: I do take your point and I think this will require a bit of thought for the next report.</p> <p>The last time we had this consultation the ferry men were asked if they would be responsible for bairns on the ferry and they said no because they had their own jobs to do – running the boat and they would not be responsible for looking after bairns and watching what they were doing.</p> <p>Shona Thompson: They are responsible for their passengers. We will be speaking with the ferry and other transport staff about their views.</p> <p>Also I was led to believe that the Scottish Government did not support school closures on financial reasons alone. Why are financial reasons included in the proposal? Why are we speaking about finance when you cannot close schools because of financial reasons?</p> <p>Janice Thomason: One of the requirements of the Act is to provide financial information. It's not the be all and end all, but it has to be provided.</p> <p>You are putting the financial information out there with the public saying this is how much you are going to save by closure, but it's not about school closure, it's about the education of the bairns.</p> <p>Janice Thomason: The financial bit is a requirement and we have to follow the full requirements of the Act.</p>
18	Ryan Arthur Parent	<p>It comes down to the bairns education. What we will end up arguing about is our better exam results and if our education is better than the Anderson High Schools' subject choice. Beyond</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



	Mellany Gorman	<p>that, curricular education is a small part of what bringing up a bairn is about. Spending most of the week away from their family and parents is going to take away a lot of the other things we are supposed to be teaching our bairns to take them into adulthood. I don't have anything particularly against the hostel and I respect the staff who work there. I had a difficult time adjusting at the age of sixteen and there is no way I will send an autistic fourteen year old or a very homesick eleven year old. It's just not going to happen.</p> <p>It has been said lately that the Skerries population is still declining even though we have a secondary school here. In reality over the last three decades we have hardly ever been without the threat of closure which is the reason why the population is in decline.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>The Scottish Government's Guidelines on closure proposals. Recommendation 31 states that 'once a school closure proposal has undergone full consideration under the 2012 Act, and it is agreed not to close a school the local authority should make no further closure proposal for at least five years unless there is a significant relevant change'. I think we got about six weeks.</p> <p>Shona Thompson: The document you are speaking about – the recently published Commission report, has not been accepted yet by the Government so it has not been legislated for yet. If it is passed as legislation that's where we will find ourselves but we are not there yet. We are expecting guidance by the end of the summer.</p> <p>Does that mean we are likely to be closed just before this comes into force?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: I can't say. Authorities across Scotland have been waiting for the report to be published and have been holding off on consultation type activity.</p> <p>Does that mean everything else in that document is invalid?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: Not invalid. It contains recommendations. The Government has neither accepted it or approved it or decided which bits they want to legislate on. It is just a report with some recommendations.</p> <p>The whole consultation is based on that Act, so if it is not passed will you have to do a whole new consultation?</p>
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Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



		<p>Shona Thompson: No. We need to wait to see what the Government will do with it. We don't know what bits they will accept and what bits they will not. It is just a report with some guidelines at the moment. It has no standing in terms of things we must do.</p> <p><i>I don't understand. If you are making recommendations based on an Act which has not actually been approved yet...</i></p> <p>Shona Thompson: The Act is as it stands now and is what we are working with. Any legislation to change it will take at least eighteen months. Nothing has changed yet as a result of the Commissions' report.</p>
19	Steve ??	<p><i>It is my belief that we are first in this consultation as the plan is to close us before the recommendations come into law. I think this is completely engineered. The rest of the schools will be ok but the timing of this has been engineered to close us before the recommendations are made law.</i></p> <p><i>Applause</i></p> <p>Councillor Vaila Wishart: The decision to go to consultation was made before the Commission produced that report. It was not engineered in that way.</p>
20	Marina Anderson	<p><i>I know you are probably fed up of hearing about all the money the Council has wasted but it boils down to if the Council had not squandered umpteen million on things which do not exist, rural schools would not be under threat.</i></p> <p><i>Applause</i></p> <p>Councillor Vaila Wishart: That's probably true but we are where we are when it comes to finances. We have inherited the situation we are in now.</p>
21	Steve ???	<p><i>It seems to me the smallest communities, the outer isles are being punished hardest for those mistakes.</i></p> <p><i>Applause</i></p>
22	Marina Anderson	<p><i>Here in Skerries the only Council spending is on the school and on the ferries both of which are under threat. The ferry will be cut to a huge extent because you will not base it here in the isle. This is all that we have. The mainland receives all kinds of services: old age care, Clickimin etc. but the school and ferry are all that we have here which the Council spends on and it seems</i></p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



		<p>a shame that they are both being nobbled.</p> <p>Applause</p>
23	<p>Denise Anderson</p> <p>Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent</p>	<p>I want to speak about some educational points. One of the arguments is that bairns are not getting a broad, good enough education. Some points which I have made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small group of teachers is likely to know each child and get a real understanding of the child's learning needs in a small class setting; • many children are transparent children lost in a crowd of learners with very little differentiation taking place in a larger setting; • In Skerries each learner has individual teaching and learning experiences and lessons are tailor made for them individually in order to support and stretch them to the best they can be. This is the case. <p>Applause</p> <p>I believe that Vaila actually wrote this about staff: 'larger staff provision which creates more time to commit to the school improvement agenda'. You cannot beat a low ratio of pupils to teachers. The teacher who can spend time with a child is always going to get the best out of that child. A small school will act quicker on any need for improvement for each child's learning. The school improvement agenda has each individual student at its very heart.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>One of your arguments is that staff have access to better continued professional development and peer interaction. Staff here can benefit from continued development from the island of Skerries through various virtual networks and internet resources. The fact that Skerries is a member of the SIC means that its staff benefit from the support of the local authority, its network of schools and inset sessions.</p> <p>Jerry Edwards: Staff are encouraged to take part in any SIC organised in-service. Sometimes it is difficult or not possible for them to attend for things like twilight training sessions.</p>
24	<p>Councillor Garry Cleaver</p> <p>North Isles</p>	<p>I am mindful that this is primarily a consultation for the community so I will not interfere. I would like to make a comment for the record. We need to understand and acknowledge that when the talk has been around the proposed</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



	Ward	<p>transport arrangements of children to attend Anderson High School, we need to get away from the glib assertion that a ferry is like a bus. In every way possible it is not like a bus. The ferry which serves Skerries is entirely different to any of the others operated by the Council. There are whole periods of time when any member of the ferry crew is nowhere near the saloon and unless the ferry service is proposing locking the doors of the saloon with children inside, I would need to see strong assurances as to how the children can be guaranteed to be in a safe place at all times on their journeys.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>Councillor Vaila Wishart: All these things will be looked at and answers provided.</p>
25	<p>Denise Anderson</p> <p>Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent</p>	<p>I would like to tell you about a young lass who came to Skerries because she was not doing well with her studies at Anderson High School. There were issues of bullying also which had not been sorted out. She came through Skerries School and achieved an A and a One in her exams. One to one teaching and time spent with her helped her.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>I have also been contacted by parents who have concerns about their children being in the hostel. One child had a breakdown and the parent of another went to stay in Lerwick at the taxpayers expense. Another child is currently in a juvenile detention centre as a result of falling in with a bad crowd.</p>
26	Mellany Gorman	<p>These issues – the safety on the ferry and Skerries School having better exam results – have been said so many times before. We had one consultation where we were told that all results would be published, available in shops and we would be informed at every point along the way. We never were. The next thing we know is that we are up for closure again. It seems to be that we are saying the same things over and over again and we are not being listened to. We keep being told that the issues are being addressed and they will be considered but they are not. I'm not sure which consultation number this one is but the issues have not been addressed in this report, for example, chaperoning which was spoken about at a previous consultation is not even mentioned here.</p> <p>Shona Thompson: There was mention of it in the consultation report which is a much bigger weightier document. This has everybody's comments in it as well as Education Scotland's</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



		<p>input. The proposal paper is an outline document</p> <p>There are so many reports. So in the bigger paper will it include how you have investigated the issue of the safety of the children and how you are going to manage it. It did not say that in the most recent one published.</p> <p>Shona Thompson: It will say that. I will ensure that the new report addresses that point.</p>
27	<p>Denise Anderson</p> <p>Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent</p>	<p>I have a letter here written by one of the pupils who attended Anderson High School for five weeks. I have permission to read this to you.</p> <p><i>'During the time I was at Anderson, I could never really settle. It lacked the homely feeling and the one to one teaching I was brought up with. The hostel had homely features but I was never comfortable no matter how much the nice people at the hostel tried. I missed my own bed, my family, home cooking and the freedom of time and space'.</i></p> <p>Applause</p>
28	Name not given	<p>With all the threat of closure and of cutting the ferry service by half we feel that the Council is effectively halving the price of any house built. There are two just being built which will have their retail price cut by half.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>Councillor Alan Wishart: In the consultation on ferries which you responded to, you said that it is unreasonable to cut our service by half. The Symbister based vessel options in Appendix 3 would see between eleven and thirteen sailings into Skerries and between twelve and thirteen from Skerries each week. Although it is accepted that some would be via Symbister over five or six days. This is not cutting the service by half. I think you should look at the timetables when you get a chance. I want it to be on record as saying that we are not proposing to cut the ferry service by half. The number of journeys will have to be reduced and we are hoping these cuts will be at weekends still allowing the ferry to run for bairns. I am pleading with you to take a look at the four options which are listed.</p>
29	Name not given	<p>I am in disbelief at what you have just said. We had a ferries meeting last week and the hours are cut in half. How can that not be half a service? I know this is not the meeting for discussing this, however if we were to have a hospital appointment on a Monday we can't get back till Thursday.</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



		<p>Anyone who holds a working week will have to take four days off. If the bairns have a long weekend they will not be able to get back here until Friday and they will still have to leave on Monday morning. They will not get to enjoy the long weekend. As Gary pointed out the ferry is no way like a bus. There is a driver to look after them on a bus, they are secure. This does not happen on a ferry where they are at open sea, unescorted. Words fail me.</p> <p><i>Applause</i></p>
30	Marina Anderson	<p>The Socio-Economic Reports – The last report was from November 2012. Everything in that report is still valid today. How much is it costing to re-do them? I don't understand this. It is only two years. Every issue within that report is still valid today. There are still young families trying to build a life here and it seems like an unnecessary expense. It must be costing money, which is supposed to be what you are trying to save.</p> <p>Shona Thompson: What I think is going to happen is that someone from the Development department will look over the report and see if anything has materially changed or not, rather than us commissioning another body to come and do it again. There are some areas which socio-economic reports have not been done for and these will need to be carried out.</p>
31	Marina Anderson	<p>You said in your slide show that the school's population is in decline. By September this year we will have five under threes which is an increase.</p> <p>Shona Thompson: Some areas have increases, but the general trend across Shetland is for a steady decline. There are peaks in some areas. There is a decline in the secondaries coming up through the primaries, but the early years are showing a decline.</p>
32	Denise Anderson Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent	<p>If the closure is to go ahead it would affect my son who has health problems. His doctor is in Whalsay and his paediatrician is Susan Bowie. Are you going to be responsible for making provisions for appointments and for seeing the signs that his health is suffering?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: Yes of course. We would have to. We have a number of bairns including a transplant patient who require medical support. This is discussed with staff working with parents and arrangements are put in place. It is different for each one.</p> <p>My son's doctor is in Whalsay? Will you have staff travel with him to his own doctor? Do you have a policy?</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



		<p>Shona Thompson: We do not have a policy as such because everybody's needs are different.</p> <p>Chris Horrix: Individual care plans are drawn up for each individual who enters the Anderson High School with medical needs. There is not one care plan which fits all children. These are drawn up in consultation with parents.</p> <p>I am worried because the staff at the hostel do not know the bairns personally and will not be able to notice the signs which may indicate a health issue. My son will not just go and tell strangers how he is feeling. He may think something is trivial when in fact it could be a very serious problem which could be life threatening.</p> <p>Chris Horrix: We have got some pupils with very complex needs at the hostel at the moment with individualised care plans who are being looked after very well and we would do the same for your son. Also the hospital is just up the road if emergency care is necessary. With a care plan it, hopefully would not come to that as provisions would be made.</p> <p>What about special diets? Does the hostel cater for special dietary needs?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: Yes it does, as does the school. This is becoming more and more the case.</p> <p>So if my children are used to eating lobsters, crabs, scallops and fresh fish caught on the day, they can have these? Is that what they will get when they go to the hostel? Will you provide the diet they are used to?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: I cannot say with hand on heart that we will be able to provide lobster on the menu at the hostel. The pupils are very well catered for at the hostel, I can say that. Seafood is included, however I can't say that they would get lobster daily.</p>
33	Mellany Gorman	<p>In relation to the seafood. This incorporates life lessons. It is traditionally taught without a teacher and part of island life. I attended Anderson High School and on moving here I learned island skills like mending nets which is part of life here. This is a normal thing to do. For Shetland and Shetland's heritage, I believe things like this are very important. Bairns learning from being outside with their folk and their grand folk is part of what Shetland is about. Bairns attending the hostel will loose this and not only them but their bairns also.</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



	<p>Denise Anderson</p> <p>Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent</p>	<p><i>Applause</i></p> <p>I totally agree with Melanie. What Melanie is describing are local skills which the bairns learn after school. You, of course, believe that we have no after school activities. We have bairns earning and managing their own money and they have their own lobster pots. How will they earn this extra money when they go to the Anderson?</p> <p>Shona Thompson: There may not be the opportunity for them to earn money but they will have access to other types of activities which they might not have access to here.</p> <p>The local skills here include: crofting, building, plumbing, fishing which the bairns learn from start to finish. The skills they learn here are second to none – the same as our school. The lifestyle and education our bairns have is second to none.</p> <p><i>Applause</i></p>
34	<p>Valerie MacMillan</p> <p>School Employee</p>	<p>I have recently built a house here and I am planning to start a family and raise them here. I would like to pick up on the subject of IT on the isle. Ten years ago I did my French Standard Grade by video conference using a headset. I did not need to have the specialist teacher physically in my school on a daily basis to pass my exam. I don't see why, ten years on, we need to have the specialist teachers in the isle to achieve the results. There are many teachers on the mainland who do not want to come here to teach and be away from their own families. Why can we not use their skills through the internet and video conferencing to teach our bairns? Why ten years later are we struggling with using technology even though it has grown leaps and bounds?</p> <p><i>Applause</i></p> <p>Councillor George Smith: I think that is a good point. I have experience of being the Director of Shetland College for five years where good use is made of technology as part of the Highlands and Islands. It works perfectly well in certain circumstances particularly where there are willing learners. I don't think it is the way forward for every situation, but the one you describe of an individual pupil linking into a bigger class can work well in some subjects. There is a feeling in some parts of Shetland that IT is an easier way forward than it might be. It may not be ideal where there are big classes of eleven or twelve year olds as they are not necessarily all wanting to learn. In the circumstances you describe it is perfectly feasible and is I am</p>

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



- 167 -



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



		<p>Excellence is about producing confident learners, successful individuals, effective contributors etc. Everything our bairns are.</p> <p>Applause</p>
36	Ryan Arthur Parent	<p>I have to disagree. I don't think it's ideal in the slightest to have a bairn going from here to the Anderson at eleven years old rather than sixteen.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>Councillor George Smith: The point I was making is that throughout Scotland the way Curriculum for Excellence is designed is to have bairns in the same school from S1 to S6. I am not devaluing the experience of bairns here. That is how it has been designed and is being delivered in most parts of Scotland apart from the islands.</p> <p>These consultations were not supposed to be entirely about closure but also alternatives to closure. We touched on IT already which is not ideal in all circumstances, but to us as parents in Skerries is hugely more acceptable than the alternative which is to give them up at eleven years old when they are not ready to go. I think at this point it is worth trying to make it work before we go down the closure route.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>I am pretty sure the Scottish Government would want to see that an alternative had been attempted before closure was commenced.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>Three new houses have been built here recently. Five years ago there was one family and now there are three, four by the end of the summer. Regardless of the population decline, it is probably the best Skerries has had in recent history.</p>
37	Name not given	<p>On a recent night out in Lerwick I was approached by a member of the Lerwick Community Council who told me that we should give up the fight to save the Skerries School. I think it was completely inappropriate for him to approach me in this way. Under no circumstances is this Skerries community giving up our fight for the Skerries secondary.</p> <p>Applause</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



		<p>His argument was that we should give up this fight so that his bairns in Lerwick could have a better education. Why should our bairns suffer? They have a brilliant education here. They are loved here and they have work out of school. We all look after them as a community. I do not want to see them going away at eleven because I know that some of them could not cope. His opinion was that he had attended school with boys who had come from Fair Isle and his opinion was that they had a good experience. I do not think it is right for him to say that our children should suffer educationally in order that his can get a better education. I can say that his children would have a better education if they came here. I feel that you are bullying the Skerries parents into sending our bairns to a boarding school which we do not want to do.</p> <p><i>Applause</i></p>
38	Councillor Garry Cleaver North Isles Ward	<p>I would advise you in cases like that to point out to folk that if the Skerries secondary closes, not one penny of that money will go anywhere. It will be a saving. There will be no extra money for Anderson. They will get the same or less than they have now. Skerries being hung out to dry will not make a jot of difference.</p>
39	Ryan Arthur, Parent	<p>It was not long ago, after we were saved in the last consultation, that Helen Budge went to the press to tell everybody that each pupil was going to be X amount of pounds per year educationally worse off because Skerries was kept open. I feel this was totally irresponsible for someone in her position to say.</p> <p>Councillor Vaila Wishart: I don't know what was said, but I think we should try not to make it personal. We are here to listen to your opinions and to what you have to say.</p> <p>I do not think we should be targeted in the media about this. At one time it was quoted that the secondary department cost £170,000, a figure which was given to the media. The national media then singled out an individual quoting how much he as a pupil was costing personally to educate.</p> <p>Janice Thomason: The figures you are quoting were the figures at that time. The service has been making savings over a number of years so the costs in all schools has come down. The actual cost in Skerries secondary now is £110,000 and the saving is £76,000. The figures were correct at that time. If there is one pupil it is extremely high.</p>
40	Douglas Anderson	<p>That is not entirely true. The figures were challenged as wrong and they were withdrawn shortly afterwards.</p>



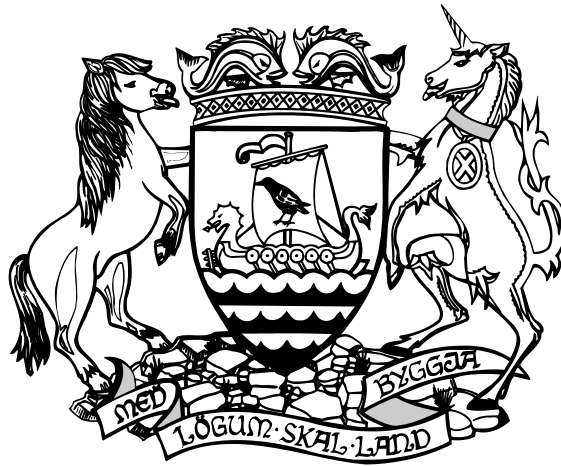
Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department



		<p>Janice Thomason: All the figures we provide are based on the budget and on discussions with the Head Teacher of the school.</p> <p>The figures were inaccurate and were withdrawn.</p>
41	Name not given	<p>You are not happy to publicise the exam results of individual pupils in case you identify them, however you are quite happy to publicise the cost of educating that individual pupil.</p> <p>Janice Thomason: We are required under the act to provide the financial information.</p>
42	Denise Anderson Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent	<p>To pay off the national debt the UK would have to endure four hundred years of national austerity. This is not going to happen. Governments change, politicians change and the SIC needs to look at other ways of saving money. The law entitles and insists that our children are educated and part of a family life as a basic human right. Should you decide to close the Skerries School secondary department it will affect family life for parents and children. At the moment we are an economically viable community which puts millions into Shetland's economy. Have we left you in any doubt that we are not wanting our secondary to close.</p>
43	Alistair MacBride	<p>I am a bit confused sitting here for the last hour or so about whether we are trying to save money or provide the best educational opportunities for the children of Skerries. I am not convinced that Curriculum for Excellence is worth anything in particular which will change children's lives here in any way. It is at the end of the day a money saving endeavour dressed up as an educational movement forward.</p> <p>Applause</p>
44	Ryan Arthur, Parent	<p>Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights provides that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence and there shall be no interference by a public authority on the exercise of this right, except in accordance with law and public safety. How do you see taking our bairns away from us at age eleven as not interfering with that human right?</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>Councillor Vaila Wishart: We will not be doing anything illegal, if that's what you mean.</p>

Meeting Closed at 1355



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

Appendix E – Health Impact Assessment

Health Impact Assessment

Proposed closure Skerries School Secondary Department

Health Improvement Department

NHS Shetland

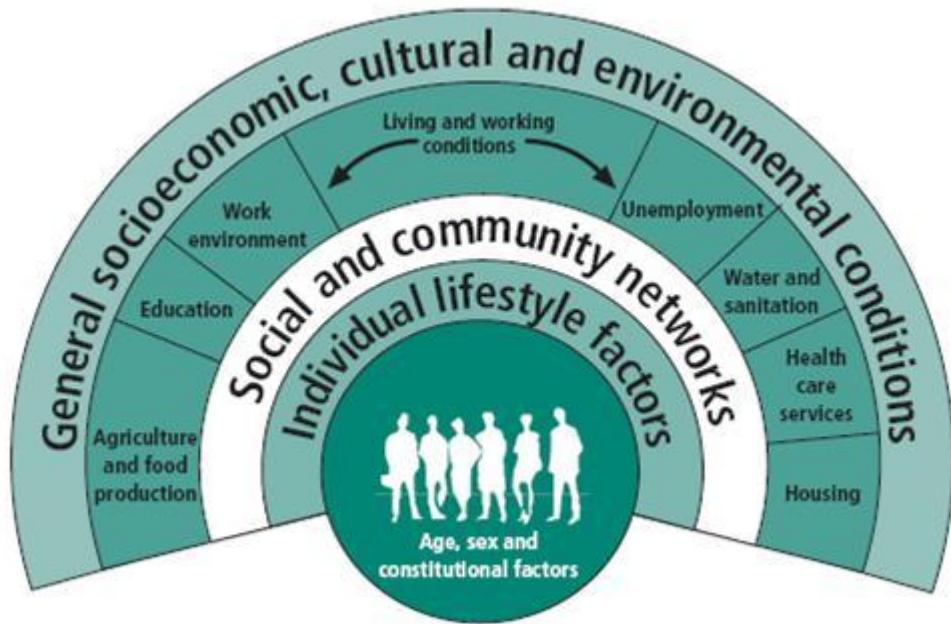
28th June 2013

What is a Health Impact Assessment?

Health Improvement, NHS Shetland has been tasked with producing a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) on the proposed closure of the Skerries School Secondary Department. A HIA involves identifying and considering actual or potential health and equality impacts that a proposal may have on a population. It helps to inform the decision making process and is conducted using a variety of methods with the aim of producing evidence-based recommendations. Where evidence is not readily available reasoned judgement is used. It will present ways to minimise or negate negative impacts on health, well-being and health inequalities that exist or may arise. It will also enhance the positive impacts of a proposal.

When conducting a HIA the wider determinants of health have to be considered. The diagram below illustrates the interrelationships between these determinants. It demonstrates that the NHS, although playing an important role in health, is only part of a range of factors that impact on health. HIAs provide a practical way of taking each of these factors into consideration and to identify key people to engage in the process.

Figure 1: The wider determinants of health. Source adapted from Dahlgren (1995) [1]



Skerries: a brief outline

In line with the rest of Scotland, Skerries has an ageing population. The current population of Skerries is 67 broken down as follows:

Age group	Number of people
0-15	9
16-64	41
65+	17

The future of the population is highly dependent on its local industries.

Skerries has three main islands but only 2 are inhabited: Housay and Bruray, which are joined by a bridge. Skerries is a busy, industrious community that appears to be forward thinking. Its major industries are fishing; both in-shore and deep-sea, and aquaculture. There are 2 shops and a post office on the island. There is also a range of activities available through the hall, which was refurbished 6/7 years ago, and is used by 98% of the population. Activities and events include: -

- a wide variety of free sporting facilities e.g. table tennis, badminton, football, darts, TV, pool, snooker, bowling club;
- bowling and PE sessions for the school;
- a Christmas dinner and a Christmas bairns' party, with games for all, is held annually;
- monthly events such as meal nights, bingo;
- regular coffee mornings are held by the local nurse to catch up with island people and check their health and well-being;
- the bowls club meets once a week from Oct-April with 16-20 regular attendees ranging from 30-85 years. For many people this is their only weekly social outing. There are two trophies played for each year, one in March and a memorial trophy in September, followed by an evening meal and social event.
- in the last year the island has also set up a history group and a community development group. The latter is working on implementing actions to improve tourism on the island as well as looking at local projects i.e. allotments.

How the HIA has been conducted

The HIA has been conducted using the following methods:

- review of blueprint for education documentation
- review of community development data
- survey with local community
- individual and group interviews with community members
- visit to Skerries school
- independent assessment of receiving school and halls of residence
- general internet based literature research in line with concerns raised
- completion of health impact assessment tool and presentation of recommendations

Health Impact Assessment

Table 1. Stage 1 Screening; The table below highlights the concerns/comments raised by parents and community members in Skerries.

Screening Question	No If there will be no health impact, provide a brief explanation for your response	Yes If there will be a health impact (s) provide a brief explanation.
Will the proposal have a direct impact on health, mental health and wellbeing? For example, would it cause ill health,		Potential mental and emotional affects of secondary school pupils leaving home including home-sickness.

<p>affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?</p> <p>You should consider whether any socioeconomic or equalities groups* will be particularly affected.</p>		<p>There is a concern in the community that moving from a small school to a large school may increase chances of being bullied.</p> <p>The receiving school and halls of residence have robust anti-bullying policies and processes in place. The halls of residence in particular has an annual anti-bullying poster competition and annual anti-bullying event. In larger schools there are more choice of friends and therefore can be less socially isolating.</p>
		<p>Personal hygiene of secondary pupils - who is going to enforce this?</p>
		<p>Concerns around child becoming ill: firstly the parent would notice the signs early if child not well or having issues; secondly if child becomes ill then how will parent reach the child if on Skerries and there is no ferry for 2 days? In the instance of an emergency, what would happen? Parents fear that the child would be unwell and in the hospital alone.</p>

		<p>Concern that children would worry about the ferry journey due to length of journey, weather, travel sickness. It is therefore very likely that the children would worry about the journey days in advance, which will impact on their mental well-being.</p>
		<p>Sea-sickness – all children who are currently in Skerries suffer sea-sickness, ranging from mild to severe. There is limited seating on the ferry and there is not always the chance to lie down. Due to legislation passengers are not allowed out on deck or to sit in their cars; this means that getting fresh air is not an option, which is a factor that could help ease sea-sickness. Sea-sickness is very unpleasant and increases anxiety levels (need to find evidence to back this up but seems reasonable statement), there again contributing to poor mental health.</p>

		<p>Other issues regarding the ferry: clarification is required on the contingency plan in place if the ferry is unable to get into Skerries and has to return to Vidlin or Whalsay. This is of great concern to parents, as this contributes to the many anxieties the parents have. There is also a need to clarify this to reduce anxiety for the children themselves.</p> <p>Serious consideration must be given to the supervision of children during the ferry journey. At present the detail of this has not been given and is of great concern. There is not only concern due to safety on board a boat in open seas but also the potential of being in contact with unknown adults who have not been PVG checked.</p> <p>There needs to be real consideration given to a route that is as stress-free as possible for the pupils and clarification on the route that is to be taken. There has to be a cut-off at which the route becomes unacceptable. A more fragmented route will result in waiting time as well as travel time, and with the added complication of changing ferries or changing from ferry to bus, could be very stressful for the young people involved. Again there needs to be clarification on how the children are supervised on route to ensure connections are met.</p> <p>Travelling by air is not an option due to health and safety legislation which means that flights in and out of Skerries are not reliable and more often than not they do not go.</p>
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<p>Will the policy have an impact on social, economic and environmental living conditions that would indirectly affect health?</p> <p>For example would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, good employment opportunities, green space or climate change?</p> <p>You should consider whether any socioeconomic or equalities groups* will be particularly affected</p>		<p>The young families have stated that if the secondary department shuts they will have no other choice but to leave the island. This will leave an older population with less contact. At present contact is through younger people visiting older people, helping them with a range of chores, keeping them company etc. This would lead to social isolation and poor mental health.</p> <p>There is concern that the hall would close as a result of few younger people to form the committee or support the events. If the hall were to shut this would compound the social isolation of many of the older people. The hall committee also seek clarification on what would happen with the storage of school PE equipment and PE lessons that are currently held in the hall if it were to close.</p> <p>Concern that the impact on the shops and the post office on the island will be significant with less people there to purchase from them. Also the young people on the island often help the shopkeepers with chores voluntarily or have holiday or week-end jobs.</p>
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		<p>Socio-economic impact will be significant as the salmon farm would fold as the staff that run this including the central figure would leave the island if the secondary department shut. This would have multiple economic impacts in that the salmon farm has an annual turnover of £2 million pounds, a percentage of which goes back into the local economy, either directly (e.g. inter-island ferry freight costs) or indirectly. This income would be lost. The staff would lose their jobs and therefore their earnings. The younger people working at the salmon farm would leave the island and would need to get accommodation on the mainland, however, they would be left with houses on Skerries, for which they have mortgages to pay off, houses which would be difficult to sell due to their location and this would result in many of these families having large costs which will greatly reduce incomes even if they should gain new employment. This again could result in costs to the local authority and government in housing and benefits.</p>
<p>Will the proposal affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example will it affect their ability to be</p>		<p>There is a concern that secondary pupils will have access to fast food establishments. Currently in Skerries all meals are cooked from scratch and as far as possible using fresh ingredients.</p>

<p>physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?</p>		<p>Concern that children may adopt risk taking behaviour when possibly exposed to older young people discussing sex, drugs, alcohol and smoking etc.</p>
<p>You should consider whether any socioeconomic or equalities groups* will be particularly affected</p>		<p>Learning on Skerries is much broader than just school teaching. Children are taught from an early age about the work ethic. They are encouraged to get involved in local work activities and are taught skills through this such as net mending, creel mending, fishing, knot tying, building, engineering. Such skills are life skills which can help individuals to support and improve their own health. In some cases the young people may gain small incomes from this work and therefore learn about budgeting. There is evidence to show that working, whether paid or unpaid, is good for overall health and particularly for mental health. Developing a working ethic from an early age, it could be argued, would help to increase the chances of gaining and staying in employment in later life and thereby improving health.</p>

		<p>At present the children meet physical activity recommendations of at least one hour daily (and limiting sedentary behaviour to less than two hours daily, not including school) through outdoor activities, chores for other people, fishing, cycling, walking, rowing boats, going to the creels, access to the local hall for a range of activities including sports training – all of which are free. Many of these activities would not be available in Lerwick, particularly those involving fishing or crofting; the young people may become less active as a result. In addition they walk to and from the school twice, which is a total of three miles. In Lerwick, due to the proximity to the halls of residence, this would not be possible and alternative activities would have to be sought.</p>
<p>Will there be a change in demand for or access to health and social care services?</p> <p>For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community services, Mental Health and Social Services?</p> <p>You should consider whether any socioeconomic or equalities groups* will be particularly affected</p>		<p>Consideration must be given to the wider factor of community care costs if there were to be fewer or no younger people on the isle. At a time when a model which is moving to community care is being implemented then this would be an inverse relationship, in that, due to the lack of younger people to deliver care packages there would be a need to look at alternative methods of providing this which at present would mean placements in care homes, which would be more costly than providing community care. Placing people in care establishments is not only more costly but where the client</p>

		would prefer to stay in their own home it would be traumatic for them. Also if an older person did not need care but needed help with the fabric of their home, grass cutting, moving heavier items such as gas cylinders – consideration must be given to how these services would be provided and at what cost.
Will the proposal have an impact on global health?		No impact identified
Any other issues?		There needs to be complete clarity and transparency in the savings figures that are presented. The secondary department consists of one room in the middle of the primary school. Due to its location the potential of savings on the room would appear to be insignificant, meaning costs mostly relate to teachers' pay. However the cost of this must be set against other costs such as transportation of pupils to and from Lerwick, Halls of Residence costs and the greater socio-economic and care costs as highlighted in points 12 and 13.

		Concern that there is a misconception that children on Skerries do not mix with others of their own age. However, children attend summer activities on the mainland as well as visiting friends and family with children outwith Skerries. They also mix with others through the internet. Children are also encouraged to leave and attend secondary school outwith Skerries if this is what they want to do. In addition children are encouraged to mix with all age groups and are therefore able to converse with people of all ages.
*Equalities groups such as race, gender, health, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.		

Table 2. Stages 2 and 3; Identify and Prioritise health impacts

Stage 2: Identify Health Impacts	Stage 3: Prioritise Health Impacts					
Describe the Health Impacts	Will the health impacts affect the whole population or will there be differential impacts within the population?	Will the health impacts be difficult to remedy or have an irreversible impact?	Will the health impacts be medium to long term?	Are the health impacts likely to generate public concern?	Are the health impacts likely to generate cumulative and/or synergistic impacts?	Combining the answers, on balance will the health impacts have an important positive or negative impact on health?
	You should					Provide a brief overview of the reason for your decision on prioritization.

	consider whether any socioeconomic or equalities groups* will be particularly affected.					
1. Mental and emotional effect of secondary pupils leaving home.	Skerries secondary children	Potentially	Have potential to be long-term	No	No	Without further research into this it is currently not possible to say the positive or negative effects of children living away from home during the week and returning at weekends. Further research into this required. Negative impact – unknown Positive impact - unknown
2. Concern of susceptibility to bullying in larger school	Skerries secondary children and their parents	Due to measures in place to tackle bullying then this is unlikely.	Have potential to be long-term if children/ parents do not know about anti-bullying measures and how to act on them	No	No	The receiving school and halls of residence have robust anti-bullying policies and processes in place the halls of residence. The Halls of Residence in particular has an annual anti-bullying poster competition and annual anti-bullying event. In larger schools there is more choice of friends and therefore can be less socially isolating. Both the receiving school and the Halls of Residence operate buddy systems for

						<p>pupils, they also have transition programmes in place. Handbooks are available which give details of these services, as well as web-pages.</p> <p>Parents and children's anxiety around bullying could be addressed by making them fully aware of the systems in place and ensuring parents and children familiarise themselves and know how to act on these systems.</p> <p>Negative impact – potential impact on self esteem, confidence, mental health. Positive impact – may enhance coping mechanisms.</p>
3. Maintenance of personal hygiene	Skerries secondary children	Potentially	Have potential to be particularly in relation to oral health	No	No	<p>The Halls of Residence have staff (house parents) that have relevant qualifications to work in this sector. Each pupil is assigned a key worker house parent and part of their role is to ensure the health and welfare of pupils this includes personal hygiene. Again parents need to be aware of the detail of the house parent</p>

						<p>role and how they assist in ensuring personal hygiene is being carried out.</p> <p>Negative impact – may have implications for oral health. Positive impact – potential to allow young people to become more independent</p>
4. Child becomes ill	Skerries secondary children and parents	Potentially	Yes if child needs parent and they cannot get there	No	No	<p>Serious consideration needs to be given to the practicality of getting the parent to the child if the child becomes unwell and requires hospitalisation or emergency transfer out of Shetland. This is a stress for the parent and the child. This needs to be addressed by the Local Authority.</p> <p>Negative impact – stress for parents/child. Positive impact - unknown</p>
5. Worry that child would have about ferry journey and sea-sickness	Skerries secondary children and parents	Yes	Yes	No	No	<p>This is a serious concern and could result in lasting mental and physical health issues due to constant stress which would impact on the learning of the children.</p> <p>Negative impact – stress for parents/child Positive impact – unknown</p>

6. Clarification on ferry systems: supervision of children on ferry; journey route to be taken and length of journey; contingency if ferry were not to get into Skerries.	Skerries secondary children and parents	Yes	Yes	Yes to Shetland public	Yes if incident happened	<p>This is a serious concern that needs addressing by the Local Authority. There must be a robust plan in place to ensure the welfare and safety of the children involved.</p> <p>Negative impact – safety of children could be compromised Positive impact – children become more independent</p>
7. Social Isolation	Older people on Skerries	Yes if younger people chose to leave due to school closure		No	No	<p>Serious concern that needs to be planned for, should there be fewer younger people on Skerries, both in terms of individual contact with older people and contact through the community hall which may also be affected if the school secondary department should close. This may have an impact on Community Care Services.</p> <p>Negative impact – social isolation, impact on mental health Positive impact - unknown</p>
8. Significant reduction in socio-economic activity	Skerries population as a whole	Yes				Serious consideration needs to be given to the salmon farm on Skerries closing

						<p>with the loss of jobs and the need to relocate families in alternative accommodation. Also to the knock-on effect to other businesses on the island. This may all result in families living in deprivation and therefore more likely to have health issues.</p> <p>Negative impact – economic viability of community. Positive impact - unknown</p>
9. Increase in less healthy individual lifestyle .	Skerries secondary children	Yes	Yes	No	No	<p>Currently physical activity levels among children in Skerries are good due to the extent that they use the outdoors and that they walk, or cycle to school. Plans must be put in place to ensure these levels of activity are supported if they were to relocate.</p> <p>In terms of healthy eating the receiving school and Halls of Residence provides meals that meet nutritional standards and parents must be made aware of this.</p> <p>Negative impact – less physical activity Positive impact – access to sports centres, swimming pools and other alternative</p>

						leisure activities
10. Increased social care costs	Older people on Skerries	Yes	Yes	Potentially in Shetland	No	<p>Full consideration must be given to the practicalities and monetary and emotional costs of community care services should younger people on the island choose to leave.</p> <p>Negative impact – increased spend for Local Authority Positive impact - unknown</p>
11. Clarity and transparency in savings figures	Shetland population as a whole	Yes	Yes	Potentially in Shetland	No	<p>All costs must be taken into consideration in these figures - school closure savings as set against the wider costs of educating the children elsewhere, and the potential for wider social care and economic costs.</p> <p>Negative impact – increased spend for Local Authority Positive impact - unknown</p>
12. Clarity around the fact that children in Skerries do already mix with others of own age	Shetland population as a whole	No	No	No	No	<p>This needs to be made clear through all consultation on the school in order to reduce the anxiety of parents.</p> <p>Negative impact – potential to break up established relationships Positive impact – potential to make new and different relationships that may not</p>

						have been available before.
13. Action learning	Skerries	No	No	No	No	<p>This is a concern for the population.</p> <p>Negative impact – potential for generational skills to be lost</p> <p>Positive impact – can still happen during weekends and through School holidays. Skerries young people can pass on their skills to new peers in Lerwick.</p>

Table 3. Stage 4 Analysis: quantify or describe important health impacts

There are 2 main issues that are of concern to the families affected by the proposal: -

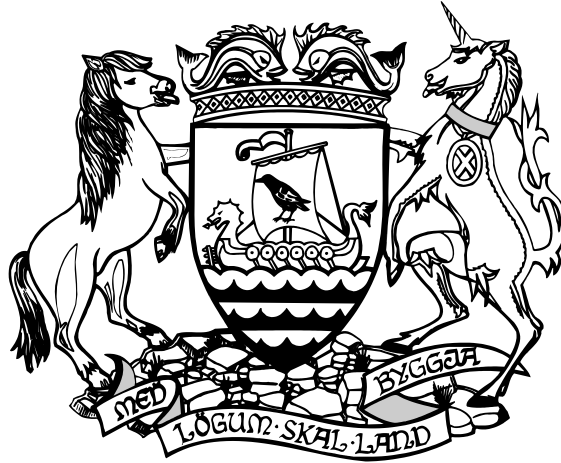
1. Ferry concerns as described above
2. Socioeconomic impact to the population if the younger generation move away from the island. This includes community care costs which may be increased.

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Table 4. Stage 5: Recommendations to improve policy

The local authority can mitigate the concerns highlighted above through discussing the policies and procedures they have in place for other children who live in remote island communities and have to attend a school outwith their immediate area.

Community care should consult with the population to understand what the impact would be on their services if the younger generation were unable to continue caring for the ageing population in their current format.



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

Appendix F – Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT	<p>How to answer the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) questions:</p> <p>It is divided into 2 sections: PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES (which has 7 sub sections) and RESOURCES (which has 4 sub sections). Each sub section has a number of questions that you must answer to complete your IIA. For each question you must consider whether the intended outcome has a positive / neutral / or negative impact. You must then add a note that explains why/how you have made your judgement.</p>	Each question must be answered as either Positive, Neutral or Negative . If there are both Positive and Negative outcomes then answer Neutral and give an explanation.	You must write a note for each question explaining why you have answered Positive, Neutral or Negative	Reducing Negative Impacts
INTENDED OUTCOME:	The closure of Skerries School Secondary Department			
SECTION:	PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES			
SECTION:	Culture	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.C01 Does the intended outcome impact on participation, among locals and visitors, in Shetland's culture and heritage?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.C02 Does the intended outcome impact on access to local cultural activities?	Negative	Some respondents feel that Skerries children will not be able to access community events as they will be away through the week	Children will travel home every weekend. Skerries Secondary pupils are small numbers, exploration will take place on offering more frequent opportunities for transport home
Question	IIA.PC.C03 Does the intended outcome impact on diversity in local cultural activities?	Positive	Secondary pupils from Skerries will have greater access to cultural activities within the Lerwick region	
Question	IIA.PC.C04 Does the intended outcome impact on preservation and/or conservation of local cultural heritage?	Negative	Some respondents feel that Skerries children will not be able to access community events as they will be away through the week	Children will travel home every weekend. Skerries Secondary pupils are small numbers, exploration will take place on offering more frequent opportunities for transport home
Question	IIA.PC.C05 Does the intended outcome impact on interpretation and promotion of Shetland's culture?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.C06 Does the intended outcome impact on promotion of Shetland's cultural heritage outside the isles?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.C07 Does the intended outcome impact on development of good practice among businesses and organisations engaged in cultural heritage activity?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.C08 Does the intended outcome impact on development of promotional and commercial opportunities for cultural heritage practitioners?	Positive	The intended wider education opportunities should have a positive impact	
Question	IIA.PC.C09 Does the intended outcome impact on professional and artistic development of local practitioners?	Positive	The intended wider education opportunities should have a positive impact for professional development - and neutral for artistic development	
SECTION:	Economic	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation

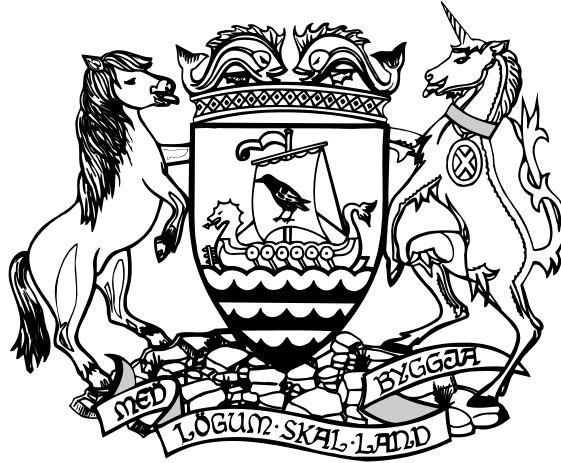
Question	IIA.PC.EC01 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on achievement of sustainable economic growth throughout Shetland?	Negative	There is concern that if Skerries School Secondary Department closes, families will leave and this will affect the fragile local economy of Skerries.	Children's Services will work with other Council services and other community planning partners to support Skerries.
Question	IIA.PC.EC02 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on access to a stable and sustainable employment market?	Negative	The closure of the Skerries School Secondary Department will result in the loss of some part-time public sector jobs and a full-time secondary head teacher post.	The council's relevant policies for redundancy, redeployment, transfer and retirement will be used to support affected staff into positive futures.
Question	IIA.PC.EC03 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on development and retention of a skilled workforce of relevance to Shetland's needs?	Neutral	However, respondents to the consultation on Skerries believe that if the secondary department closes, families who would be economically active will leave Skerries. However they are likely to remain in Shetland.	
Question	IIA.PC.EC04 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on opportunities for and access to education, training and lifelong learning to retain educational achievement?	Positive	The outcome will ensure better access to a wider range of educational opportunities for the secondary aged children of Skerries. The Skerries School itself will still be open for primary and nursery children so community access to its facilities will remain.	
Question	IIA.PC.EC05 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on development of Shetland's reputation as a high-quality visitor destination?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC06 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on development of Shetland's reputation as a producer of high-quality products?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC07 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on access to air and sea transportation links?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC08 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on adding value in all areas of local manufacturing and food production?	Negative	Respondents are concerned that if families leave the island, no one will be available to work in Bound Salmon, so its future will be threatened.	Children's Services will work with other Council services and other community planning partners to support Skerries.
Question	IIA.PC.EC09 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on production of hydrocarbons and diversification of activity at Sullom Voe Oil Terminal?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC10 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on establishment of robust broadband services to homes, businesses and organisations in Shetland?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC11 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on research and development of renewable energy infrastructure for commercial, domestic, public and community use?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC12 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on encouragement and support of community groups engaged in economic activities?	Neutral	n/a	

Question	IIA.PC.EC13 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on improvement of access and economic opportunities in remote and fragile areas?	Negative	Respondents feel that if Skerries School Secondary Department closes, then young people will leave the isle and not return again to work there.	Curriculum For Excellence senior phase should explore educational placement opportunities in the isles to complement the school further education and employer opportunities that will be developed in Lerwick. Provision of work experience opportunities during secondary education at home in Skerries.
Question	IIA.PC.EC14 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on access to appropriate advice and business development opportunities for local employers and sole traders?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC15 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on development of the local creative and heritage sector?	Neutral	n/a	
SECTION:	Environment	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.EN01 Does the intended outcome promote / integrate environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development?	Neutral	Both. Positive in that there will be less energy consumption in the secondary department, however it is negative as there will be more transport. A taxi will be used to transport Secondary children to and from the ferry. Use will be made of scheduled ferry runs.	Transport will as far as possible link in to public transport. A Strategic Environmental Assessment gateway screening of the Blueprint For Education was undertaken in 2011 and confirmed the Blueprint For Education is unlikely to have significant environmental effects
Question	IIA.PC.EN02 Will the intended outcome result in the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. waste management or water protection)?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EN03 Are there any environmental problems in the area which the intended outcome could effect?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EN04 Will the intended outcome lead to any permanent effects (consider the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects)?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EN05 Will the intended outcome lead to cumulative effects?	Neutral	Both. Positive in that there will be less energy consumption in the secondary department, however it is negative as there will be more transport. A taxi will be used to transport Secondary children to and from the ferry. Use will be made of scheduled ferry runs.	Transport will as far as possible link in to public transport. A Strategic Environmental Assessment gateway screening of the Blueprint For Education was undertaken in 2011 and confirmed the Blueprint For Education is unlikely to have significant environmental effects
Question	IIA.PC.EN06 Will the intended outcome result in health risks, such as smells, pollution, noise and accidents?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EN07 Will there be an impact on the natural / historic environment (consider the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected)?	Neutral	n/a	

Question	IIA.PC.EN08 Will there be an impact on intensive land-use (consider the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected)?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EN09 Will there be an impact on environmental quality standards (consider the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected)?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EN10 Will there be an impact on nationally or international protected landscapes?	Neutral	n/a	
SECTION:	Equality: Will any of the following protected characteristics experience change as a result of the intended outcome?	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.EQ01 Ethnic minority communities – consider different ethnic groups, nationalities, language barriers.	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ02 Gender	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ03 Gender reassignment – consider transgender and transsexual people. This can include issues such as privacy of data and harassment.	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ04 Religion or belief – consider people with different religions, beliefs or no belief.	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ05 Disability – consider attitudinal, physical and social barriers.	Negative	Respondents feel that Skerries provides a very supportive environment for children with additional needs. They also feel it important for those additional needs that children of secondary age are able to go home at night.	Specific transition arrangements have to be put in place for children with additional needs under the ASL Act 2004. These will be carefully monitored. The hostel has specific supported accommodation for children with additional needs.
Question	IIA.PC.EQ06 Age – consider across age ranges. This can include safeguarding, consent and child welfare.	Positive	Secondary aged children will have a better educational experience and access to a peer group.	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ07 Sexual orientation	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ08 Pregnancy and maternity – consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities	Neutral	n/a	
SECTION:	Health	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.H01 Will the intended outcome have an impact on diet and nutrition?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.H02 Will the intended outcome have an impact on exercise and physical activity?	Negative	Children will no longer be able to walk or cycle to school. The hostel is adjacent to the Anderson High School	There will be a range of after school activities available to the children, including activities provided by the hostel. The Anderson High School will provide two periods of specialist PE, which is not available in Skerries.
Question	IIA.PC.H03 Will the intended outcome have an impact on substance use: tobacco, alcohol or drugs?	Negative	Respondents believe that children will be exposed to more alcohol and drug use on the mainland of Shetland	Personal and social education will be provided at the Anderson High School. House-parents provide one-to-one pastoral support in the hostel.
Question	IIA.PC.H04 Will the intended outcome have an impact on sexual health?	Neutral	n/a	

Question	IIA.PC.H05 Will the intended outcome have an impact on learning and skills?	Positive	Skerries children will have access to a wider curriculum, taught by specialist staff.	
SECTION:	Poverty: will people with different economic circumstances experience different levels of change as a result of the intended outcome?	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.P01 Young people whose parents are not able to ensure they are able to access opportunities and grow up feeling a part of the community within which they live	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P02 Those who are physically disabled or with a long-term illness and their carers, when they do not receive adequate support and understanding	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P03 Those looking after a young family without access to their own transport, particularly those living in remote areas of Shetland	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P04 Older people unable to access opportunities that would enable them to feel a part of the community	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P05 Those who are of no fixed address, homeless or residing in temporary accommodation	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P06 Ethnic minority individuals in Shetland, whether cultural or as a result of employer barriers,	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P07 Adults of any age who have low self-esteem and/or poor mental health, often due to situations which have developed as a result of negative experiences in the past and can result in homelessness and substance misuse.	Neutral	n/a	
SECTION:	Stakeholders	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.S01 What will the impacts be for wider social support, social networks and neighbourliness?	Negative	Respondents feel that families will leave Skerries if the secondary department closes and the secondary children will no longer be around in the community.	Children's Services will work with other Council services and other community planning partners to support Skerries. Curriculum For Excellence senior phase should explore educational placement opportunities in the isles to complement the school further education and employer opportunities that will be developed in Lerwick.
Question	IIA.PC.S02 What will the impacts be for citizen power and influence?	Negative	If Skerries School Secondary Department closes, Skerries people who have fought to keep it open will feel their views have been ignored.	In line with the new Community Plan, partners will work with community groups to ensure they are involved in local matters where they can make a difference.
Question	IIA.PC.S03 What will the impacts be for community identity and sense of belonging?	Negative	Some respondents feel that Skerries children will not be able to access community events as they will be away through the week	Children will travel home every weekend. Skerries Secondary pupils are small numbers, exploration will take place on offering more frequent opportunities for transport home
SECTION:	RESOURCES			
SECTION:	Assets and Property	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation

Question	IIA.R.A01 Will there be an impact on Shetland's assets? such as land, buildings or equipment, including ICT	Neutral	The Skerries School will still be open for primary and nursery education.	
SECTION:	Finance	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.R.F01 Will there be an impact on Capital Spend?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.R.F02 Will there be an impact on Operational Budgets / year?	Positive	Skerries School will require fewer resources if it is only delivering primary and nursery education.	
Question	IIA.R.F03 Will there be an impact on Shetland's Finances?	Positive	Closure will make an ongoing saving in the Council's revenue budgets.	
SECTION:	Legal	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.R.L01 Does the intended outcome have any legal implications?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.R.L02 Does the intended outcome have any reputational impacts on the organisation?	Neutral	Both. Failure of the Council to reduce budgets will cause reputational damage, however closing schools is not popular in affected communities.	
SECTION:	Staff	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.R.S01 Decide whether there is an impact on staff, in particular in relation to those with protected characteristics	Negative	The closure of the Skerries School Secondary Department will result in the loss of some part-time public sector jobs and a full-time secondary head teacher post.	The Council's relevant policies for redundancy, redeployment, transfer and retirement will be used to support affected staff into positive futures.



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

Appendix G – Socio-Economic Study

SKERRIES SCHOOL SECONDARY DEPARTMENT

Socio-Economic Study

A Report

for

SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL

by

Steve Westbrook, Economist

in partnership with

Sandy Anderson

August 2013

**Steve Westbrook, Economist, Bellevue, Seafield Street, Nairn IV12 4HL
Tel / Fax: 01667 455308 E-mail: srwestbrook@aol.com**

Skerries School Secondary Department - Socio-Economic Study
A Report for Shetland Islands Council

Contents:	Page No:
Section 1. : Introduction	1
Section 2. : Background	2
Section 3. : The Economy of Skerries	7
Section 4. : The Impacts of Closing the Secondary Department	15
Section 5. : Potential Mitigating Action	18
Section 6. : Conclusions	20

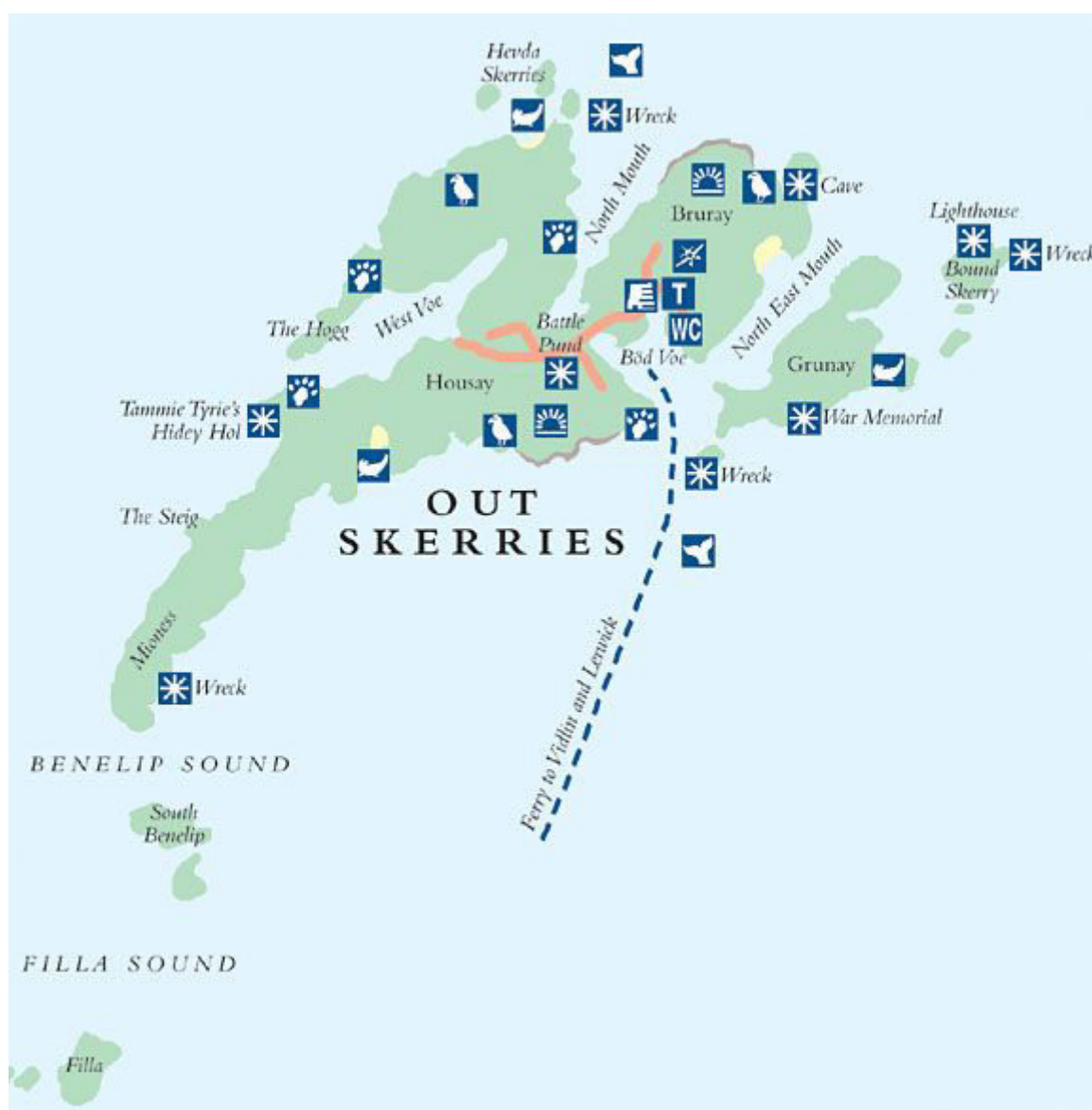
1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report was commissioned by Shetland Islands Council to inform its consideration of the future of the secondary department at Skerries School. This review is taking place as part of a wider Blueprint for Education which aims to set the shape of the Education Service across Shetland. The report updates the socio-economic study on the school that we carried out in relation to an earlier proposal to consider the future of the department in 2010 and is informed by developments since then, including the refresh of the Blueprint in 2012 and the report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education and its recommendations.
- 1.2 The terms of reference for the study were to:
- identify changes to the total economic output from Skerries;
 - identify changes to the workforce requirements of businesses based in Skerries;
 - identify the direct and known impacts of closing the secondary department;
 - identify the potential impacts should families leave Skerries because they are not prepared for their children to travel to Lerwick for schooling;
 - investigate possible mitigating effects, such as the prospect for additional private and public sector employment in Skerries and the scope for attracting new residents.
- 1.3 In the process of compiling the report, we visited Skerries and have received helpful input from a wide range of consultees – in particular the people of Skerries who gave us a lot of detailed local socio-economic information. We also made extensive use of previous research by Shetland Islands Council and other organisations and have drawn on available national and local information sources. Data from the national 2011 Census is being released in stages, and the most recent release on 15th August 2013 provided basic data at small area level which we have incorporated as appropriate.
- 1.4 The spreadsheet that we drew up in 2010 to collate information on the population of Skerries, their gender and age group, employment status, etc, has been fully updated through the visit to Skerries and a series of discussions with local contacts and others with knowledge of the island's population and businesses.

2. BACKGROUND

Skerries

- 2.1 Skerries is a small group of islands 9 miles to the east of the Shetland mainland and 5 miles north east of Whalsay. The population lives on two of the islands, Housay (West Isle) and Bruray (East Isle), which are connected by a bridge. The other islands are currently uninhabited.



Map sourced from www.shetland-heritage.co.uk

- 2.2 Skerries is a crofting community with 15 registered crofts. Most of the land is held under crofting tenure. In 2010, the Out Skerries Estate, which includes all of the islands other than Grunay and land in other private ownership (such as the school, hall, church, water compound and private housing), was for sale at an asking price which was reduced to £250,000. It has now been taken off the market. At that time the community decided not to pursue purchase of the estate.

Socio-Economic Data

- 2.3 Data zones are the smallest geographical unit for much of the socio-economic data published by the Scottish Government. One data zone covers both Skerries and much of Whalsay – a total population of around 500 people. This means that much of the published demographic information on Skerries (for example mid year population estimates, data available on the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics website and in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) relates to the wider area and would be misleading to apply to Skerries. To provide a socio-economic profile in 2010 we carried out our own informal census, and we have now updated this for 2013. As this information has been collected informally it may be less reliable than the Census, but it does give a relatively accurate representation of the current position.

Population

- 2.4 The latest results from the 2011 Census released by the National Records of Scotland include population and household numbers for Scotland's inhabited islands¹. These are headline figures only and it will be some time before more detailed information becomes available, for example on age distribution.
- 2.5 Incorporating headline data from earlier Census information on island populations², and data from our 2010 study and our current work gives a picture of how the population of Skerries has changed over time:

Housay and Bruray	1981	1991	2001	2010	2011	2013
Total residents	82	85	76	79	74	73
Total households	n/a	29	32	32	31	32
% male	n/a	53.9	52.9	57	n/a	57.7
% under 16	n/a	19.5	18.4	12.7	n/a	13.7
% retirement age	n/a	13.8	25.0	31.6	n/a	26.0

- 2.6 The population has fallen over the last 30 years, although it has been relatively stable since 2001. The current population is 73 – a reduction since our 2010 study largely because deaths have exceeded births.
- 2.7 The proportion of children had steadily fallen to 2010, but there has since been a slight increase to the current 13.7%, with 10 residents currently aged under 16. There have been 5 births since 2010, but some young people have left the island and some have become 16, giving a net reduction of 1 child.
- 2.8 The number of retired people has also fallen – a net reduction of 6. This reduces the proportion of retired people towards the 2001 figure.
- 2.9 Of the 73 residents, 44 are of working age – 60% of the population. It should be noted, though, that some residents above retirement age are still economically active.

¹ Available from www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk, release 1C Part 2, 15th August 2013

² Fleming, Alan. *Scotland's Census 2001: statistics for inhabited islands*. Occasional Paper no 10. GROS, 2003.

Housing

- 2.10 Our study suggests that there are 32 households in Skerries, the same as in 2010. The housing stock has changed, however, with 2 new build properties replacing 2 which have become empty and are now used as holiday homes by families with a connection to Skerries. There are also 3 vacant properties in need of, or undergoing, renovation, including the Schoolhouse. A further property is registered for non-domestic rates as a self catering let.
- 2.11 There have been 2 house sales in Skerries since 2010, with a further 3 recorded since 2004, including the self catering cottage. One house is currently for sale. This was also for sale in 2010, and although a range of prospective buyers have viewed the property, including families with children, it is proving difficult to sell in the current market. The owners intend to stay in Skerries and have a vacant house to move into.
- 2.12 The 2 recent house completions are the first new builds in Skerries for many years. A further house is currently being built, and this will increase the number of households to 33, with the owners moving out of shared accommodation once it is ready. No other planning approvals are listed. Land is available for additional housing from the Estate or other private landowners.
- 2.13 There are 2 houses in the social rented sector, excluding the Schoolhouse which is also owned by the Council. 5 applicants for social housing have given Skerries as an Area of Choice.

Transport

- 2.14 Skerries can be reached by air or ferry. The air service from Tingwall Airport near Lerwick takes 20 minutes to reach the airstrip in Skerries. There are flights to the islands once on Monday and Wednesday and twice on a Thursday, but the service is weather dependent. Passenger numbers and aircraft movements since 1996 are as follows:

	1996	2001	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Passengers	545	840	1,886	621	623	627	651	449
Aircraft Movements	408	570	453	359	374	315	306	233

Source: Shetland in Statistics

- 2.15 There has been a substantial reduction in the number of flights to and from Skerries since 2001, with fewer than half as many in 2010. In recent years, passenger numbers tend to average around 2 per flight, although there was a spike in 2005. The aircraft can take 6 passengers.
- 2.16 The ferry has sailed to Skerries from Vidlin, a village on the northeast corner of the Shetland Mainland, each day except Wednesday, with Tuesday and Thursday sailings from Lerwick. Travel time from Vidlin is 90 minutes and from Lerwick 150 minutes. The ferry service is also weather dependent and, especially in the winter, has been subject to disruption. However the Council

has recently spent £300,000 on a dredging project to improve access to Skerries via the south mouth approach to the harbour area. This access has been a problem since the new Filla came into service due to the deeper draught and lack of manoeuvrability of this vessel compared to the previous one, and has led to difficulties berthing the ferry in inclement weather. The south mouth provides a more sheltered approach, and the improved access will reduce cancellations due to weather and make the ferry service more reliable.

- 2.17 The number of passengers and vehicles carried by ferry are as follows:

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Passengers	3,920	6,029	6,435	5,866	6,393	5,214	5,388
Vehicles	1,763	2,742	2,809	2,714	2,837	2,565	2,488

Source: Shetland in Statistics

- 2.18 A new timetable has recently come into operation which removes the Tuesday sailings and reduces the number of sailings on most other days. The service is now based in Symbister in Whalsay, with the first and last sailings connected to the mainland via the Whalsay Sound ferry from and to Laxo. Intermediate sailings, however, still connect to Vidlin (including a sailing from Vidlin on a Friday at 17.30 and to Vidlin on a Sunday at 19.00).

Skerries School

- 2.19 Since the decision was made in 2010 to retain the secondary department Skerries School has continued to provide education from nursery level through to secondary S4 (approx age 16), and to support adults who wish to gain qualifications. The school was closed for a short period due to a staff change and during that time 2 pupils went to Lerwick (with their mother accompanying them) and one was schooled at home with support from the Council. A new Headteacher started work at the beginning of the 2013/14 school year.
- 2.20 After leaving Skerries school, pupils are able to go on to Anderson High School in Lerwick, where they can stay at the Boarding Hostel through the week. The primary school roll in 2010 was 6, with 1 child in the nursery. The secondary school roll was 3.
- 2.21 For the 2013/14 school year the secondary roll is 2, with 3 in the primary. There are no nursery pupils at present, though one child is expected to start in January. There are a further 4 pre-school children in Skerries.
- 2.22 The majority of school leavers over the past ten years have stayed in Skerries and are now part of the community and the workforce. Some who continued their education in Lerwick have stayed on the mainland or gone on to university for a few years before returning, while others are working away but returning at weekends. A number have returned to Skerries with partners from elsewhere in Shetland and intend to stay.
- 2.23 As well as attending school, young people in Skerries are fully involved in island life. They may, for example, work on the family croft, help to look after

the ducks, go out in a creel boat to catch lobsters, or fish. Skerries is a safe community with strong inter-relations between families, and the children have a degree of freedom and involvement unusual in a more urban setting such as Lerwick – or indeed in most other Shetland communities.

- 2.24 This is even more the case for pupils with special needs, as with one of the school's current pupils. His needs can be given particular attention in the classroom, while out of school he can have a freedom, community involvement and support structure it would be difficult to replicate elsewhere.
- 2.25 The future of the secondary department of Skerries school has been considered a number of times in the recent past. One of the recommendations of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, endorsed by the Scottish Government in its response, is that once a school closure proposal has undergone full consideration under the 2010 Act and it has been agreed not to close the school, local authorities should make no further closure proposal for at least five years unless there is a significant relevant change. Views on this proposal for a five year moratorium between closure proposals for a school are currently being sought as part of the Government's consultation process.

3. THE ECONOMY OF SKERRIES

- 3.1 As was illustrated in our earlier study, Skerries is a small, remote, island community and its economy is complex, with a mix of direct employment, self employment and self sufficiency. People often carry out more than one type of work and pluri-activity is a way of life – a pattern which is expected to continue.
- 3.2 Much of the Skerries economy is based on the sea, through fishing and aquaculture, with other private sector employment focused on retail and tourism. The public sector has also been a source of direct employment.
- 3.3 However, the formal economy is complemented by the less formal. Crofting activity in Skerries can involve members of the community working together to carry out essential tasks, and the sheep raised on croft land are largely a local resource, both as a food source and for their wool. Crofting may provide a modest income (for example, through the sale of an occasional sheep or of produce such as duck eggs), but largely no money changes hands. Small scale fishing from creel boats is also important for local consumption, and, while there may be some sales of lobsters and brown crabs (even by children) to local people or tourists, the economic output from such activity is difficult to measure.
- 3.4 Shetland Islands Council³ quotes figures derived from CACI Paycheck data giving median households income levels for each of Shetland's Community Council areas in 2009. For Skerries the median figure for household income was £23,905, compared with £30,180 for Shetland as a whole. Skerries had the lowest median income level of all the Community Council areas.
- 3.5 The average (mean) household income in Skerries as provided by CACI for 2009 was £27,999. With 32 active households in Skerries this suggested total household income in the order of £900,000.
- 3.6 More recent 2011 CACI figures show a mean household income in Skerries of £27,417 – a decrease of 2% (plus inflation). Applying this to 29 households would give a total household income of around £800,000 in 2011.

Employment

- 3.7 Shetland Islands Council carries out periodic employment surveys. The most recent detailed survey relates to 2007, but a more recent estimate of full time equivalent (FTE) employment is possible incorporating information from an employment survey carried out as part of an Input Output study in 2011. Part time jobs are counted as one third of a full time job, and many people have more than one job.

³ Shetland Islands Assessment of Housing Need and Demand. August 2010.

- 3.8 In the table below we show the results for Skerries from these surveys, to which we have added the results from our own consultations:

	Full time	Part time	Total	FTE
From SIC survey 2007				
Males	22	9	31	25
Females	3	36	39	15
Total	25	45	70	40
From our consultations 2010				
Total	27	39	66	40
SIC estimate based on 2011 input output study survey				
				34
From our consultations 2013				
Total	22	28	50	31

- 3.9 In addition to these local jobs held by Skerries residents, there are 6 residents working away from Skerries. 5 of these people return when not working or at weekends, while one is a Merchant Seaman returning between spells of duty.
- 3.10 Of the Skerries working age population, our consultations suggest that only 5 are without a job, none of whom are seeking employment, due either to illness or looking after young children.
- 3.11 The economic value of part time work is particularly difficult to measure as much of this involves relatively few hours or self employment. The reduction in part time work between 2007 and 2010 was partly due to the suspension of operations at the fish processing factory, while the further reduction since 2010 is largely due to fewer public sector jobs (see below).
- 3.12 Whilst the income may be welcome, not all part time work is sought after, however. The community makes efforts to ensure that all necessary work to maintain services in Skerries is undertaken, even if this means taking on work on top of full time employment.

Fishing

- 3.13 In 2010 there were 5 fishing boats operating out of Skerries, and these are still active. They employ 10 people living in Skerries.
- Fairway;
 - Ocean Way;
 - Renown;
 - Sharyn Louise;
 - Treasure.
- 3.14 3 of these are whitefish boats, 1 shellfish and 1 mixed. The value of the gross catch landed in Shetland by these boats has risen since 2010 from around £2 million to £2.7 million. As well as Skerries residents the boats are also crewed by fishermen who live elsewhere in Shetland, (although some of these are originally from Skerries). It has become difficult to recruit local crew, which reduces the time the boats spend in Skerries. For example,

while each boat at one time returned to Skerries to restock and change crew, some now rotate between restocking in Skerries and in Lerwick.

Aquaculture

- 3.15 Bound Skerries Ltd was established in 2004 as a company limited by guarantee. It operates a salmon farm and also has a fish processing factory in Skerries (which is currently under care and maintenance). The business has achieved full organic status and has established an enviable reputation as a supplier of high quality produce. Bound Skerries salmon has been supplied to 10 Downing Street for a G20 Summit dinner and to various other high profile events. The operation employs 7 people full time to run the fish farm.
- 3.16 The turnover of the business has grown from less than £1 million (as reported) in 2010 to an estimated £2.4 million in 2013/14. Stock has grown from some 70,000 fish to 150,000, with the maximum capacity now double that. The strategy is to produce a high quality, high value salmon, and the operation is successfully expanding on that basis. Profits are currently being recycled into the company's operations, but it has been possible to make some small awards to community initiatives, and in due course further funds might be available for community development.
- 3.17 A further 8-10 people could be employed in the fish processing factory, although this would only be for 9 months of the year. Processing on Skerries would give the business increased flexibility to respond to market opportunities and add value to its end product. A lack of staff, however, means that the factory has not reopened since 2010.
- 3.18 Bound Skerries acquired two chalets from Shetland Islands Council and bought land from the Skerries Estate with the intention of installing the chalets permanently to house staff. Because of uncertainty about the recruitment of staff (including the uncertainty concerning the school), however, the chalets have not yet been installed, although one has been temporarily connected to services to house a fish farm trainee. No further progress has been made since 2010.
- 3.19 Bound Skerries has adjusted its operation to accommodate the processing and marketing of its product in Lerwick. The fish are transported in ice, in 1 tonne bins, on the ferry. The ferry also brings in feed which is supplied from Lerwick. The proposed reduction in the number of sailings between Lerwick and Skerries will cause some difficulties, and reduce the company's profit through the need to transport via Vidlin.

Retail

- 3.20 There are still two general stores in Skerries, one on East Island and one on West Island. The combined turnover of the shops was reported as some £120,000 in 2010, but this has now reduced to around £110,000. This includes provisions for the fishing boats, although there is now some restocking elsewhere because of the difficulty of recruiting crew in Skerries. One shop also provides post office services, with the shopkeeper being employed as postmaster. As well as the 2 shopkeepers, one of the shops

also supports 3 part time jobs. The low turnover – and therefore profitability – of retailing on Skerries means that the sector is fragile. Internet shopping has affected sales, especially of higher margin stock such as toys and Christmas presents, and Skerries residents can order from shops in Lerwick with delivery by ferry.

- 3.21 Both shops source their supplies from wholesalers on the Shetland mainland or further afield. Little locally produced stock is offered for sale, other than duck eggs, lobsters and crabs. Although some tourist souvenirs are offered, these are bought in from elsewhere and no locally produced crafts or other items are available.
- 3.22 The recent change to the ferry timetable is of particular concern to the shops in Skerries. With Skerries now serviced from Lerwick on only one day, all stock arrives at once. Of even more concern is that much perishable stock such as fruit and vegetables and items (such as dairy produce) with short sell by dates comes into Shetland on a Thursday and cannot be shipped to Skerries until the following Wednesday.

Tourism

- 3.23 There has been little change in recent years in tourism. The 2006 Shetland Visitor Survey estimated that 59,924 people (excluding cruise ship passengers) visited Shetland in a year, spending a total of £15.3 million. A further 1,292 yacht travellers were estimated to spend £163,000.
- 3.24 The Visitor Survey suggested that only 1% of these visitors come to Skerries. Allowing for rounding, this would mean that between 350 and 850 tourists might visit Skerries each year, staying around 2-3,000 nights. 35% of yacht travellers indicated that they visited Skerries, which would give another 450 visitors and a total of around 3,000 visitor nights.
- 3.25 There are 3 visitor accommodation businesses in Skerries: 2 bed and breakfasts and a self catering cottage. Neither of the B&Bs is operating at capacity, with one for sale and the other housing an extended family until the house being built is completed. A local person services the self catering cottage between visitors. There is also a resident who can arrange diving round the Skerries coast, where there are a number of wrecks.
- 3.26 As a new venture, an activities operator on the mainland has introduced occasional scheduled trips to Skerries as part of their walking tour programme, using the ferry on a Sunday. This type of day tour is dependent on ferry (or air) transport allowing a day visit to Skerries.
- 3.27 As well as holiday visitors, Skerries accommodates people who visit for work reasons. Construction work usually involves contractors staying on the island and this brings valuable business to the accommodation providers.

- 3.28 Maximising the economic value of tourism is one of the issues being addressed by the Skerries Development Group (see below). For example, it can be difficult for people visiting Skerries to spend much. The shops are open to fit with local work patterns, there is nowhere to buy lunch or a cup of tea, and no local produce or crafts are on sale. The Council has not replaced the local harbour assistant who also collected dues from visiting yachts on behalf of the marina association, and no alternative arrangements have been put in place.

Public and Community Sector

School

- 3.29 The Council's Proposal Paper explains that Skerries School is a small, remote, all-through school with a number of staff used across all of the departments – nursery, primary and secondary. The school staffing comprises:

Primary Teaching Staff	1.4 FTE
Secondary Teaching Staff	1.2 FTE
Support Staff (Whole School)	0.7 FTE
Cleaning Staff	0.25 FTE
Total	3.55 FTE

Health

- 3.30 The NHS has a District Nurse based in Skerries providing 24/7 cover, and a doctor from the Whalsay Health Centre visits every 6 weeks if necessary. Other NHS staff, in specialisms such as podiatry and dentistry, also visit the island. A nurse was appointed soon after our 2010 report and moved to Skerries with her husband, but she has since resigned and the post is currently being advertised. The Scottish Ambulance Service is training a team of Community First Responders – volunteers who will provide support for the nurse and allow some respite from the need to provide a 24 hour on call service. 6 residents have volunteered for the training.

Other Public Sector and Related Employment

- 3.31 Other public sector work in Skerries has declined. Social Work now has no clients in Skerries and there is no formal care provision. There is also no longer a retained Fire Service on Skerries, and volunteers are ensuring proper provision at the airstrip and helping with medivac and other emergencies. As noted above, the Council has not replaced the harbour assistant who formerly met visiting boats and collected harbour dues. Although all of the jobs involved were for relatively few hours – and were often difficult to fill because of the small workforce – the pay they provided supplemented household incomes.

- 3.32 Contracts are let by the Council for services such as winter road gritting, waste collection and maintenance of the graveyard, and these contracts are currently held by Skerries residents on a self employed basis.
- 3.33 Scottish Water has an employee (and a relief) on Skerries, who work around 18 hours a week to ensure water quality. Royal Mail employs a local person for 10 hours a week to deal with mail deliveries, and SSE has a retained employee.
- 3.34 For many jobs, especially in the public sector, there is a need for relief staff to provide cover when the normal employee is absent. The flexibility of the community and their willingness to support each other to ensure that all tasks needed for day to day life and to keep business going is an important feature of life on Skerries.

START

- 3.35 The START Centre is a community business offering IT facilities, including an archiving service to put paper information onto computer discs. It seeks work from both the public and the private sectors but currently has few contracts. The Centre supports the operation of the community hall and administers the operation of the community fuel pumps.

Workforce Requirements

- 3.36 The workforce in Skerries is small, which causes difficulties and constrains development across all sectors. In the fishing industry, local boat owners have had to look further afield to recruit crew. One boat owner, who works with 2 local crew members, indicated in 2010 that if his current crew were to leave he would probably have to downscale his operation to a one man boat, resulting in a much reduced catch and reduced impact in the Shetland economy (reduced wages, fuel, maintenance etc).
- 3.37 The shortage of labour on the islands is also restricting the development of Bound Skerries Ltd. The company is confident from the demand side that it could employ an additional 6 people in its fish processing plant working 3 days each week immediately, and envisages potential to increase that as the business grows. This workforce would need to be flexible however, and the jobs might not be year-round – i.e. they would fit into the pattern of pluri-activity rather than attracting new residents.
- 3.38 In the public sector there have been issues in recruitment and maintaining the workforce. One of the issues with the Fire Service was the lack of sufficient people to maintain a fully trained crew. Social Work had difficulty in recruiting carers when it had clients in Skerries, and the Headteacher post had to be advertised 3 times before being filled. There is some concern in the NHS about how easy it will be to replace the Community Nurse.

3.39 In addition to attracting staff to work in a remote location, recruitment constraints include:

- the part time and casual nature of some of the jobs;
- the availability of work for partners;
- the availability of suitable accommodation;
- being on call/available 24/7.

Summary of Employment and Output

3.40 Fishing and aquaculture remain the mainstays of the Skerries economy. Between them they contribute £5.1 million to the Shetland economy.

3.41 Other economic output broadly equates to earnings plus employment costs. Building work in Skerries, such as for the recently completed housing, and specialist maintenance that would be undertaken by non-residents would also contribute to the Shetland economy.

3.42 The current 31 FTE jobs in Skerries might provide earnings of some £620,000. Adding in the earnings of local residents who work off Skerries and the income of the 19 retired people might bring total income to some £900,000.

3.43 It is not necessary to apply a “multiplier” to assess Skerries supply chain and “induced” employment through the local spending of employees as these impacts are captured by our comprehensive assessment of the Skerries economy.

3.44 The estimated earnings total of £900,000 is similar to that estimated in 2010 although above the CACI-derived figure of £800,000 given in paragraph 3.6 above. Overall, our analysis suggests that there has been no growth in earnings since 2010.

Economic Development

3.45 In our 2010 report we indicated that Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) recognised the fragility of the community and was interested in exploring working with them to produce a development plan for the island. The possibility of Skerries becoming Community Account Managed by HIE was explored but this did not go ahead for a number of reasons. However, HIE and SIC’s Community Work Officer for the area have worked with the community to build confidence and capacity and to explore potential ways forward.

3.46 As a result the Skerries Development Group (which had been dormant) has been re-formed at the request of the community and supported in sorting out practical issues such as banking and constitutional matters. An eleven strong committee with office bearers has been elected and has started work to prioritise a Skerries Community Development Plan. With more young families in Skerries there is a commitment to strengthen the community and make it more sustainable in the longer term.

- 3.47 The group has invited guests from the Northmavine Community Development Company, SIC Youth Services and Shetland Geoparks, and has explored topics and opportunities for community and economic development. These include population decline, housing and accommodation, employment; tourism, community polytunnels, visitor services, interpretation and infrastructure. There is a view that lack of available accommodation and the fragility of services has put families off moving to Skerries and constrained the development of the islands. The Development Group is keen to address such issues.
- 3.48 Activities to-date have been the design and distribution of a Visitor Questionnaire which probes what attracts people – and visiting yachts – to Skerries and what they would like to see when they get to the islands. The community have also started a Skerries History Group to consider heritage developments; are investigating setting up their own Youth Club which would link to the activities of other clubs that they might be able to work with; and have added 4 new Geocache points to the existing Geocache point in Skerries helping to promote the area and attract visitors.
- 3.49 Through next winter, the Group intends to progress both its structure (to become limited liability) and its Development Plan. It has many ideas and considers it essential that those ideas are prioritised and initial steps taken to implement them.

4. THE IMPACTS OF CLOSING THE SECONDARY DEPARTMENT

Direct Impacts

- 4.1 The total cost of operating the secondary department at Skerries is budgeted by the Council at £109,195, including £70,973 of staff costs (including oncosts). The staff cost saving from closing the secondary department would exceed this at £78,865, however, because part of the saving would relate to staff costs currently budgeted against the other school departments.
- 4.2 The total annual saving from closing the secondary department is estimated at £76,336, including additional costs relating to the hall of residence in Lerwick of £1,644 and additional transport costs of £2,508. This saving includes £936 additional income which it is assumed will be generated at Anderson High School through the sale of school meals. There is no charge to parents for board costs at the hall of residence.
- 4.3 The main direct impact of closing the Secondary department at Skerries school, then, will relate to the saving in staff costs of £78,865. The savings would comprise one full time post and, we assume, a number of part time posts, although this is not clear from the Proposal Paper. There would also be a negative impact through parents needing to pay £936 for the school meals.
- 4.4 In themselves, these job losses are important to the Skerries economy; while the loss of the income associated with the full time teaching post would represent a potentially significant loss to the local shopkeepers who already operate on relatively small turnovers. Those who would lose part time posts might find alternative part time work, but this could be through a redistribution of work on the islands, and, without new development, there would be a reduction in Skerries' overall household income.
- 4.5 Losing the teacher would also affect the community negatively since this is currently one of the few professional posts in Skerries. The former Headteacher, for example, was chair of the community co-operative which runs the petrol pumps and a director of Bound Skerries, the community company. In a small community it can be difficult to replace the loss of professional skills, and community development can suffer as a result.

Other Impacts

- 4.6 We were asked to comment on the potential impacts of families leaving Skerries due to the closure of the secondary department. The 2 pupils attending secondary school in 2013/14 are from two families. One of the children has special needs, which his parents feel raises particular difficulties in terms of his leaving home to stay at the boarding wing in Lerwick and returning on the ferry at weekends without supervision. This is a strong concern in itself but the potential for the weather to affect ferry sailings adds to the worries of parents. When the school was closed temporarily recently, 2 of the then 3 pupils went to Lerwick, while this pupil was given education at home. The mother of the 2 who went to Lerwick also stayed off the island through the week.

- 4.7 The two families concerned are the same as would have been affected in 2010. If both were to leave, which seems possible, Skerries would lose a total of 13 residents – the 4 parents, 3 of the island's young adults, and 6 of the 10 children. One of the parents has a fishing boat, and could relocate the boat to Lerwick or elsewhere on the mainland. The crew who live on Skerries would then have to travel to meet the boat elsewhere – although it seems likely, if the boat owner left, that they would be replaced in the short or longer term by crew living on the mainland. If the family stayed elsewhere in Shetland there would be no loss to the Shetland economy, but there would be a serious loss to Skerries and a reduction in future relatively well paid jobs available to island residents. The other family lived and worked on the mainland for some years before making the decision to move back to Skerries to settle and build a family house.
- 4.8 Both families have an association with Bound Skerries Ltd, including one parent working full time on the fish farm and one who is the company secretary. Bound Skerries has already experienced difficulties in recruiting staff, and as there are no other potential fish farm workers in Skerries it would be necessary to attract staff from elsewhere. This has proved difficult in the past and, without a secondary school, the company would rate the prospects of attracting new workers as low. As the fish farm needs attention every day, working with one fewer worker would put pressure on the operation.
- 4.9 Combined with the loss of the teacher, these moves away would reduce the population to 59. With the pluri-activity which is the norm in Skerries, the limited number of younger adults on the islands and some spending significant time at sea, loss of these two families would also affect the maintenance of services and voluntary activity on Skerries.
- 4.10 The longer term commitment of other younger people who have set up home on Skerries would also become questionable. Young people choose where to live and bring up their families for a variety of reasons, but a clear feeling was evident in our discussions that the unique environment and lifestyle on Skerries would be adversely affected if children had to attend boarding school from the age of eleven. In addition to the two families mentioned above, there is a possibility that other couples would leave Skerries before any children came to secondary age.
- 4.11 The involvement of these younger families has been important in the progress made by the Skerries Development Group, as mentioned above. Community confidence is fragile and the possible closure of the Secondary Department would be likely to adversely affect progress in taking the Group's ideas forward.
- 4.12 Closure of the secondary department could make it more difficult for public sector employers to recruit staff with families, and reduce the pool of people who might move to Skerries for work.

- 4.13 If younger families left Skerries this would increase the proportion of older people living on the islands while reducing the number of people available to provide care in the future (either formal or informal). Social Work has no Skerries clients at present, but if future care needs cannot be met locally, it could become necessary to move older people into care homes elsewhere.
- 4.14 Overall, then, the impacts of closing the secondary department in Skerries could be severe, with implications for the main drivers of the island economy – the fishing fleet and Bound Skerries – as well as for future community involvement in economic development. The age and occupational balance of the population would be changed, and this could adversely affect arrangements for (and the costs of) long term care for the elderly. It would therefore be important to take action to replace those who would move away with families willing to accept the new educational arrangements (which might not be possible).

5. POTENTIAL MITIGATING ACTIONS

- 5.1 We were asked to consider potential mitigating effects should the school's secondary department close, such as the prospect for additional public and private sector employment in Skerries and the scope for attracting new residents.
- 5.2 As mentioned in Section 3 there has been some progress since 2010 in taking forward community led economic development. HIE and SIC Community Work have supported the re-establishment of the Skerries Development Group and initial work has been carried out to prepare a Development Plan. Continuing support for this process would be important.
- 5.3 The community has identified various potential prospects for development, though more extensive work would be required to prioritise these opportunities and to assess their feasibility and viability.
- 5.4 Although Bound Skerries has grown since 2010, there is further potential to expand its output. Although the fish farm has doubled its stock in the last 3 years while maintaining its quality standards, it is operating at half its maximum stock level, and throughput could be increased, although this could require capital investment. If the workforce expanded and staff could be sufficiently flexible, additional employment could be provided in the fish processing factory.
- 5.5 Bound Skerries and the Development Group are also exploring further the potential to expand the range of value added products from the farm's output, either directly or through associated companies. This might involve smoking salmon or other specialist products.
- 5.6 The Development Group is investigating the scope to increase the benefits from tourism, attracting more visitors to Skerries. It is encouraging that a local tour operator has included Skerries in its programme of day walking trips and there is scope to improve the facilities available for tourists and day visitors. It is understood that the Shetland Amenities Trust has examined the potential to develop the lighthouse buildings as part of its range of Shetland Lighthouse Holidays.
- 5.7 Given the wild and remote image of Skerries it is likely to remain very much a niche tourism product, but this is also true for Shetland as a whole, and Skerries, in many ways, epitomises the wildness and remoteness that a possibly increasing number of tourists are seeking. Allied to its birdlife, the potential for relatively short walks, diving, yachting and other outdoor pursuits, Skerries has much to offer a particular kind of tourist, and there is potential to develop both activities for visitors and further visitor accommodation.
- 5.8 The Development Group has recognised the importance of housing in attracting new residents to Skerries and is exploring how the community could increase availability. With an appropriate Development Plan, it might be possible for the community to reconsider registering an interest in ownership of the Skerries estate and in Grunay. The community's consideration of land purchase in the past has included concerns about the capacity of an ageing

population to take on the increased level of community activity, the uncertainty about the future of the school (with the difficulties that would create in attracting new long term residents), and the price of the land compared to the cost of purchasing the freehold of crofts. Nevertheless, ownership of the islands that make up Skerries might provide a focus for the energy that will be required to regenerate the community for the future.

- 5.9 Such developments might go ahead whether or not the secondary department is closed. However, there would need to be stability in community confidence and the retention of younger people for the developments to be taken forward. In either case, the community would require support both to develop and implement their plans, but if it was faced with losing up to 13 of its current residents, it would clearly need a higher level of support.
- 5.10 It seems likely, however, that without the secondary department a different type of new resident would tend to be attracted to the island – either people without or with grown up children, or those from a different background more accepting of sending their children away to school. The Skerries that might emerge from the process would be different from the Skerries of the recent past, and its long term sustainability – with an increasing proportion of elderly people if families with young children are not attracted – would be less assured than were the secondary department to be retained.

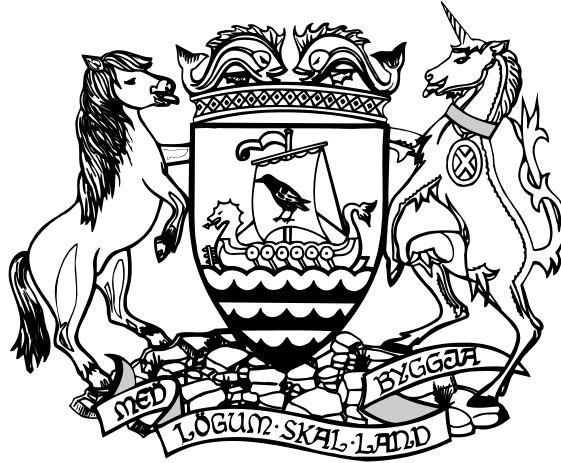
6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Our main conclusions from this socio-economic study are that:

- Skerries continues to be a fragile community but there has been progress through younger families committing to settling there by building new housing and starting families;
- The main drivers of the Skerries economy remain fishing and aquaculture;
- Public sector employment has reduced, with the withdrawal of the fire service and no current social care clients;
- The retail sector in Skerries is fragile, with reduced turnover since 2010;
- There is almost full employment in Skerries;
- Most full time jobs are held by men, often carrying out additional part time jobs;
- Women are most often in part time work, often with a number of different jobs in different sectors;
- All sectors of the Skerries economy are experiencing difficulties in recruitment and this is affecting economic output;
- Closure of the school's secondary department might lead to two families leaving Skerries and other families with young children considering their future;
- Should these families decide to leave, there would be a severe impact on the balance of the population in Skerries and its economy, including reducing the viability of the primary school and the employment it provides, unless those families could be replaced relatively quickly;
- Employers are concerned that loss of the secondary department would make it even more difficult to recruit staff to live and work in Skerries;
- The community has worked with HIE and SIC to begin to produce a development plan which could create a path for the future that would sustain and increase the total population, the proportion of young people in the community, employment and output;
- A relatively stable educational environment will be important in maintaining community confidence and retaining the younger people necessary for development plans for the future of Skerries to be successful.

6.2 The development potential of Skerries would be stronger with the secondary department retained as there would otherwise be a constraint on family residence. Thus, a larger population with an increased proportion of working age people (some with current or future children) would provide more pupils

both for the secondary department and the primary department, increasing the school's cost effectiveness and retaining (or increasing) education-related employment in Skerries.



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

Appendix H – Strategic Environmental Assessment



Shetland Islands Council

Head of Service: Helen Budge
Executive Director: Hazel Sutherland

Mr William Carlin
SEA Gateway Manager

Schools Service
Education & Social Care Department
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
Shetland, ZE1 0QD

Telephone: 01595 744000
Fax: 01595 744010

www.shetland.gov.uk

If calling please ask for:
Marianne Gordon
Direct Dial: 01595 74 4745

Our Ref: HB/mg/B40/SC/001
Your Ref:

Date: 11 April 2011

Dear Mr Carlin

Blueprint for Education- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Determination and Supporting Statement of Reasons

Shetland Islands Council as Responsible Authority has carried out under Section 8 of The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening of the Blueprint for Education.

The determination by Shetland Islands Council under Section 8(1) of the Act is that the Blueprint for Education is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required. Therefore no environmental report will be prepared alongside the Blueprint for Education.

Before making this determination, the Council sent a summary of its views as to whether or not the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects to Consultation Authorities via the SEA Gateway on 24 March 2011. The Council's views are summarised in the attached document. Responses were received via the SEA Gateway in emails dated 06 April. Copies of these emails also form part of the attached document.

Shetland Islands Council noted that the Consultation Authorities agreed with the view that the Blueprint for Education was unlikely to have significant environmental effects and made the determination to that effect under Section 8 (1) of the Act. In making that determination the Schools Service applied criteria in Schedule 2 of the Act.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Budge
Head of Schools

Cc: SEA Consultation Authorities (Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and Historic Scotland)

Enc

Statement of reasons for Screening Determination under Section 8(1) of the Act and Key facts about the plan

Responsible Authority	Shetland Islands Council
Title of plan	Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Purpose of plan	The purpose of the Blueprint for Education is to develop a modern 'blueprint' for the shape of education provision in Shetland for the next two decades.
Period covered by the plan	The Blueprint for Education is a strategic piece of work that was instigated by Elected Members in 2007. Informal Community Consultations took place in 2008 and early 2010. In autumn 2010 the Schools Service began a series of statutory consultations on a number of school closure proposals. Part of the plan is to review staffing and other aspects of the Schools Service. It is proposed that all aspects of the Blueprint for Education will be implemented by 2013.
Proposed update, if any:	n/a
Area covered:	Shetland Islands
Are there any proposed plan objectives?	Yes
Copy of the objectives attached?	No. Full details of the plan to date can be found at http://www.shetland.gov.uk/education/BlueprintforEducation.asp
Summary of the plan and reasons	<p>The Blueprint for Education is a significant strategic piece of work to determine the future of education in Shetland, remitted by Shetland Islands Council Services Committee in June 2007. At that time, the principle drivers were, given the projected decline in the pupil population across Shetland, to create an educationally and financially sustainable model of education for the future.</p> <p>It is a significant change management project, which addresses strategic priorities, allocation of resources based on need, a best value option appraisal and choices over value for money.</p>

The table below considers the likely significance of effects on the environment of the Blueprint for Education.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment 1(a) to 2(g) below refer to paragraphs in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Likely to have significant environmental effects? YES / NO	Summary of significant environmental effects. (negative and positive)

1(a) the degree to which the PPS sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	No.	Any school closure will result in an increased level of school transport. There would be a reduction in the carbon footprint due to a reduced amount of energy being used to heat and power fewer establishments.
1(b) the degree to which the PPS influences other PPS including those in a hierarchy	No.	-
1(c) the relevance of the PPS for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	No.	-
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the PPS	No.	Increased carbon emissions from additional school transport.
1(e) the relevance of the PPS for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, PPS linked to waste management or water protection)	No.	-
2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	No.	-
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No.	-
2 (c) transboundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States)	No.	-
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	No.	Impact of increased journey time on health and wellbeing of pupils Journeys will sometimes be made on single track roads which may mean increased risk of accidents.

2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	No.	School closures are proposed in areas that are relatively low population centres.
2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to- (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use.	No.	School closures may have a potential impact on the value of land and housing in a particular area.
2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	No.	There are a number of sites of special scientific interest in the areas affected by potential school closures. These closures however will have no impact on these sites.

Summary of the Environmental Effects

A summary of the consideration of the significant environmental effects of the SIC Education Blueprint is given below.

School Closures will lead to an increase in the use of school transport. This will mean larger vehicles being used increasing fuel consumption and carbon emissions. In some cases however, existing transport routes will be utilised.

There would be a reduction in the Schools Service's carbon footprint due to the decrease in the number of establishments than would be required.

There may be an impact on the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff if they are travelling a longer distance especially if they previously walked to school.

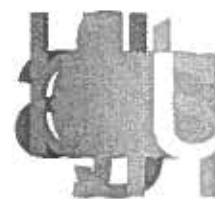
There are a number of sites of special scientific interest in the areas affected by potential school closures. These closures however will have no impact on these sites.

School closures may have a potential impact on the value of land and housing in a particular area.

If school closures are realised then any vacant building would be passed to other areas of the Council. It would then be outside of the control of the Schools Service as to the potential use of the school building.

Directorate for the Built Environment
SEA Unit, 2-H Bridge Car Park Mail point 13, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6
6QQ

T: 0131-244 7650 F: 0131-244 7555
E: Johnathan.whittlestone@scotland.gsi.gov.uk



Date : 6 April 2011

Marianne Gordon
Schools Service
Shetland Islands Council

00584 Screening - Shetland islands council - Blueprint for education in shetland

Dear Marianne,

With reference to the Screening document you submitted on 24 March 2011.

The Consultation Authorities have now considered your screening request as per **Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005**. For convenience I have set out, in the table below, their individual views on whether there is a likelihood of significant environmental effects.

Please note, these are the views and opinions of the Consultation Authorities on the likelihood of significant environmental effects arising from the plan or programme and not a judgement on whether an SEA is required. It is therefore for the Responsible Authority to determine whether an SEA is required in the circumstances. I have attached the individual letters from the Consultation Authorities, outlining their views and opinions. Where possible the Consultation Authorities may have offered supplementary information and/or advice for you to consider, which you should find helpful.

CONSULTATION AUTHORITY	LIKELIHOOD OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS
Historic Scotland	No
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	No
Scottish Natural Heritage	No
OVERALL VIEW ON LIKELIHOOD OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS	No

As the Consultation Authorities have now notified you of their views, you should now refer to the Act to consider your next step. You should of course take into account the advice offered by the Consultation Authorities.

You should note, as per Section 10 of the Act, within 28 days of your determination about whether an SEA is required or not, a copy of the determination and any related statement of reasons must be passed to the Consultation Authorities. This may be done via the SEA Gateway.

If you have any queries or would like me to clarify any points, please call me on 0131 244 7650.

Yours sincerely

Johnathan Whittlestone
SEA Gateway Officer

HISTORIC
SCOTLANDALBA
AOSMHOR

Marianne Gordon
Communications Officer
Education and Social Care Department
Shetland Islands Council
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
Shetland

Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH

Direct Line: 0131 668 8960
Direct Fax: 0131 668 8899
Switchboard: 0131 668 8600

Our ref: AMN/23/551 AS
Case ref: 201007828

Date: 6 April 2011

Dear Ms Gordon

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
Shetland Islands Council – Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Screening Report**

Thank you for consulting Historic Scotland on the screening report for Shetland Islands Council's Blueprint for Education in Shetland received by the Scottish Government's SEA Gateway on 24 March 2011. I have reviewed the screening report on behalf of Historic Scotland in its role as a Consultation Authority under the above Act, in accordance with the requirements of Section 9(3). In doing so I have used the criteria set out in Schedule 2 for determining the likely significance of the effects on the environment. Please note that our view is based on our main area of interest for the historic environment.

My understanding from the report is that the plan will include proposals setting out education provision in the Shetland Islands over the next two decades. I note that while you identify some environmental effects that will arise from the plan you do not consider that these effects are likely to be strategically significant. In light of the information contained in the report I agree that the plan is unlikely to have significant effects on the historic environment.

As you will be aware, it is the responsibility of Shetland Islands Council as the Responsible Authority to determine whether the plan requires an environmental assessment and to inform the Consultation Authorities accordingly.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this response.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stevenson
Senior Development Assessment Officer (SEA)





Scottish Natural Heritage

All of nature for all of Scotland

Marianne Gordon
Communications Officer
Shetland Islands Council
Schools Service
Education and Social Care Department
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
Shetland
ZE1 0QD

Dear Madam

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF PLANS AND PROGRAMMES (SCOTLAND)
REGULATIONS, 2004
00584 – SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL BLUEPRINT FOR EDUCATION IN SHETLAND**

I refer to your screening consultation submitted on 24 March 2011 via the Scottish Executive SEA Gateway in respect of the above Strategy.

In accordance with Section 14(3) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004, we have considered your screening report using the criteria set out in Schedule 1 for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment.

We agree with the conclusion of the Scoping Report that the Shetland Islands Council Blueprint for Education in Shetland is not likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The closure of schools will result in an increase in CO₂ emissions from school transport, but this will not be significant in the context of Shetland's total output and will be at least partly offset by the reduced number of schools using less energy in total.

Yours faithfully

John Uttley
Area Manager
Northern Isles Area
john.uttley@snh.gov.uk



ENVIRONMENTAL

Scottish Natural Heritage, Northern Isles Area
Ground Floor, Stewart Building, Alexandra Wharf, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0LL
Tel 01595 693345 Fax 01595 692565 www.snh.org.uk



Our ref: PCS113003/scr/SH
 SG ref: SEA00584
 If telephoning ask for:
 Susan Haslam

Marianne Gordon
 Schools Service
 Education and Social Care Department
 Hayfield House
 Hayfield Lane
 Lerwick
 ZE1 0QD

By email only to: sea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

5 April 2011

Dear Ms Gordon

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
 Blueprint for Education in Shetland - Screening Report**

Thank you for your Screening Report consultation submitted under the above Act in respect of the above. This was received by SEPA via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway on 24 March 2011.

In accordance with Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act, 2005, we have considered your screening report using the criteria set out in Schedule 2 for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment.

Having reviewed the Screening Report, we consider that in respect of our main areas of interest (air, water, soil, human health and climatic factors) the Plan is not likely to have significant strategic environmental effects. Although we are of the view that significant environmental effects are not likely, it is for the Shetland Islands Council as Responsible Authority to make a formal determination taking into account the consultation responses received.

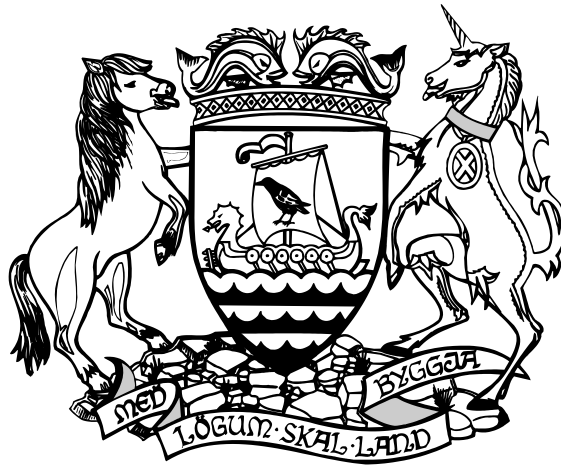
If it is formally determined that SEA is required, you will be aware that the next stage requires the Responsible Authority to consult the Consultation Authorities on the proposed scope and level of detail to be included within the Environmental Report. The Consultation Authorities typically expect to receive a concise Scoping Report at this stage. Further information about this stage and what should be included in a Scoping Report can be found in Chapter 5 of the Scottish SEA Tool Kit available from www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/13104943/45. We would encourage you to use the Scoping Report to focus the assessment on those SEA topics upon which there are likely to be significant environmental effects.

Should you wish to discuss this consultation, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01349 860359 or via SEPA's SEA Gateway at sea.gateway@sepa.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Haslam
 Senior Planning Officer (SEA)

Planning Service



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

Appendix I – Skerries Exam Results

Year	awards achieved	Subject	level	Number of pupils who achieved this award
1995	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	2
	2	English	standard grade	2
	2	Office Information Studies	standard grade	2
	2	Maths	standard grade	1
	2	Geography	standard grade	1
	3	Maths	standard grade	1
	3	Geography	standard grade	1
	3	Biology	standard grade	1
	3	Chemistry	standard grade	1
1998	1	Physics	standard grade	1
	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	3	Accounting & Finance	standard grade	1
	3	English	standard grade	1
	3	Maths	standard grade	1
	3	Geography	standard grade	1
1999	1	Science	standard grade	1
	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	2	English	standard grade	1
	2	Geography	standard grade	1
	2	Maths	standard grade	1
	3	Graphic Commuication	standard grade	1
	3	Physics	standard grade	1
2000	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	1	Accounting & Finance	standard grade	1
	1	Science	standard grade	1
	2	English	standard grade	1
	2	Maths	standard grade	1
	2	Office Information Studies	standard grade	1
	3	French	standard grade	1
2001	1	Maths	standard grade	1
	1	French	standard grade	1
	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	1	Accounting & Finance	standard grade	1
	1	Graphic Commuication	standard grade	1
	2	English	standard grade	1
	2	Biology	standard grade	1
2002	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	3
	1	Science	standard grade	3
	1	Graphic Commuication	standard grade	1
	2	English	standard grade	3
	2	Geography	standard grade	1
	2	Biology	standard grade	1
	2	Maths	standard grade	2
	2	Physics	standard grade	1
	3	Geography	standard grade	2
	3	Graphic Commuication	standard grade	2
	3	Physics	standard grade	3
	4	Maths	standard grade	1

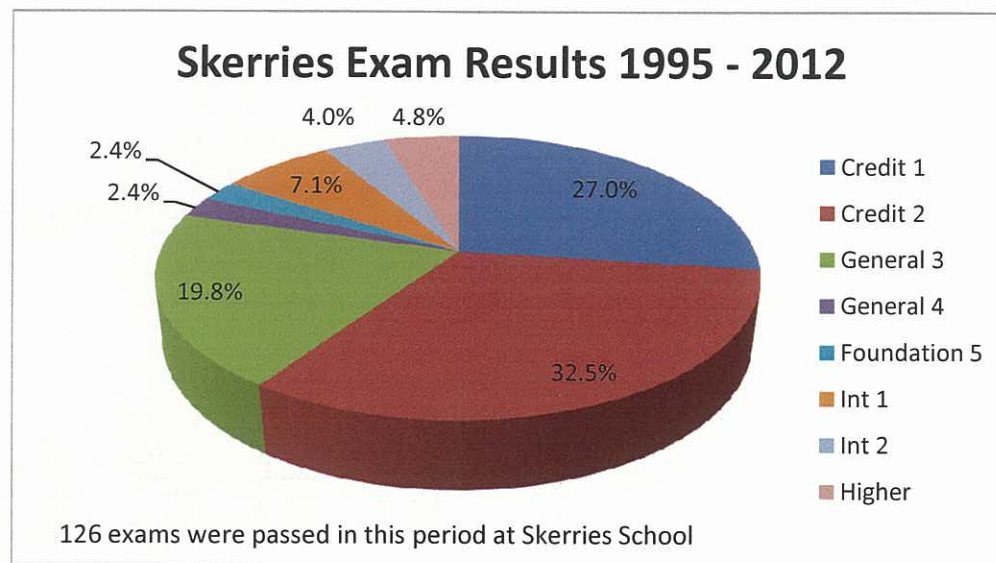
34 1s
41 2s
25 3s
3 4s
3 5s
9 Int 1s
5 Int 2s
6 Highers
126 Total

2003	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	1	Geography	standard grade	1
	1	Maths	standard grade	1
	2	English	standard grade	2
	2	Physics	standard grade	1
	2	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	2	Graphic Communication	standard grade	1
	2	Science	standard grade	1
	3	English	standard grade	1
	3	Biology	standard grade	1
	4	Maths	standard grade	1
	4	Graphic Communication	standard grade	1
2004	1	Art	standard grade	1
	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	2	Graph Com	standard grade	1
	2	English	standard grade	1
	3	Maths	standard grade	1
	3	Biology	standard grade	1
	A	Cookery	Int 1	1
	A	Cookery	Int 2	1
	A	Maths	Int 2	1
	B	Human Biology	Higher	1
	B	Chemistry	Higher	1
2005	B	Maths	Higher	1
2006	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	2	English	standard grade	1
	2	Graph Com	standard grade	1
	2	Science	standard grade	1
	2	Maths	standard grade	1
	3	Physics	standard grade	1
	5	Geography	standard grade	1
	A	Practical Cookery	Int 1	1
2007	1	Chemistry	standard grade	1
	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	1	Science	standard grade	1
	2	English	standard grade	1
	2	Maths	standard grade	1
	3	Modern Studies	standard grade	1
	A	Practical Cookery	Int 1	1
	A	Woodwork	Int 2	1
2010	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	1	Science	standard grade	1
	2	English	standard grade	1
	2	Physics	standard grade	1
	2	Technological Studies	standard grade	1
	A	Engineering Craft Skills	Int 1	1
	A	Hospitality: practical cookery	Int 1	1
	A	Maths	Int 1	1
	A	Hospitality: practical cookery	Int 2	1
2011	B	Early Education & Childcare	Higher	2
	C	Early Education & Childcare	Higher	1

2012	1	English	standard grade	1
	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	2	Art & Design	standard grade	1
	2	Home Ec	standard grade	1
	3	Modern Studies	standard grade	1
	5	English	standard grade	1
	5	Admin	standard grade	1
	A	Maths	Int 1	1
	A	Hospitality: Practical Cookery	Int 1	1
	B	Maths	Int 1	1
	A	Hospitality: Practical Cookery	Int 2	1

Number of pupils who sat
exams from 1995 - 2012

Credit 1	Credit 2	General 3	General 4	Foundation 5	Int 1	Int 2	Higher	
126	27.0%	32.5%	19.8%	2.4%	2.4%	7.1%	4.0%	4.8%
	34	41	25	3	3	9	5	6





**Education and Families Committee
Special Shetland Islands Council**

**10 October 2013
10 October 2013**

Blueprint for Education in Shetland Decision on Olnafirth Primary School	
CS-48-13-F	
Report Presented by Director of Children's Services	Children's Services

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This Report presents the Consultation Report on the proposed closure of Olnafirth Primary School. An Executive Summary of the Consultation Report is attached as Appendix A, and the full Consultation Report is attached as Appendix B
- 1.2 Statutory Consultation was carried out on the proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School between 14 May 2013 and 28 June 2013 in line with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Having weighed up the balance of evidence presented, the Consultation Report recommends approval to close Olnafirth Primary School and transfer the pupils to Brae High School Primary Department from 18 August 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter. If this approval is given there is a duty on Children's Services to inform the Scottish Ministers of the decision. Thereafter, Scottish Ministers have a six-week period to decide whether or not to call-in the decision.

2.0 Decision Required

- 2.1 That the Education and Families Committee recommend that Shetland Islands Council RESOLVE that:
- (a) education provision at Olnafirth Primary School be discontinued with effect from 4 July 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter; and
 - (b) the pupils of Olnafirth Primary School continue their education at Brae High School Primary Department, from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter; and

- (c) the catchment area for Brae High School Primary Department be altered to include the current catchment area for Olnafirth Primary School.

2.2 Should the Proposal be approved then please note that

- (a) the Scottish Ministers have a six week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the Proposal so no action can be taken regarding implementation;
- (b) the Director of Children's Services will work with pupils, parents and staff at Olnafirth Primary School and Brae High School Primary Department to develop a transition plan that would ensure an effective transition for pupils to Brae High School Primary Department;
- (c) the Director of Children's Services will ensure all staff will be properly consulted about their future, as will relevant trade unions. The individual wishes of each member of staff will be taken into consideration within the context of appropriate human resource policies and agreements.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 A detailed re-fresh of the Blueprint for Education was undertaken by Children's Services in 2012. On 20 September 2012 Shetland Islands Council approved a Statement for Education 2012-2017; Commitments for Education 2012-2017; and a Plan for Delivering Education 2012-2017 (Min Ref:74/12). Statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Olnafirth Primary School to be carried out in 2013 was part of the approved Plan.
- 3.2 The statutory consultation process commenced with the publication of the Proposal Paper on 14 May 2013 and ran until the 28 June 2013.
- 3.3 In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Act) Scotland 2010, a public meeting was held in the Voe Public Hall on 29 May 2013, where twenty-eight people attended. An additional public meeting was held in Brae High School, the proposed receiving school on 30 May 2013 where three people attended. Transcripts of these meetings are published on Shetland Islands Council's website and are appended to the Consultation Report.
- 3.4 In response to concerned consultees two additional meetings were also held on 6 June 2013 and 19 June 2013 to gather views. Transcripts of these meetings are also published on Shetland Island's Council's website.

- 3.5 In addition, twenty-two written responses were received on the Proposal.
- 3.6 Following the end of the statutory consultation period, in line with legislation, the Proposal Paper, all written responses and transcripts of the public meetings were then sent to Education Scotland who published a formal report on the educational aspects of the Proposal on 19 September 2013.
- 3.7 Children's Services published their response to the consultation, in the form of a Consultation Report on 19 September 2013. This was circulated at the time, both electronically and in paper copy. The Consultation Report contains:
- a record and a summary of the number of written responses received during the Statutory Consultation Period, and Children's Services' response to these;
 - a summary of the representations made at the public meetings held during the consultation period, and Children's Services' response to these;
 - the full text of Education Scotland's Report on the educational aspects of the Proposal and Children's Services' response to the issues raised in their report;
 - a statement of how Children's Services has reviewed the Proposal following all the representations made during the consultation period;
 - details of any omissions or inaccuracies in the Proposal Paper.
- 3.8 The Consultation Report has been published in electronic and printed formats and its publication has been advertised in the local media. It is available on Shetland Islands Council's website and free of charge in printed form from Hayfield House, Shetland Library, Olnafirth Primary School and Brae High School. An executive summary of the Consultation Report is also published on Shetland Islands Council's website and is Appendix A to this report.
- 3.9 The Consultation Report contains a full analysis of all the issues raised through the Consultation Process. The summary of the written responses indicates that half of respondents disagree with the Proposal. The table below, an extract from the Consultation Report, shows an analysis of the responses, including the key issues of concern.

Number of written consultation responses received	22	%
Number of responses that:		
agreed with the Proposal	6	27%
disagreed with the Proposal	11	50%
did not indicate an opinion or request further information	5	23%

Of the 6 who agreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:	
Quality of Education	2
Class Sizes	2
Peer Interaction	2
Community Concerns	2

Of the 11 who disagreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:	
Quality of Education	7
Community Concerns	5
Financial Issues	5
Transition Issues	4
Transport Availability	4
Transport Cost	3
Child Safety	3
Democratic (or Decision Making Process)	3
Travelling Distance/Time	3

- 3.10 The Consultation Report is a comprehensive analysis of all the issues which have been raised and Children's Services' responses to those. The key points made and responses provided are considered under the following headings:
- Transport/Child Safety
 - Quality of Education
 - Out of School Activities
 - Peer Interaction
 - Class Sizes
 - Community Concerns
 - Access to community Services
 - Transition
 - Relationships/Friends
 - School capacity
 - Condition of buildings
 - Democratic (or decision making process)
 - Financial
- 3.11 The key conclusions from the Consultation Report are set out below.
- 3.11.1 Throughout the consultation, Children's Services has given special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 3.11.2 The statutory consultation process was robust and provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to identify key issues of concern.
- 3.11.3 The issue of an alternative receiving school for the proposal was raised during the statutory consultation. Some respondents including the Olnefirth Parent Council did not

want Olnafirth Primary School to close, but, if it did, they wanted Lunnasting Primary School considered as the receiving school. This issue was further discussed during the consultation period and other respondents felt this view was not representative of the majority of parents' views in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area.

3.11.4 Children's Services has given due consideration to this option and are continuing to recommend Brae High School Primary Department as the receiving school should Olnafirth Primary School close. This decision is based on:

- The excellent transport links between Voe and Brae, and the relatively short journey time for children, compared to travel to Lunnasting Primary School;
- The fact that most parents from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment still opt for Brae High School Primary Department for nursery education;
- The fact that, of the 15 placing requests there are currently out of Olnafirth Primary School, 12 of these are to Brae High School Primary Department and only two are to Lunnasting Primary School
- The fact that Brae High School is Olnafirth Primary School's associated school for secondary education.

3.11.5 To ensure Children's Services fulfilled the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 in their fullest regard, we commissioned a socio-economic study on this proposal and a health impact assessment. We also carried out an Integrated Impact Assessment. NHS Shetland also carried out a Health Impact Assessment.

3.11.6 The Standards in Schools (Scotland) etc Act 2000 requires local authorities

"to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential".

3.11.7 Education Scotland visited Olnafirth Primary School to speak to parents, children and staff. They had the opportunity to view the proposal paper and all written responses.

3.11.8 In summary, the report by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal recognises:

- that there are potential benefits to the children directly affected by the proposal and more widely across Shetland Islands Council;
- that children would have better opportunities for learning together and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
- that children would have more regular access to specialist classes and staff;
- that transition arrangements have the potential to be improved further with this proposal;

- that the Proposal has the potential to contribute Shetland Islands Council efforts in securing best value within the context of the over-capacity in the Council's school estate;
 - that as a result the Council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area.
- 3.11.9 We know excellent high-quality education is delivered in our small schools in Shetland, and although Curriculum for Excellence is entirely able to be delivered to an equally high standard in a small school, for some aspects of it, delivery can be more challenging.
- 3.11.10 Brae High School Primary Department is only 5.08 miles away from Olnafirth Primary School and there is a well-maintained main road between Voe and Brae.
- 3.11.11 Only eight of the 25 children who could attend Olnafirth Primary School currently do go there, and of the 17 placing requests there are out of the school, twelve of these are to Brae High School Primary Department. Olnafirth Primary School children also mostly still attend Brae High School Primary Department for nursery education. Brae High School Secondary Department is their associated secondary school.
- 3.11.12 There is considerable spare capacity in Olnafirth Primary School and the children could be accommodated in Brae High School Primary Department without the need for any additional staffing.
- 3.11.13 Of the twenty-two written responses received during the consultation, 50% disagreed with the proposal, 27% agreed with the proposal and 23% did not express an opinion.
- 3.11.14 Children's Services believes there are clear educational benefits to be gained for Olnafirth Primary School children, by moving them to Brae High School Primary Department. Brae High School Primary Department is a larger setting which would give the children better opportunities for learning, and better opportunities for social interaction with other children of the same age. As a result, this larger setting can more easily deliver on particular aspects of Curriculum for Excellence where skills development such as learning in groups, relating to others, communicating in different ways and working in teams are required. Currently there are twelve children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area being educated in Brae High School Primary Department so this Proposal will have the benefit of enabling more children from the community to be educated together. Brae High School remains the most popular choice for nursery education for parents from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area and it is the associated secondary school for secondary education from Secondary 1 to Secondary 6 for children from the area. Therefore this

Proposal also offers the benefit of eliminating transitions for children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area.

3.11.15 This proposal, if implemented, has the potential to provide recurring savings to Shetland Islands Council of £97,239. This proposal makes an ongoing contribution to Children's Services meeting its target budget agreed in the Medium Term Financial Plan. This amount has been revised from the estimated savings of £91,309 in the Proposal Paper as a result of:

- a correction to the cost of Olnafirth Primary School children attending Brae High School currently for a six-week block;
- the agreement to revise transport arrangements and provide one dedicated minibus to transport all of the children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area.

4.0 Implications

Strategic

4.1 Delivery On Corporate Priorities – this report helps to achieve the aims of the:

Shetland Islands Council Corporate Plan

- All children and young people deserve the best life chances and we are determined that all our young people will have the best chance to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- This year we will continue to examine the educational estate and conduct a series of consultations on primary and secondary schools in line with the blueprint for education.
- We will have robust financial management arrangements that ensure we can make the transition to financial sustainability.
- This year we will meet our budget targets set out in the medium term financial plan.

Shetland Single Outcome Agreement 2012/15

- Area 5.1 – To support schools in their development towards a Curriculum for Excellence;
- Area 5.2 – The strategy provides a framework for developing childcare provision 2012/15;

Children's Services Directorate Plan

- To deliver the best possible service we can which balances access, opportunities and resources.

4.2 Community /Stakeholder Issues – in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Children's Services has consulted with all relevant stakeholders /

consultees. Full details of the outcomes of the consultation are in the Consultation Report attached as Appendix B.

- 4.3 Policy And/Or Delegated Authority – in accordance with Section 2.3.1 of the Council's Scheme of Administration and Delegations, the Education and Families Committee has responsibility and delegated authority for decision making on matters within its remit which includes school education. However, as the decision required would be a variation of an existing plan and policy, a decision of the Council is required. This report is related to the function of an education authority.
- 4.4 Risk Management – The outcome of the Appeal in the Court of Session and the report from the Commission on Rural Education are both now available. There may be changes in legislation but these are not to be passed until at least Spring 2014. In the meantime the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 is the legislation to be followed. Failure to reduce the net ongoing running costs of the Council carries a significant risk of the Council's financial policies not being adhered to and will require a further draw from Reserves.
- 4.5 Equalities, Health And Human Rights – An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out in respect of this closure proposal for Olnafirth Primary School. A summary of the impacts forms part of the Consultation Report at Section 16, including how adverse impacts can be mitigated against. The full Integrated Impact Assessment is an appendix to the Consultation Report.
- 4.6 Environmental – An Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out on the overall Blueprint for Education proposals. A summary of this assessment forms part of the Consultation Report, and the full Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment is an appendix to the Consultation Report. There are no significant environmental implications at this stage.

Resources

- 4.7 Financial – The approved 2013-18 Medium Term Financial Plan includes a savings target of £3.268m on Blueprint for Education. The identified savings of £97,239 from this proposal make an important and ongoing contribution to achieving this target.
- Failure to agree to the closure of Olnafirth Primary School would result in an additional cost pressure of £8,103 per month.
- 4.8 Legal – A proposal to close a school is a "relevant proposal" in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Shetland Islands Council must comply with the requirements as set out in that Act.

- 4.9 Human Resources – Shetland Islands Council has Human Resource policies which will be utilised if the decision is taken to agree to the closure of Olnafirth Primary School. Children's Services will ensure that consultation with all staff affected and with Trade Unions will be held following any decisions taken.
- 4.10 Assets And Property – Within our commitments there are implications for assets and property regarding the use of buildings. If there is a decision to close Olnafirth Primary School, Olnafirth Primary School building would become surplus to the school estate. Potential future use of the building is discussed in the Consultation Report.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Consultation Report on the proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School recommends that:
 - 5.1.1 education provision at Olnafirth Primary School be discontinued with effect from 4 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - 5.1.2 the pupils of Olnafirth Primary School continue their education at Brae High School Primary Department from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
 - 5.1.3 the catchment area for Brae High School Primary Department be altered to include the current catchment area for Olnafirth Primary School.

For further information please contact:

Audrey Edwards, Executive Manager – Quality Improvement

Tel: 01595 74 3966. E-mail: Audrey.edwards@shetland.gov.uk

Report Finalised: 30 September 2013

Appendices

Appendix A: Executive Summary of the Consultation Report

Appendix B: Consultation Report

Background Documents

Blueprint for Education 2012 – 2017 (CS-19-F)

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=13620>

Shetland Islands Council Medium Term Financial Plan (F-034-F)

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=14850>

END

Blueprint for Education

Proposal to Close Olnafirth Primary School

Consultation Report

Executive Summary

Shetland Islands Council, Children's Services recommends that:

1. Education provision at Olnafirth Primary School be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter;
2. The pupils of Olnafirth Primary School continue their education at the Brae High School Primary Department, from 18 August 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter;
3. The catchment area for the Brae High School Primary Department be altered to include the current catchment area of Olnafirth Primary School.

The statutory consultation period in relation to the proposed closure of Olnafirth Primary School ended on Friday 28 June 2013.

Please note that this is a summary document for information only.

Representations

Twenty-eight people attended the public meeting held at Voe Public Hall on 29 May 2013.

Three people attended the additional public meeting held at the Brae High School on 30 May 2013.

Twenty-seven people in total attended two additional meetings on 06 June 2013 and 19 June 2013.

The total number of written representations received during the consultation period was twenty-two.

Number of written consultation responses received	22	%
Number of responses that:-		
• supported the proposal	6	(27%)
• disagreed with the proposal	11	(50%)
• did not indicate an opinion or request further information	5	(23%)

For those that agreed with the proposal the most often stated reasons were:- quality of education; class sizes; peer interaction and community concerns.

For those that disagreed with the proposal the five most often stated reasons were:- quality of education; community concerns; financial issues; transition issues; and transport.

Quality of Education

Key issues raised:

- Olnafirth Primary School provides a very high standard of education and there would not be a clear educational benefit in moving children to Brae High School Primary Department.
- It is unfair to use the lack of nursery provision at Olnafirth Primary School as a point in favour of closure, as there have been requests from the school to allow a nursery department.
- Small classes are good for a child's education, and some children will struggle in a much larger school.

Response

- Children's Services acknowledged in the proposal paper that Olnafirth Primary School provides a very high quality of education to its pupils. However it is felt that under the Curriculum for Excellence there would be an educational benefit for children in attending Brae High School Primary Department, as it is better placed to meet their needs for group learning, working in teams, relating with others and communicating with others.
- The nursery provision currently provided by Children's Services meets its statutory obligations. Children's Services will therefore not be opening additional provision as it would incur additional costs.
- Although Curriculum for Excellence is able to be delivered to a high standard in a small school, the delivery of some aspects can be more challenging. It is particularly challenging to fulfil requirements for group learning and peer interaction.

Community concerns

Key issues raised:

- The proposal paper has not fully addressed how the school building would be used if the school was closed, and whether access to community facilities such as the local play park would remain.
- School closure would discourage young families from moving to Voe.

Response

- If Olnafirth Primary School was to close, and Shetland Islands Council retained the building, all the facilities currently enjoyed by the community would remain. If the school were to close and Shetland Islands Council sold the building, it would be sold with right of access to public facilities such as the play park remaining.
- An independent report commissioned in 2007 by Shetland's Community Planning Partnership did not identify the presence of a school as a critical factor in the economic sustainability of a community.

Financial Issues

Key issues raised:

- Closure would not lead to a significant saving; the actual figure saved would be lower than the proposed figure as there are factual errors in the proposal paper.
- There are other ways the school's budget could be cut, for example the cost of school meals and the school's cleaner could be significantly reduced; Children's Services should also consider cuts to its central administration team.
- The addition of Olnafirth Primary School pupils to the Brae High School Primary Department roll will cause that school to require an additional teacher.

Response

- Estimated savings on the cost of children travelling to Brae for swimming lessons were recalculated following correction from correspondents. Other financial queries were clarified and explained. Despite reduction of savings on travel costs, the proposed overall savings have been revised and in fact increased from £91,309 to £97,239.
- Children's Services has been given a target budget under the Medium Term Financial Plan; Since the start of the 2012/13, Children's Services has already saved £4.2 million in the schools area of the budget without making further changes to the school estate. It cannot do much more without considering again how many schools it has.
- The addition of Olnafirth Primary School pupils would require Brae High School Primary Department to remain a five teacher department. However, if all the children in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area attended that school it would require two teachers while Brae High School Primary Department would require four teachers.

Transition Issues

Key issues raised:

- Removal of transition is not necessarily an educational benefit – most state educated pupils in Scotland physically move schools between primary and secondary education.
- Lunnasting Primary School and Mossbank Primary School should have been considered as receiving schools.

Response

- Brae High School Primary Department was identified as the receiving school for a number of reasons: it is the most popular choice for nursery children from the Olnafirth catchment area; transport to the other suggested schools would take longer and in the case of Lunnasting Primary School would involve a portion of the journey travelling over a single-track road; at Brae High School Primary Department, the affected pupils would not have to make another transition for their secondary education; and Brae High School Primary Department is by far the most requested school for parents in the area seeking a pacing request for their child.

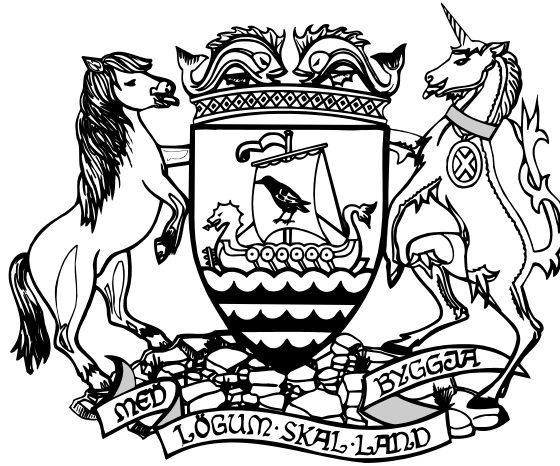
Transport

Key issues raised:

- Increased travelling distance/time will detract from children's ability to partake in other activities.
- It is unfair to expect a selected group of primary school children to travel on the existing secondary school bus, while the rest of their peers travel on a dedicated primary bus.
- There are health and safety issues with the car and bus parking area at Brae High School.

Response

- There are no after school activities at Olnafirth Primary School currently and latterly there have only been after-school sessions on an irregular basis. Children at Brae High School Primary Department would have access to a wider range of after-school activities in the school and other community facilities such as the leisure centre. In other areas, when school transport does not fit in with after-school activities children who have to use this transport do manage to attend through the support of their parents or sometimes school staff.
- In response to concerns of parents regarding selected children travelling on the existing secondary school bus, it is proposed that one vehicle transport all the primary children from the Olnafirth catchment area. This will increase the estimated transport costs by £3,800.
- Outline plans to improve the car park at Brae High School Primary Department have been drawn up and these will now be progressed. However, it is acknowledged that there would be a reduction in the number of cars picking up and dropping off children if school transport became available for the children in the Olnafirth catchment area who are already attending the school in Brae.



Shetland Islands Council Children's Services Consultation Report

The following schools are affected by this Consultation Report:

- **Olnafirth Primary School**
- **Brae High School**

This Consultation Report has been issued by Shetland Islands Council Children's Services in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

NB: Services Committee was replaced in part by Education and Families Committee in May 2011.

Schools Service, Education and Social Care was replaced by Schools/Quality Improvement, Children's Services in May 2011.

These terms are used somewhat interchangeably throughout this document.

Contents

1	Summary of Process for this Consultation Report
2	Introduction
3	Background
4	Consultation Process
5	Representations
6	Summary of the Written Responses
7	Summary of oral representations made at the statutory public meeting held at Voe Public Hall on Wednesday 29 May 2013
8	Summary of oral representations made at the additional public meeting held at Brae High School on Thursday 30 May 2013
9	Summary of oral representations made at the additional meeting held at Voe Hall on Thursday 6 June 2013
10	Summary of oral representations made at the additional meeting held at Olnafirth Primary School on Wednesday 19 June 2013
11	Children's Services responses to those written and oral representations
12	Summary of Consultation with Children
13	Summary of Consultation with Staff
14	Education Scotland's Report
15	Review of the Proposal to discontinue education at Olnafirth Primary School
16	Integrated Impact Assessment
17	Socio-Economic Study
18	Health Impact Assessment
19	Strategic Environmental Assessment
20	Omissions or Inaccuracies
21	Compliance with Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010
22	Representations to the Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15 (4) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010
23	Conclusion
24	Recommendation

Appendices

A	Proposal Paper
B	Education Scotland's Report on the Proposal
C	Transcript of the public meeting held at Voe Hall on 29 May 2013
D	Transcript of the public meeting held at Brae High School on 30 May 2013
E	Transcript of the additional meeting held at Voe Hall on 6 June 2013
F	Transcript of the additional meeting held at Olnafirth Primary School on 19 June 2013
G	Health Impact Assessment
H	Integrated Impact Assessment
I	Socio-Economic Study
J	Strategic Environmental Assessment

1. Summary of Process for this Consultation Report

1.1 Notice of Consultation

A Notice of Consultation was provided to the consultees listed under Distribution List 1.10. This Notice provided full details of how to access the Proposal Paper. The Proposal Paper was available in affected schools, Hayfield House and Shetland Library. It was also published on the Council's website, www.shetland.gov.uk

1.2 Advertisement in Local Media

A Notice of Consultation was published in local media on Friday 10 May 2013.

1.3 Length of Consultation Period

The Consultation Period for the Proposal ran from Tuesday 14 May 2013 until Friday 28 June 2013. This period allowed for the statutory minimum of 30 school days.

1.4 Public meetings

Public meetings were held on:

Wednesday 29 May 2013
7.00pm to 9.00pm
At Voe Public Hall

and

Thursday 30 May 2013
7.00pm to 9.00pm
At Brae High School
Brae

A note was taken at the meetings of questions and views. These notes are published on the Shetland Islands Council's website, and a copy will be made available on request.

1.5 Involvement of Education Scotland (previously Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education)

Shetland Islands Council provided Education Scotland with a copy of the Proposal Paper on the date of publication. Education Scotland also received a copy of all relevant written representations received by Shetland Islands Council from any person during the Consultation Period. Education Scotland has also received a summary of all oral representations made to Shetland Islands Council at the public meetings that were held. Education Scotland has prepared a Report on the educational aspects of the Proposal. As a result of the summer holiday period, Children's Services agreed with Education Scotland that their three-week period would commence on Monday 26 August 2013. In preparation of their report, Education Scotland have entered the affected schools and made such reasonable enquiries of such people there as they considered appropriate and have made such reasonable enquiries of such other people as they consider appropriate.

1.6 Preparation of Consultation Report

Shetland Islands Council has reviewed the Proposal having regard to Education Scotland's report, the written representations that it has received and the oral representations made to it by any person at the public meetings. Children's Services has, on behalf of Shetland Islands Council, prepared this Consultation Report.

This Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed formats. It is available on the Shetland Islands Council website, from Hayfield House, Shetland Library, as well as the affected schools, free of charge from **19 September 2013**.

Anyone who made written responses during the Consultation Period has been informed about the publication of this Report. This Report includes a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meetings, Shetland Islands Council's response to Education Scotland's Report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of Education Scotland's Report and all other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled.

This Consultation Report also contains a statement explaining how it complied with the requirement to review the Proposal in light of Education Scotland's Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received.

This Consultation Report was published on 19 September 2013 and is available for further consideration for a period of three weeks. The intention is that interested parties should have time to see and digest the contents of this Consultation Report and also have time if they so wish to voice concerns and approach and lobby the Councillors who will shortly be deciding on the Proposal.

1.7 Decision

This Consultation Report, together with any other relevant documentation, will be considered by Shetland Islands Council Education and Families Committee on 10 October 2013. This decision is then subject to Shetland Islands Council approval also on 10 October 2013.

1.8 Scottish Ministers Call-in

As set out in The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Shetland Islands Council is required to notify the Scottish Ministers of its decision and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Paper and Consultation Report.

The Scottish Ministers have a six-week period from the date of that final decision on 10 October 2013 to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Within the first three weeks of that six-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the six-week call-in process has been notified to Shetland Islands Council, they will not proceed to implement the Proposal approved at Stage 1.7 above. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the Proposal they may refuse to consent to the Proposal or grant their consent to the Proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally. Until the

outcome of the call-in has been notified to Shetland Islands Council, they are unable to proceed to implement the Proposal.

1.9 Note on Corrections

If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in the Proposal Paper either by Shetland Islands Council or any person, Shetland Islands Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or, there has been an inaccuracy. They will then take appropriate action which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of the Proposal Paper or the revision of the timescale for the Consultation Period if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland would have been advised. The Consultation Report highlights the actions taken and why.

1.10 Distribution

A copy of this Consultation Report is available on the Shetland Islands Council website: www.shetland.gov.uk.

Copies are available for inspection (free of charge), at Hayfield House, affected schools and the Shetland Library.

The list of Consultees are:

- the Parent Councils of the affected schools;
- the parents of the pupils of the affected schools;
- the parents of any children expected by Children's Services to attend any of the affected schools within two years of the date of the publication of the Proposal Paper;
- the pupils at the affected schools in so far as Children's Services considers them to be of a suitable age and maturity;
- the staff (teaching and other) at any affected school;
- any trade union which is a representative of the staff;
- the Community Councils of the affected areas;
- the Shetland Partnership;
- any other users of the affected schools that Children's Services considers relevant;
- the constituency Member of the Scottish Parliament;
- the constituency Member of Parliament;
- the list Members of the Scottish Parliament.

Copies of this Consultation Report are also available on request from:

Children's Services
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
Shetland
ZE1 0QD

Or by email: blueprintforeducation@shetland.gov.uk

This Consultation Report is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to the above address.

**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services
Consultation Report**

2. Introduction

- 2.1 This is a Consultation Report prepared in compliance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the following Proposal:

The Proposal

That subject to the outcome of this proposal exercise and statutory consultation process as set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010:

1. Education provision at Olnafirth Primary School be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
2. The pupils of Olnafirth Primary School continue their education at Brae High School Primary Department from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
3. The catchment area for Brae High School Primary Department be altered to include the current catchment area for Olnafirth Primary School.

- 2.2 The purpose of the Consultation Report is to:

- provide a record of the total number of written responses made during the Statutory Consultation Period;
- provide a summary of the written responses;
- provide a summary of oral representations made at the public meetings held on 29 May and 30 May 2013 and at additional meetings held on 6 June 2013 and on 19 June 2013;
- provide a statement of Children's Services response to those written and oral representations;
- provide the full text of Education Scotland's Report and a statement of Children's Service's response to this Report;
- state how Shetland Islands Council reviewed the above Proposal following the representations received during the Statutory Consultation Period and the Report from Education Scotland;
- provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper and state how Shetland Islands Council acted upon it.
- State how Shetland Islands Council has complied with Section 12 of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 when reviewing the above Proposal;
- Provide an explanation of how representations can be made to the Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15(4) of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

3. Background

- 3.1 In June 2007, Children's Services was given a remit by Shetland Islands Council, through the Corporate Plan, "to develop a modern blueprint for the shape of the service across Shetland for 10 years time". Children's Services has been working on developing a Blueprint for Education since being given this remit. Some of the key milestones are set out below.
- 3.2 In November 2007, the Services Committee of Shetland Islands Council considered a report "Developing a Blueprint for the Education Service". Following consideration of the report, Councillors agreed that:
- the key drivers should be to provide the best quality educational opportunities and best quality learning environment for all;
 - in so doing, the opportunity for savings to bring budgets to a sustainable level should be considered; and
 - the final Blueprint was presented to Services Committee with an action plan to look at all schools, internal management, the necessary investment required, quality of education, new ways of delivering education and the potential for each school within a realistic timescale.
- 3.3 Membership of a Member/Officer Working Group was agreed in early 2008 in order to help take forward the development of a Blueprint for Education.
- 3.4 As a result of the issues emerging from the Working Group, Shetland Islands Council gave approval for Children's Services to undertake a community-wide informal consultation consisting of a widely distributed questionnaire and comprehensive series of meetings in order to inform the direction of the Blueprint for Education. Following analysis of the consultation outcomes Councillors approved the following Principles for Education in March 2009:
- to ensure strategic planning, effective leadership and quality assurance to bring about improvement;
 - to ensure effective partnership working;
 - to ensure that all families have access to quality early education and childcare provision;
 - to ensure all schools deliver Curriculum for Excellence, specifically, a broad curriculum, a breadth of experience, social interaction and learning experiences;
 - to ensure all learners experience smooth transitions between stages of learning, supported by the highest possible professional standards;
 - to ensure all learners in Shetland have equal opportunity throughout their educational experience to enable them to achieve their full potential;
 - to ensure that these principles are delivered within Shetland Islands Council's budget.

These principles are Shetland Islands Council policy and underpin the development of the Blueprint for Education.

- 3.5 Children's Services undertook work on various aspects of education service delivery. Informed by this work it was agreed by Shetland Islands Council that Children's Services undertake a consultation process to gather information on options for change across all schools in Shetland. This informal consultation took

place between January 2010 and the end of March 2010. Further information can be found at www.shetland.gov.uk.

- 3.6 Following an evaluation of the informal consultation, nine proposals were presented to Services Committee on 17 June 2010.
- 3.7 Services Committee and subsequently Shetland Islands Council agreed to take forward the Blueprint for Education Primary Proposal 2 and Secondary Proposal 2.
- 3.8 Secondary Proposal 2 included:
“Formal consultation would begin for the closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and Skerries School Secondary Department.”
- 3.9 Primary Proposal 2 included:
“Formal consultation would begin for the closure of Uyeasound Primary School, Burravoe Primary School, North Roe Primary School, Olnafirth Primary School and Sandness Primary School.”
- 3.10 Between August 2010 and May 2011, Children’s Services undertook Statutory Consultation on the Proposals in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. As a result of these consultations and subsequent approval from Shetland Islands Council and the Scottish Minister, education provision was discontinued at Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and at Uyeasound Primary School.
- 3.11 The planned Statutory Consultation on education provision at Olnafirth Primary School due to take place in August 2011 was deferred following the implementation of a national year-long Moratorium on Rural School Closures in June 2011. A Commission on the Delivery of Rural School Education was also established and has now reported. The key recommendations made by the Commission have been considered during the development of this report.
- 3.12 In February 2012 Councillors asked Children’s Services to “undertake a refresh of the Blueprint for Education using existing information, taking account of the outcome of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural School Education deliberations and guidance, when available, considering the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, the Senior Phase, the National Qualifications range and links with further education/other learning settings and based on the underpinning principles of the Blueprint for Education project of equality, quality and value for money, and taking account all new learning methods and Information Communication Technology links and facilities”.
- 3.13 Children’s Services reported back to Councillors on 20 September 2012 and they approved the following:
- Shetland Islands Council’s Statement for Education 2012 - 2017
“We will ensure the best quality education for all our pupils to enable them to become successful learners, who are confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. We will achieve this through the highest standard of teaching and learning delivered in modern, well equipped school buildings which are financially sustainable”.

- Shetland Islands Council's Commitments for Education 2012 - 2017. These commitments were made taking account of the Principles of Education agreed by Councillors in March 2009. See 3.4.
 - Primary Education: we will provide primary education in all our remote isles with pre-school provision as and when required. We will organise primary education in establishments which are viable both educationally and financially.
 - Secondary Education: we will organise education to provide the breadth of curriculum to best develop a young person's skills and particular interests in viable establishments/schools.
 - Childcare: it will be developed in line with the Childcare Strategy. We will work with voluntary and private sector providers to secure more integrated and flexible services that meet local need.
 - Youth Strategy: we will develop a Youth Strategy for Shetland which encapsulates activities children and young people are involved in across Shetland.
 - Catchment Areas: we will consult on any change to a school's catchment area as part of any future statutory consultation process.
 - Travel Times: we will organise transport to ensure that, as far as possible, pupils will not travel for longer than the current maximum single journey time in 2011/12.
 - Transport: we will ensure School Transport is given high priority.
 - Community involvement in Schools: we will work to ensure that: children's community identity is protected, opportunities are put in place for them to be participating in any new school community they are part of and the Youth Strategy is developed to enhance young people's participation in the communities they are part of.
 - Use of Buildings: we will ensure that the potential use of school buildings will be part of the statutory consultation process.
- Shetland Islands Council's Plan for Delivering Education 2012-2017

Phase 1

Closure Proposal	Receiving School	Statutory Consultation	Proposed Transfer Date
Aith Junior High School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2013	August 2014
Skerries School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2013	August 2014
Olnefirth Primary School	Brae High School Primary Department	2013	August 2014
*Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2013	August 2016

Phase 2

Closure Proposal	Receiving School	Statutory Consultation	Proposed Transfer Date
Burravoe Primary School	Mid Yell Junior High School Primary Department	2014	August 2015
North Roe Primary School	Ollaberry Primary School	2014	August 2015
Urafirth Primary School	Ollaberry Primary School	2014	August 2015
Urafirth Primary School Nursery Department	Ollaberry Primary School	2014	August 2015

Phase 3

Closure Proposal	Receiving School	Statutory Consultation	Proposed Transfer Date
Whalsay School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2015	August 2016
Sandness Primary School	Happyhansel Primary School	2015	August 2016

*The statutory consultation regarding the proposed closure of Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department was moved from Phase 3 to Phase 1 following a request from Sandwick Parent Council. This was approved by Education and Families Committee on 23 January 2013 and Shetland Islands Council on 18 February 2013.

- 3.14 On 28 August 2013, Shetland Islands Council approved an updated Medium Term Financial Plan for 2013 - 2018. The Plan identified savings of £3.268 million for Children's Services from the implementation of the Blueprint for Education.
- 3.15 As a result of the development of the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence, Children's Services proposed amendments to the secondary proposals agreed in the Blueprint for Education 2012 - 2017, to Education and Families Committee, and a special meeting of Shetland Islands Council on 11 September 2013. These proposed changes would mean retaining Secondary 1 to Secondary 3 education in Baltasound Junior High School, Mid Yell Junior High School and Whalsay School. Shetland Islands Council deferred decision on these proposals for one committee cycle to allow time to consider a number of alternative options which could re-shape all of secondary education in Shetland. Education and Families Committee will meet to consider these options on 13 November 2013.

4. Consultation Process

- 4.1 The requirements for consulting on a proposed school closure proposal are set out in The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

- The Proposal Paper was issued on 14 May 2013. This is attached as Appendix A. A copy of this document or information on the Proposal was provided free of charge to the consultees listed within the document. Copies were also available at the affected schools, Hayfield House and at Shetland Library.
- A Public Notice ran in The Shetland Times newspaper on Friday 10 May 2013. A Notice of Consultation appeared on www.shetnews.co.uk and remained for the duration of the consultation. Details of the consultation also ran on local radio.
- Two Public Meetings were held on 29 May 2013 at Voe Public Hall and 30 May 2013 in Brae High School.
- An additional meeting was held with parents from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area on 6 June 2013.
- An additional meeting was held with Olnafirth Parent Council and parents from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area on 19 June 2013.
- The Quality Improvement Officer for both schools consulted with staff and children separately.
- The Consultation Period ended on Friday 28 June 2013.
- Education Scotland's involvement consisted of the Proposal Paper being sent to them. They also received a copy of all written representations. They visited Olnafirth Primary School and Brae High School and spoke to relevant consultees. They then prepared a Report on the educational aspects of the Proposal. This is attached as Appendix B.

4.2 This Consultation Report is Children's Services response to the issues raised during the Consultation Period including a response to identified inaccuracies in the Proposal Paper.

4.3 This Consultation Report will be published three weeks before a final decision is taken by Shetland Islands Council.

5. Representations

5.1 Twenty-eight people attended the Public Meeting held in Voe Public Hall on 29 May 2013. The minute of this public meeting is attached as Appendix C. Three people attended the additional Public Meeting held at Brae High School on 30 May 2013. The minute of this public meeting is attached as Appendix D. Thirteen people attended the meeting held on 6 June 2013 and fourteen people attended the meeting held on 19 June 2013. The minutes of these meetings are attached as Appendix E and Appendix F.

5.2 The total number of written responses received during the Consultation Period was twenty-two.

Parent / Carer	14
Shetland Resident	4
Parent Councils	3
Community Councils	1
Total	22

The detail of how each respondent described their interest is detailed in the table above.

6. Summary of the Written Responses

Number of written consultation responses received	22	%
Number of responses that:		
agreed with the Proposal	6	27%
disagreed with the Proposal	11	50%
did not indicate an opinion or request further information	5	23%

Of the 6 who agreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:	
Quality of Education	2
Class Sizes	2
Peer Interaction	2
Community Concerns	2

Of the 11 who disagreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:	
Quality of Education	7
Community Concerns	5
Financial Issues	5
Transition Issues	4
Transport Availability	4
Transport Cost	3
Child Safety	3
Democratic (or Decision Making Process)	3
Travelling Distance/Time	3

7. Summary of oral representations made at the statutory public meeting held at Voe Public Hall on Wednesday 29 May 2013

- It is good that mistakes in the proposal have been corrected, however it still wrongly states in paragraph 4.21 that the school does not have a library.
- Olnafirth Primary School has had previous concession to try to remain open, such as accepting a shared Head Teacher, budget cuts and the delaying of capital projects – so it is disappointing to again be in this position.
- Clarification of capacity is required due to differences between floor space capacity, maximum class sizes and capacity as per the Council's admissions policy.
- The catering contract works out at £9.00 per head for a meal – this seems too high and based on costs at other schools there are potential savings of

£17,000.

- It is not clear why education materials cost significantly less at Brae than Olnafirth, as these resources are centrally bought.
- The transport costs have been miscalculated: there are serious discrepancies between the cost per trip for children travelling for swimming lessons and the expected cost of children travelling to Brae High School Primary Department.
- The Grant-aided Expenditure is down as £2,300 - the Rural Schools report states this should be £2,600 to £3,200. Shetland is at the higher end of this scale so the figure has been underestimated.
- The second year that Olnafirth Primary School goes to Brae, Brae would only remain a five teacher school because of the additional children – therefore reduced teacher costs are not an ongoing saving.
- Effects on the community, such as access to the Voe Show, have not been considered.
- Will there be access to the play park if the school is closed?
- Olnafirth Primary School is the first school in Shetland to be a Rights Respecting School.
- Olnafirth Primary School has been successful in the Junior Saltire Prize two years running.
- Placing children from Mulla on the existing secondary school bus is unfair and potentially unsafe.
- Lunnasting Primary School and Mossbank Primary School should have been considered as receiving schools as these are more similar to Olnafirth Primary School and Olnafirth has had closer ties with these schools in the past.
- The high cost of the Children's Services team should be cut back before schools are closed.
- School closure would have a negative impact on local businesses.
- The proposed savings have fallen significantly since the previous consultation, so why should people trust the new figures are actually valid?
- More communication would be a great benefit – it is surprising that Council staff were not aware of the Parent Council's wish to transfer children to Lunnasting Primary School.
- Comments from some Council staff suggest they have already made their

minds up about closing the school, so the consultation lacks integrity.

- How long would the money set aside to maintain the building last?
- There has to be access to the play park if the school is closed. It is not part of the school. It is just adjacent to the playground.
- The play park is a really key part of the community and has been a safe haven for children to play and cycle away from the roads.
- The school grounds are the only access point for the resident of a council property.
- The school building itself is used during the community show for its kitchen facilities and dining area.
- The threat of closure has influenced placing requests away from the school.
- Has the council considered approaching schools individually and asking them to independently make their share of the required savings?
- Are education resources bought in bulk by the education department, and if not why not?
- Grant-aided Expenditure money is being overlooked – if children are moved from small schools to larger schools that money is lost.
- The money spent on staffing the consultations could have been used to keep the schools open, and once schools are shut there will be a lot of extra staff with nothing to do.
- The Proposal Paper states that the greatest demand for council housing has been for 1-2 bedroom properties, but most of the larger properties are no longer Council owned.
- Incoming oil workers have reduced the availability of family-sized houses, which has affected school rolls, but this will only be a short-term change.
- Shetland Islands Council will be building ten houses in Brae and Hjaltland will be building houses too, but other than that nearly all demand is in the Central Mainland and around Lerwick.
- Demand is only high in central areas because rural communities have been targeted with Council cuts.
- The last time the school was considered for closure, it was saved because houses were available and private owners were moving in.
- If houses are being built in Brae, school rolls will be naturally increasing there – what happens if it gets to its capacity?

- There are lots of private house builds happening in the North Mainland at the moment so extra school capacity is important.
- Have the industry developments in the North Mainland – the Gas Plant, Sullom Voe and the redevelopment of Scatsa airport – been fully taken into account?
- Does the Proposal assume that every child within the catchment area for Olnafirth – including those who have already opted to move to Lunnasting or Mossbank – will move to Brae High School Primary Department if that is the receiving school?
- Most of the arguments in the Proposal are financial and it doesn't show there would be any educational benefit.
- The Proposal document has very small print and is difficult to read.
- What is the educational benefit for Olnafirth Primary School children in moving to Brae High School Primary Department?
- Children at Olnafirth Primary School already have close friends and peer groups – that isn't an educational benefit of moving.
- Classes at Brae High School Primary Department are split differently every year – only one class has gone through three years with a stable year group.

8. Summary of oral representations made at the additional public meeting held at Brae High School on Thursday 30 May 2013

- Would a whole new consultation process be required for Lunnasting Primary School to be considered as the receiving school?
- Brae High School Primary Department parents are not best placed to comment on the receiving school issue; it is for the Voe parents to decide.
- Some Olnafirth Primary School parents have said the standard of education at Brae High School is not what they would prefer for their children. What reasons have Olnafirth parents given for not wanting their children to go to Brae?
- Olnafirth Primary School children attending Brae High School would be a positive thing and would be beneficial educationally for both sets of children.
- There would still be composite classes with the extra children but hopefully those classes would be less likely to change year on year.

- There are health and safety issues with the car and bus parking at Brae High School and parents have been trying to get these resolved since 2009.
- Children moving between composite classes can be a good experience for them.
- Some children would struggle in a composite class, especially as the classes at Brae High School Primary Department are much bigger than at Olnafirth Primary School.
- Voe is a changing area and numbers could grow in future.
- Will the addition of extra children be reflected in the number of classroom assistants and additional support needs auxiliaries?
- What is Lunnasting Primary School's opinion on the proposals?
- Is the catchment area restricted to only having one school?
- What is the most appropriate school or schools for receiving children from Olnafirth Primary School?
- Educational standards at Brae High School Primary Department would stand up to any school in Shetland.

9. Summary of oral representations made at an additional meeting held at Voe Public Hall on 6 June 2013

- Whose views are considered in the consultation? Is it only parents of children at the Olnafirth Primary School who can comment?
- Some groups were not represented at the previous meeting – parents from Voe area with children already at Brae High School Primary Department were not represented.
- It is difficult to stand up in front of people fighting for their school and publicly disagree with them.
- If children at Olnafirth went to Lunnasting Primary School, would that weaken Brae High School Primary Department?
- Does Brae High School Primary Department definitely have the capacity to take on more children? Brae is a developing community and has a naturally rising population already.
- Lunnasting Primary School has a very small nursery – is there space at Lunnasting Primary School for more children?
- Higher school rolls at Lunnasting would lead to composite classes almost as big as single stage classes at Brae, and there would be three or four year

groups in one classroom.

- There's a worry that parents vote with their feet and move children to bigger schools, not just at Olnafirth Primary School but at Lunnasting Primary School too.
- Is there a reason for the falling numbers at Olnafirth? Has the threat of closure influenced the school roll?
- Parent of child in Voe moved him to Brae High School Primary Department as the Olnafirth Primary School was moving to a one-teacher school and the parents felt he would struggle.
- All parents have different reasons for moving children and it is unfair to say it is simply down to threat of closure.
- Child joining Olnafirth Primary School this year (school term starting August 2013) would have been only child in the class and his closest peer in the school would be Primary 4.
- Parent from Voe felt no link to Vidlin beyond the school, whereas in Brae there was a larger community with facilities like the Leisure Centre and other after-school activities.
- The majority of children from Voe were going to Brae High School Primary Department so parent wanted to child to be with the majority of his peers.
- Road to Vidlin is not a bad road but there were problems last winter, especially with the reduced gritting service.
- Is Brae High School Primary Department still an option as part of this Consultation?
- The community was asked at the last consultation and the preferred school was Brae High School Primary Department.
- Many parents felt Lunnasting Primary School was the preferred school during the last consultation as they wanted children to attend a smaller school.
- Some of the people who asked for Lunnasting Primary School to be the receiving school will not be directly affected by the change.
- Parents who choose not to send children to Olnafirth Primary School feel outcast because of their decision.
- It would be short-sighted to keep Olnafirth Primary School open or to send children to Lunnasting Primary School purely on the basis that that is what parents of current children want.
- The Olnafirth Parent Council needs to take others into consideration.

- The one-on-one attention a child gets in a small class makes a smaller school really attractive.
- Parents will want the safest option in terms of travel.
- Does there have to be only one receiving school?
- Parking issues at Brae are exacerbated by Voe parents driving their children to school in the absence of school transport.
- There is also insufficient parking at Lunnasting Primary School.
- There is nothing wrong with the quality of education at Brae High School Primary Department and children still get attention when they need it.
- One of the challenges of a small school is that it's hard to get away from people.
- There is no tolerance for bullying at Brae High School Primary Department.
- Everything is more structured in a bigger school and there is less leeway.
- It is harder to compare a child's performance in a smaller school, compared to a big school where they have a number of peers at a similar stage.
- Younger children in a small school tend to pick up knowledge and behaviours from older children that might be inappropriate.
- When there is only one teacher a child who does not get on with the teacher or suit their teaching style might struggle, whereas in a bigger school they move on to a different teacher and are not stuck with the same one for their whole education.
- Moving children to Brae High School Primary Department is not an attack on Olnafirth Primary School – many parents have personal reasons for doing so.
- The school can't be kept open for sentimental reasons – if it is not closed the money still has to be found from somewhere else.
- The threat of closure could affect teachers as well as children – they are not going to be able to give the children their best if they are constantly anxious about the future of their job.
- The decline in the school roll has been fast, it was around 30-35 children five years ago.
- Some of the decline is just due to the people in the area – there aren't people leaving, but there aren't any new houses either.
- Brae High School Primary Department has stable school roll.

- Brae High School Primary Department school roll could increase with Olnafirth Primary School children and potentially new families moving into new council housing in the area, which would help reduce the need for composite classes.
- The Proposal says there are sixteen children in the catchment area; four will travel on high school bus and others will travel in two eight seater vehicles – can all sixteen not fit into the two eight seaters?
- If in five years' time there are 35 children in the catchment area, would transport be an issue?
- Are children going to be picked up along the road or are there going to be designated pick-up points?
- Does looking at both (potential receiving schools) not affect the timescale of the Consultation?
- The building for the Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department is still empty – it is important that this doesn't happen with the Olnafirth Primary School building.
- Will there be any further meetings between the Shetland Islands Council and the Olnafirth Parent Council?
- The Olnafirth Parent Council is not representative of all the parents at the school.
- The Parent Council should have taken a vote.
- Parent Council members have a responsibility as elected representatives and have no right to respond differently to the rest of the Council members; it is part of their role to represent the view of all the parents at the school.
- The Parent Council maybe think that parents with children already at Brae High School Primary Department don't have much right to a say in matters, but the transport issue affects them.
- Parents with children already at Brae don't want to be left out of the decision.
- There needs to be a budget for all children in the catchment area to go to the chosen receiving school, as those already at different schools might choose to move to the new receiving school.
- The projected school rolls are only based on the nursery figures; do you have census information or anything like that?

10. Summary of oral representations made at an additional meeting held at Olnafirth Primary School on 19 June 2013

- The school is closing for a financial reason – it performs very well and it educates to a high standard.
- One of the main reasons Lunnasting Primary School was suggested as the receiving school is to increase the savings brought by closure, as Grant-aided Expenditure income would remain.
- Need to be certain the figures are correct, as if they are not and they are used to close the school, further savings will be required in future and more damage will be done.
- Some parents did not see advertisements or notice of Olnafirth Parent Council meetings.
- Some parents were surprised the Olnafirth Parent Council was recommending Lunnasting Primary School as the receiving school.
- Pre-school parents might assume they cannot attend Parent Council meetings as they do not yet have children in the school.
- Did parents at the first additional meeting (6th June at Voe Public Hall) choose to remain anonymous or is that just how it was minuted?
- A teacher in Olnafirth Primary School was upset by comment in previous meeting that anxiety over future employment could affect teaching standards.
- The only chance for parents to express their views verbally has been at public meetings and some feel excluded due to difficulty speaking publicly.
- Can responses from different individuals (e.g. husband and wife) come from a single email address?
- Are the Grant-aided Expenditure figures going to be corrected?
- The educational benefit is just saying if this school isn't cut there will be general cuts across Shetland – it is about money?
- Will the transport figures given to the Council be based on the new transport tenders?
- Transport costs have been a big grey area in previous consultations.
- Will information on the potential savings of a move to Lunnasting Primary School be available before the consultation ends?
- What is the general reception of the Lunnasting Primary School staff to Olnafirth Primary School children potentially going to that school?

- If children did have to move parents would need to be able make a fully informed decision of where to put them instead.
- If Olnafirth Primary School shut and Brae High School Primary Department became the designated receiving school, would parents currently sending their children there be entitled to free transport?
- Under some local authorities – such as South Lanarkshire Council – parents making a placing request effectively give up their right to the catchment area.
- One of the councillors at a previous meeting alluded to a future plan for one large primary school for the North Mainland – is that a policy?
- There is a correlation between closure proposals and the school roll falling.
- An action was raised at the last meeting for somebody to look at progress with Capital Projects and with improvements to the car park at Brae – has anything been done on that?
- There was a circular sent before the first meeting that was interpreted as saying council employees could not respond during the consultation, and some people decided not to attend the meeting because of this.

11. Children's Services responses to those written and oral representations

11.1 This section details the relevant points raised in the written submissions and at the public meetings.

Issue: Transport/Child Safety

Points Made

- Families should have choice of the school their child transfers to; Mossbank and Lunnasting primary schools should be an option as well as Brae High School Primary Department.
- Increased travelling distance/time is significant and will detract from children's ability to partake in other activities, especially for those children travelling on the secondary school bus.
- Extra cost of transport would still allow saving relative to cost of keeping Olnafirth Primary School open.
- Transport costs have gone up significantly in the past seven years, since the last school transport contracts went out to tender.
- It may transpire in years to come that it is more cost effective to have schools in rural areas than to bus children for miles all over Shetland to their

place of education.

- It is unfair to expect a selected group of primary school children to travel on the existing secondary school bus, while the rest of the children travel on a dedicated primary bus; this will disadvantage the children on the secondary school bus as they will be removed from their peer group and will return home later due to the later closing time of the secondary school.
- Winter weather contingency plans have not been addressed in the proposal paper.
- The road to Vidlin is not a bad road but there were problems last winter, especially with the reduced gritting service. Brae is a safer option for the receiving school, in relation to travel arrangements.
- There are health and safety issues with the car and bus parking at Brae High School; parents have been trying to get these issues resolved since 2009.
- There is also insufficient parking at Lunnasting Primary School.
- The proposal says there are sixteen children in the catchment area. Four will travel on the existing high school bus, and the others will travel in two eight seater vehicles; can all sixteen not fit into the two eight seaters?
- If in five years' time there are thirty-five children in the catchment area, would transport be an issue?
- Are children going to be picked up along the road or are there going to be designated pick-up points?
- Increased transport is damaging to the environment.
- The car/bus park at Brae High School is not safe even with the current numbers of school buses and cars – there would be serious concerns for an influx of new children, especially as some could be as young as four years old.
- The roads to Lunnasting Primary School might be unsafe, especially in the winter months and especially on the single track road from Laxo to the primary school; the roads to Brae High School are safer.
- Some primary school children will travel on the secondary school bus, which does not park in the school bus parking area; the Proposal paper does not mention how young children will be safely taken into the school grounds.
- Safety concerns of primary school children travelling with much older children.
- Shetland Islands Council does not provide an escort for children on buses – this is an issue for all children but especially those sharing a bus with older

secondary school children.

- There is no mention in Proposal Paper of when school buses would arrive at Brae High School Primary Department and whether supervised play will be in session in the mornings before school.

Response

If Olnafirth Primary School were to close, all the children currently attending the school would be eligible for school transport, as well as those who are currently attending Brae High School Primary Department through placing requests.

In response to the concerns of parents in respect of selected children travelling on the existing secondary school bus, it is proposed that one vehicle transport all the primary children from the Olnafirth catchment area to Brae High School Primary Department in the morning and from Brae High School Primary Department to the Olnafirth catchment area at the end of the school day. Pick-up times and pick-up points would be as follows:

- Dale at 0815
- Voe Hall at 0825
- Lower Voe at 0835
- Mulla at 0845
- Arrival at Brae at 0855

Therefore, departure at the end of the school day would be in line with a 1500 finish for all primary children at Brae High School Primary Department.

The estimated cost of this arrangement is £39,900. The original transport arrangements put forward in the proposal paper were an additional cost of £36,100.

The School Transport Policy makes it clear that children should be picked up from designated pick-up points. We do know that local circumstances, including the size of a vehicle and where it has to turn, may mean that some children do get picked up from nearer their home than the designated pick-up point.

Outline plans to improve the car park at Brae High School Primary Department have been drawn up. These will now be progressed. However it is acknowledged that, as all the children from the Olnafirth catchment area would become eligible for transport were the school to close, there would be a reduction in the number of cars dropping off and picking up children at Brae.

It is the responsibility of those who are awarded school transport contracts to take all reasonable steps to ensure the security, safety, dignity and comfort of those children in their care. The vehicles used must be suitable for the purpose and drivers must be Protecting Vulnerable Groups-checked, adequately trained and qualified.

Drivers of home to school transport bear much of the responsibility for the safety of children. However parents/carers remain responsible for the behaviour of their children and they should encourage their children to follow the instructions of the

driver.

Children are supervised at Brae High School Primary Department from 8.40 am. Transport costs are based on existing contract prices, as those current contracts have been extended until March 2014.

Arrangements for adverse winter weather have not been included in the proposal as these are standard for all our schools. A Head Teacher can close their own school if they have concerns about the weather conditions. This can be done in advance of a school day starting, or an early close. The Director of Children's Services can take decisions for schools across the authority again either in advance of a school day starting, or an early close. There are well-rehearsed communication links from central staff to Head Teachers to advise them of weather conditions, as well as all our Head Teachers having direct contact with their own transport operators.

Issue: Quality of Education

Points Made

- Olnafirth Primary School children would benefit educationally and socially from being in a larger school.
- Concern that the nursery provision at Lunnasting Primary School is being depleted to an unsatisfactory level.
- Happy with standard of education at Olnafirth Primary School– chose to have eldest child complete final years there despite opting to send younger child to Brae (due to falling school rolls).
- Very impressed with the standard of education and care that children have received at Olnafirth Primary School.
- Do not believe there would be an educational benefit if children were to move to Brae High School Primary Department.
- Most of the arguments in the proposal are financial and it does not show that there would be any educational benefit.
- The Proposal fails to mention Olnafirth Primary School's most recent educational achievements. Olnafirth Primary School has a strong focus on science and engineering as demonstrated in their success in being placed joint second in the 2012 national Junior Saltire Prize and second place in the same competition this year (2013). Olnafirth Primary School is the first UNICEF Rights Respecting primary school in Shetland.
- Olnafirth Primary School meets Curriculum for Excellence's demand for "successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens". The children in Voe are successful learners as clearly evidenced by their achievements, such as recent success in the National Junior Saltire Prize. On the subject of "responsible citizens", Olnafirth Primary School was the first school in Scotland to achieve Eco Flag status,

and a UNICEF Rights Representing School that is the first primary school in Shetland to achieve level 1.

- It is unfair to use the lack of nursery provision at Olnafirth Primary School as a point in favour of closure, as there have been repeated requests from the school to allow a nursery department.
- Child has attended a large primary school previously and it did not suit her as well as a small school – she is happier, more settled and a much better learner in a small school environment.
- Classes at Brae High School Primary Department are split differently every year – only one class has gone through three years with a stable year group.
- Some children would struggle in a composite class, especially as the classes at Brae High School Primary Department are much bigger than at Olnafirth Primary School.
- The one-to-one attention a child gets in a small class makes a smaller school really attractive.
- Everything is more structured in a bigger school and there is less leeway.
- The threat of closure could affect teachers as well as children – they are not going to be able to give their best if they are constantly anxious about the future of their job.

Response

Children's Services apologises if respondents feel that Olnafirth Primary School's achievements have not been recognised in the Proposal Paper. At 5.20 (Page 23) the Proposal Paper states that: *"...Olnafirth Primary School offers a very high quality of education to its pupils."*

Lunnasting Primary School's nursery staffing has been altered, not depleted. In line with one of its agreed proposals for savings in 2013/14, we have reduced the level of teacher input in all our nursery classes. Until June 2013, we had full-time nursery teachers in all our school nursery classes except those on remote isles. In an agreed plan this has changed across all nurseries, and we now have an agreed level of teacher input per child, and beyond this appropriately qualified Early Years Staff.

Children's Services is aware of a request from the Head Teacher to consider nursery provision at Olnafirth, but is not aware of repeated requests. There are no catchment areas for nurseries. A Local Authority's statutory obligation with respect to nursery education is that it has to provide nursery places for all eligible three and four year olds in its local authority area. We have sufficient places across the authority at present. We therefore would not be opening additional provision which would incur additional costs. Children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area have traditionally mostly attended nursery provision at Brae High School Primary Department. Should Olnafirth Primary School close, as far as the move from nursery to primary is concerned the best receiving school would be Brae High School Primary Department. Children would already be familiar with the setting.

Building The Curriculum 3, published by the Scottish Government in 2008, sets out the framework for all schools to follow in developing Curriculum for Excellence. Amongst the attributes and capacities which must be developed in each child are:

- To learn independently and as part of a group;
- To relate to others and manage themselves;
- To communicate in different ways and in different settings;
- To work in partnership and in teams.

It is elements of these aspects of the requirements of the curriculum which, within a primary school where there are only a few children and perhaps only one at a particular stage, can be more challenging. We know that all our staff do their utmost to fulfil absolutely all the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence. However given the limitations on the numbers available in the school, it is more challenging to secure these outcomes in the absolute best way possible. In 2014/15, Olnafirth Primary School is predicted to have seven Primary Ones, one Primary Five, one Primary Six and three Primary Sevens.

The Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, published in April 2013, considered the issue of the quality of education delivered in rural schools and made the following statement:

"Both Education Scotland's evidence and the Commission's visits to a wide range of rural schools confirmed that this process is more complex in small and very small rural schools where teachers are required to plan for a wider mixed age

group in one composite class. Despite these challenges, there is clear evidence that there is no general difficulty in delivering Curriculum for Excellence in rural primary schools, including very small schools, and indeed it can work very well. The Commission noted evidence that rural schools can achieve the highest levels of performance and outcomes, with a number of very small rural schools receiving very positive inspection reports, including the identification of sector leading practice.” (Page 21)

The Report goes on to say:

“Education Scotland did advise that meeting the different learning needs of a range of children at different ages and stages within one class in a very small school is difficult. Evidence from inspections of rural schools demonstrates that HM Inspectors frequently identify this as an area for improvement. In small rural schools where pupil numbers are low, opportunities for children to work collaboratively with peers of a similar age, stage and gender can be limited. Education Scotland’s evidence demonstrated that schools are sensitive to these issues and the overall quality of children and young people’s experiences is not diminished by these factors. (Page 21)

We know excellent high quality education is delivered in our small schools; and although Curriculum for Excellence is able to be delivered to an equally high standard in a small school, the delivery of some aspects can be more challenging.

We can place Olnafirth Primary School against this background and note that Brae High School Primary Department is only 5.08 miles away and that there is a well maintained main road between Voe and Brae. Only eight of the twenty-five children who could attend Olnafirth Primary School currently do go there, and, of the seventeen placing requests there are out of the school, twelve of these are to Brae High School Primary Department currently. Olnafirth Primary School children also mostly still attend Brae High School Primary Department for nursery education and Brae High School Secondary Department is their associated secondary school. If we then note that there is considerable spare capacity in Olnafirth Primary School and the children could be accommodated in Brae High School Primary Department without the need for any additional staffing, it would seem entirely sensible that for educational, financial and social reasons it is best value that the children be educated in Brae High School Primary Department. They will continue to receive a very high-quality education and will be educated with more of the children from their community than at present.

In Brae High School Primary Department, there are five classes. If Olnafirth Primary School did close, and we assumed the children who transferred were only those in the projected roll for the school next year, this would give Brae High School Primary Department a roll of 115 for 2014/15. This would make the average class size twenty-three, but children would either be in a straight class or in a class with some others from one or two other stages. If the children were to transfer to Lunnasting Primary School, this would give Lunnasting Primary School a roll of thirty-eight for 2014/15. This would make an average class size of eighteen, depending where the groupings of children best fitted. Olnafirth Primary School children would still be in a much larger class but would have a number of other stages in the class.

Early indications from Brae High School Primary Department, based on these current predicted numbers, would suggest that a straight Primary One class would be

feasible, then three composites, and a straight Primary Seven class. If numbers do not change, the prediction is that this split of classes may be able to remain in place for the following year as well.

Issue: Out of School Activities

Points Made

- Children would have access to the after-school clubs at Brae High School Primary Department if Olnafirth Primary School closed.
- After-school activities are more accessible at Brae High School Primary Department (than they would be at Lunnasting Primary School).
- Olnafirth Primary School children will be excluded from the full community experience in Brae and will not have the same access to after-school activities as their peers who live locally.
- There is no safe cycling route between Voe and Brae, so children could not receive Bikeability courses as they did at Olnafirth Primary School.
- In reference to increased opportunities for transferring children, a number of sporting activities mentioned, for instance hockey, are already available in Voe; if the children attended Brae High School Primary Department they would instead have to vie for a place in the Brae team as opposed to being part of a close knit Olnafirth Primary School team.
- Olnafirth Primary School children will not benefit from the after-school mountain biking activities at Brae as there is no way for them to take their bicycles to school.
- Olnafirth Primary School has provided trips out of Shetland for children— one child has travelled out of Shetland three times with the school, on two occasions to take part in a national competition which the school excelled in.

Response

Brae High School Primary Department ensures bikes are available to all children to take part in the Bikeability course.

Brae High School Primary Department also offers trips out of Shetland.

We have a number of schools where after-school activities are offered in the school or an adjacent leisure centre and school transport does not allow some children at the school to attend.

Children who have to get home by school transport do manage to go along through the support of their parents or sometimes school staff, although there is absolutely no obligation on staff to do so. School staff also offer clubs during lunch-times for the very reason that this enables children who have to get school transport access to extra-curricular activities.

There are no after-school activities at Olnafirth Primary School currently and latterly there have only been after-school sessions on an irregular basis to complete projects such as the work for the Junior Saltire competition.

Issue: Peer Interaction

Points Made

- Daily access to a larger peer group is not necessarily an educational benefit.
- Children at Olnafirth Primary School already have close friends and peer groups – that isn't an educational benefit of moving.
- Living within walking or cycling distance of the children they share a classroom with builds strong friendships and a real sense of community; moving children to Brae High School Primary Department would split them up from their local friends and new peers would live some distance away, reducing the opportunity to socialise out of school hours.
- The larger peer group at Brae High School Primary Department would only be applicable during school hours – living far away from their fellow children might lead to Olnafirth Primary School children becoming socially excluded outside of school hours.
- It is unfair to suggest Olnafirth Primary School children lack viable cohorts for learning given their various attainments last year (2012).

Response

The school roll of Olnafirth Primary School at the time of the publication of the Proposal Paper in May 2013 was thirteen. The current school roll of Olnafirth Primary School in September 2013 is eight. If all the children who could attend Olnafirth Primary School did attend it, the current roll would be twenty-five. As twelve of the current seventeen children who could attend Olnafirth Primary School

currently attend Brae High School Primary Department, transferring Olnafirth Primary School children to Brae High School Primary Department would have the effect of bringing more of the children from the catchment area back together in the school they attend.

Schools in Shetland give the community a wide range of class sizes and composite arrangements, from Primary 5 classes of 30 children through to Primary 1-Primary 7 multi-composites of 13 children. There is no evidence to suggest that any of our children are benefiting, or indeed suffering, as a consequence of the social interaction they are able to be exposed to. We expect that head teachers will do their utmost to ensure children gain a wide range of social experiences. However we do not think it is outrageous to suggest that perhaps a Primary 4 child who is the only child at that stage in a school might enjoy playing with others of a similar age on a daily basis. This Proposal offers children that opportunity. We agree that children from Olnafirth Primary School take part in team events but if they attended Brae High School the number of opportunities they would have both formally and informally to work and play together would be increased. Opportunities would exist simply because of the size of the school and would not require any extra effort to generate.

The Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, published in April 2013, also commented on the issue of peer interaction in small rural schools:

“In small rural schools where pupil numbers are low, opportunities for children to work collaboratively with peers of a similar age, stage and gender can be limited. Education Scotland's evidence demonstrated that schools are sensitive to these issues and the overall quality of children and young people's experiences is not diminished by these factors.” (Page 26)

Issue: Class Sizes

Points Made

- It makes more sense to have one teacher to one class year, not composite classes of two or three different year groups.
- Parents removing children from the school has made it worse for the children who remain, as fewer children means fewer opportunities.
- We chose not to send our youngest child to Olnafirth Primary School due to concerns over the falling school roll, however our older child is happy to remain there.
- We chose to send our child to Brae High School due to larger classes there.
- As the transfer of children will not result in an increase in teaching staff numbers, it is safe to assume that means an increase in average class size.
- Studies show that smaller class sizes are advantageous to education, so surely this is educationally disadvantaging the children in both schools?
- What will the average class sizes in the new Brae High School Primary Department be and how do they compare to other class sizes in Shetland?
- Under current catchment area projections, Brae High School Primary Department would become a four teacher primary department without the addition of children from Voe, so the cost of the Olnafirth Primary School teacher is in effect only moved to Brae High School Primary Department.
- Increased school rolls at Lunnasting Primary School would lead to composite classes almost as big as single stage classes at Brae, and there would be three or four year groups in one classroom.
- The decline in the school roll has been fast – it was around 30-35 children five years ago.
- Projected school rolls are only based on nursery information – is more accurate information available (e.g. census figures)?

Response

The average class size in primary in 2013/14 across Shetland is currently 18.6 children. If Olnafirth Primary School was to close and the children transferred to Brae High School Primary Department, the average class size at Brae High School Primary Department for 2014/14 would be 23 children. Currently it is 20.4 children. This move would also increase the average class size across Shetland next year to approximately 18.8 children. The maximum class size for a composite class is twenty-five.

Olnafirth Parent Council, in its response, argues that if Olnafirth Primary School closes and the receiving school is Brae High School Primary Department, then in two

years' time, with Brae High School Primary Department's projected roll, it is only the addition of the Olnafirth Primary School children which will retain the department as a five-teacher department. There are actually no savings in this argument. If all the children in Brae High School Primary Department who are placing requests from Olnafirth Primary School attended their local school, then Olnafirth Primary School would be a two-teacher school and Brae High School Primary Department would be a four-teacher department. The Children's Services Admissions Policy was only approved in December 2012. There was no mechanism before then to cap placing requests. In effect therefore, between the two schools there are six classes now, and there would be six classes if all the children from the Olnafirth catchment area attended their local school. Next year and the following year, based on current projections, if all the children attended their local catchment school, Olnafirth Primary School should be a two-teacher school, and Brae High School Primary Department, a four-teacher school. The projected pattern of six teachers in total continues across the two schools, and, based on home addresses should be split as four in Brae High School Primary Department and two in Olnafirth Primary School.

However, if Olnafirth Primary School closes and we move all the children to Brae High School Secondary Department, five classes in total will be required now and for the future three years we have current predictions for.

The population of Shetland is so small and we have so many small schools that projections for nursery numbers are hard to calculate. We can know that the birth rate has increased slightly but have to rely on our local knowledge from staff in school to predict potential individual nursery numbers.

There is a variety of research which argues for small or larger class sizes being most effective. What is most consistently evidenced is that good teaching is what maximises children's potential.

Issue: Community Concerns

Points Made

- Do not agree that closing the school would harm the community as several families already send children to Brae High School or Lunnasting Primary School.
- Disagree with the argument that people will choose not to move to the area if there is no school.
- Olnafirth Primary School is a focal point for the community and the full implications of closure have not been discussed in the Proposal Paper.
- Concerns that school closure would deter families from moving to the area have not been fully addressed in the Proposal Paper.
- The Proposal Paper does not clearly state what Olnafirth Primary School will be used for in the future should closure go ahead. The building for Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department is still empty and it is important the same does not happen with the Olnafirth building.

- If the school is closed, the building should remain a community building and should not be sold as commercial property.
- Voe children will struggle to become part of the new school's local community so far away from home, and will also have less time in their home community.
- Affects the community as younger and older generations are less likely to meet – joy of living in a village is that everyone gets to meet everyone else and this is good developmentally for the children.
- Do not want to see Voe change from a closely knit community to a 'dormitory village' for Sullom Voe oil workers.
- Proposal states that greatest demand for council housing has been for 1-2 bedroom properties; this is only the case because most larger properties are no longer Council owned.
- Influx of Sullom Voe oil workers has reduced availability of family-sized houses, which has affected school rolls, but this will not be a long term change.
- Demand for housing is only higher in central areas of Shetland because rural areas have been targeted with Council funding cuts.
- Have recent industry developments in the North Mainland - such as the gas plant and increased activity at Sullom Voe - been fully taken into account?
- Some of the decline in schools rolls is simply due to the people in the area – there aren't people leaving but there aren't any new houses either.

Response

In 2007, Shetland's Community Planning Partnership commissioned Hall Aitken to research historic, and future population trends and factors affecting this in Shetland. Their full report is: 'Shetland's Population and Migration Study'.

Hall Aiken noted that historically the population of Shetland has fluctuated significantly from a high point of over 30,000 to its lowest level of 17,000; and that population change has always closely mirrored economic opportunities and the population increased by around a third between 1971 and 1981 due to the major oil-related developments at Sullom Voe.

The conclusions of this study were that in Shetland, based on current migration Trends, there would continue to be a sharp shift in population, including:

- a steep drop in the numbers of children under 16;
- a decline in the numbers of 16 to 24 year olds after 2010;
- a rapid and continuing increase in the elderly

population.

The study also examined factors which influence population change in Shetland. In summary their conclusions were:

- economic development;
- infrastructure (including access to high quality, affordable housing) and
- social issues.

Hall Aitken did not identify the presence of a school as a critical factor in the economic sustainability of a community. In fact, to address the issues Shetland faces in terms of population decline, the report recognises the over-reliance of Shetland on jobs in the public sector, and promotes the importance, for sustainability, of:

- promoting enterprise;
- developing innovation or competitiveness;
- generating revenue streams (for example, through renewables); or
- developing business infrastructure (for example, broadband or incubator units).

Taking on board the depth of previous community concerns about the impact a rural school closure might have in Shetland, Children's Services also commissioned a Socio-Economic Study to be carried out on the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area.

Steve Westbrook, Economist, Nairn, in partnership with Sandy Anderson, was commissioned by the Director of Children's Services to undertake a Socio-Economic Study on the potential impacts on the community of Voe of the Proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School, should it go forward. The full text of the study can be found as Appendix I.

The terms of reference for the study were to:

- provide information on the economy of Olnafirth Primary School's catchment area (i.e. employment, business output, etc);
- identify the workforce requirements of businesses based in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area;
- identify the direct and other impacts of closing the Olnafirth Primary School;
- identify the potential impacts relating to families leaving Voe as a result of the school's closure;
- investigate possible mitigating factors should the school close, such as the prospect for additional private and public sector employment in Voe.

The main conclusions from the Report are that:

- The net annual savings from closing Olnafirth Primary School are estimated by Shetland Islands Council to be some £91,000;
- There are 158 normally resident households in the school's catchment area, but there are also a number of properties rented by people not permanently resident who are working at Sullom Voe;
- Voe has a small percentage of homes in the social rented sector;
- Voe has an attractive location in Shetland, being a rural community well served by the road and transport network and having easy access to major employment centres;
- The majority of the Voe population who work full-time have jobs elsewhere in the North Mainland or Lerwick;
- Important employers in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area (apart from the school) are the Voe Bakery, the Tagon Stores and the Pierhead Restaurant and Bar;
- Employment in Voe itself is very limited;
- The Olnafirth Primary School catchment area contributes some £2.5 million to the Shetland economy;
- Household income in Voe is estimated at some £6.5 million;
- There are currently 21 primary school age children in Voe, of whom 8 are attending Olnafirth school and 13 other primary schools – Brae, Lunnasting, and Mossbank [These figures differ from the number Children's Services has on its management information system];
- The direct impact of closing the school would be the loss of 3 part-time jobs held by people who live in the school's catchment area, although there would be a greater loss to the North Mainland;
- Some parents are clearly concerned at the possibility of the school closing, and while we found no evidence that any would immediately leave the village, the lack of a primary school would make the village less attractive for families moving to or within Shetland;
- Without a school, it is possible that homes that become available in Voe would increasingly be taken by older people and transient workers wishing to rent while maintaining a family home elsewhere rather than by families;
- Land availability for new housing is limited;
- The school building could be connected to a 100MB fibre optic cable, which would make it an attractive option for use by the Council for remote staff working, a community based social enterprise, and / or local small

businesses, or as a rural office base for a development such as the proposed Viking Wind Farm.

The new Community Plan for Shetland 2013-2020 has just been agreed in August 2013. This describes how the public sector will work together with the private and third sector to improve the communities in Shetland. There are commitments in the Plan that are important to securing a sustainable future for all areas of Shetland, and these will be important for the community of Voe to consider if Olnafirth Primary School closes. Outcome 1 is: *“Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities”*; and Outcome 11 is: *“We have a strong voluntary sector and social enterprises, encouraging community enterprise and co-operatives, with increased capacity to deliver services based on needs and aspirations of local communities.”* Within these there are clear objectives: to increase sustainable economic growth; increase the number of business start ups; secure population growth; increase the role of community enterprise; improve the sustainability of community groups; and involve communities in deciding what is needed to improve their area.

The Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, published in April 2013, makes the following statement about this aspect of rural schools: *“It is important to recognise that a school’s primary function is to provide pupils with the best possible educational experience.”* (Page 30)

Issue: Access to Community Services

Points Made

- The only play park in the Voe area is accessed through the school and there is currently no alternative access.
- The school grounds are used to access local amenities, such as a Council residence, and fields used during the annual Voe Show. There is also a parking area which is used by the community. The Proposal has not addressed how this access would be affected by closure.
- The school building is used during the Voe Show for its kitchen facilities and dining areas.
- Junior Youth Clubs are also under threat of closure so children at Olnafirth might be hit twice by loss of services.

Response

If Olnafirth Primary School were to close, and Shetland Islands Council retained the building as a hub for remote working, for example, then all the facilities which are currently enjoyed by the public on Voe Show day, including the use of the kitchen, would remain.

If Olnafirth Primary School was to close, and Shetland Islands Council sold the building, it would be sold, with right of access to the public remaining. This would enable the tenant of the old schoolhouse, children and their families wishing to play in the play park access at any time. This would also ensure that for the one day a year that the Voe Show takes place cars could still access the field for parking via the school gate.

Issue: Transition**Points Made**

- There is no nursery provision at Olnafirth Primary School: putting children to Brae High School, where they can be educated from 3-18, or Lunnasting Primary School, where they could be educated from 3-12, is a better prospect and less disruptive to the child.
- Brae High School Primary Department is the preferred option for receiving school due to the removal of transitions and transport issues with Lunnasting Primary School.
- Moving children to Lunnasting Primary School would introduce another transition unnecessarily – Brae High School Primary Department should be the receiving school.
- Would choose to send children to Brae High School Primary Department even if Lunnasting Primary School was named as receiving school.
- To claim the loss of a transition as a benefit of closure is disingenuous as there is no compulsion for parents to send their children to Brae High School Primary Department over other rural primary schools.
- Most state educated children across Scotland physically move schools between Primary and Secondary; to say that removal of this transition is a true benefit is effectively stating that the model which works effectively across Scotland is fundamentally wrong.
- My child would be much happier attending a small school like Lunnasting Primary School (in reference to receiving school options were Olnafirth Primary School to close).
- Lunnasting Primary School and Mossbank Primary School should have been considered as receiving schools as these are more similar to Olnafirth Primary School and Olnafirth Primary School has had closer ties with these schools in the past.
- Have the staff at Lunnasting Primary School been consulted on the potential for that school to become receiving school for Olnafirth? How was the idea received by staff?

Response

Brae High School Primary Department was identified as the receiving school for Olnafirth Primary School children, should the school close, for a number of reasons. Brae High School Primary Department remains the most popular place for nursery children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area to access nursery education. Children from Olnafirth Primary School go to secondary school in Brae High School Secondary Department. Olnafirth Primary School and Brae High School are only 5.08 miles apart, and although all children from Olnafirth will

now require to be transported to school instead of the current two, the longest single bus journey for any child in the catchment is 40 minutes. The transport links are good with most of the journey to school being along a main road. Transport to other suggested schools, Mossbank Primary School and Lunnasting Primary School-would take longer than this. The journey to Lunnasting Primary School for all the children from Olnafirth Primary School would, for a portion of the journey, involve travelling over a single-track road.

For both Mossbank Primary School and Lunnasting Primary School as a receiving school, children from Olnafirth Primary School would have to transfer school for secondary. Transfer to Brae High School Primary Department is surely an ideal option as it is the most accessible and enables children not to have to make a transfer to a different school for their secondary education.

There are no catchment areas for nursery education but Brae High School Primary Department remains the most popular choice for nursery education for children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area.

Of the seventeen children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area who currently do not attend Olnafirth Primary School, twelve of these are at Brae High School Primary Department. It is by far the most requested alternative school for parents in the area seeking a placing request for their child. Moving all of the children to Brae High School Primary Department if Olnafirth Primary School closes therefore offers the opportunity to bring almost all of the children from the village together again in one school.

Lunnasting Primary School staff were not specifically consulted on this Proposal but were free to make a response, as was anyone else in Shetland.

Issue: Relationships/friends

Points Made

- Child is keen to attend Brae High School Primary Department having made friends there through attendance at sporting activities.
- My child has attended playgroup in Voe, allowing early introduction to the school environment and an opportunity to get to know older children at break time. This early connection is vital to all children.
- Brae High School Primary Department should be the receiving school; the majority of children in the area who do not attend Olnafirth Primary School already attend Brae High School Primary Department so the community's children would be kept together.
- The children (at Olnafirth Primary School) all play well together and there is a strong caring atmosphere with no children being excluded socially.
- Composite classes at Brae High School Primary Department may involve splitting year groups, potentially separating children from the friends they have made; the anxiety this may cause negates the positive effect of reduced transitions.
- The way Brae High School Primary Department classes are organised could mean child moving after closure is isolated from anyone they knew at Olnafirth Primary School – this would impact the child's ability to participate in play in their own community and leave them unable to fully develop relationships with any local Voe children during class time.
- Since moving to Olnafirth from large primary school (circa 300 children) a child has stated she had more friends in Olnafirth Primary School than she had in her previous school.
- Developing friendships is not just about the age or number of children rather the feel and ethos of the school itself.

Response

In Brae High School Primary Department, there are five classes. If Olnafirth Primary School did close, and we assumed the children who transferred were only those in the projected roll for the school next year, this would give Brae High School Primary Department a roll of 115 on 2014/15. This would make the average class size twenty-three, but children would either be in a straight class or in a class with some others from one or two other stages.

Early indications from Brae High School Primary Department, based on these current predicted numbers, would suggest that a straight Primary One class would be feasible, then three composites, and a straight Primary Seven class. If numbers do not change the prediction is that this split of classes may be able to remain in place for the following year as well. This plan could change subject to possible fluctuations in

numbers, in advance of children transferring.

If Olnafirth Primary School did close, then a Transition Group would be set up immediately to work through all the concerns from parents, children and staff about the move. Through this Group, specific opportunities could be put in place for children who have previously attended Olnafirth Primary School to be together, and to share any worries with staff.

Issue: School Capacity

Points Made

- Clarification of capacity is required due to differences in the calculation of floor space capacity, capacity as per the Council Admissions Policy, and capacity within the boundaries of maximum class sizes.
- The nursery department at Brae High School is big enough to hold all the children.
- The capacity of Olnafirth Primary School is not as high as stated in the Proposal Paper; the capacity calculation ignores maximum class size – Olnafirth Primary School has four classrooms and can therefore only hold 100 given maximum composite class size of twenty-five. The Council would currently cap the capacity at nineteen based on projected school roll and current staffing.
- The population in Brae is increasing and a number of new houses are being built. What happens if the Brae High School Primary Department reaches its capacity?
- There are a lot of private house builds happening in the North Mainland at the moment so extra school capacity is important.
- Voe is a changing area and school roll numbers could grow in future.
- Does the proposal assume that every child within the catchment area for Olnafirth – including those who have already opted to move to other schools such as Lunnasting Primary School or Mossbank Primary School – might move to Brae High School Primary Department if that is named as the receiving school?

Response

The reference to the capacity of Olnafirth Primary School in the Proposal Paper is to its physical capacity. This is identified as 125, and is based on the figure of 2.1 square metres per child. This figure is to indicate the level of the overall space in the building which is currently being made use of. The more efficiently a school building is used, the more the cost per child for that school can be reduced, as certain building costs are fixed, no matter how well used it is.

Taking account of the Points Made by Olnafirth Parent Council that the school only has four classrooms, we can agree to consider the capacity as 100 based on the

maximum size of a composite class which is twenty-five. This would mean that the school is currently operating at 8% capacity.

Olnafirth Parent Council also argue that due to the Admissions Policy, the maximum capacity of the school is actually nineteen, as this would reflect the projected roll, class sizes and the budget set for the school. However it is still the case, and would be for any school in Shetland, that if all the children in a catchment area wished to attend the school, they would be accommodated in their local school. For example, in August 2013, we provided an additional teacher in Hamnavoe Primary School and in Nesting Primary School due to the increased roll resulting from the numbers of children in the catchment area increasing. In the school session 2013/14, Olnafirth Primary School should have twenty-five children. If all of these children wished to attend Olnafirth Primary School they would be accommodated.

If we take this figure, the maximum that Olnafirth Primary School could presently be operating at, if all the children who could attend the school did attend it would still only be operating at 25% capacity.

Whichever way it is calculated, there remains significant under-used classroom space in Olnafirth Primary School which is increasing the cost per child. The physical capacity of Brae High School Primary Department means that it can support 160 children. There is no evidence in current projections for the department that it will get near this number. The secondary department is adjacent to the primary department at Brae High School and should it ever be required there may be scope there to utilise accommodation better.

For the purposes of calculating the transport figures it was assumed that transport would be required from the school year 2014/15 onwards, thus all the children who were predicted to attend Olnafirth Primary School were counted plus those who are currently in Brae High School Primary Department from the area by way of placing request who would still be in primary education in 2014/15.

Issue: Condition of Buildings**Points Made**

- The age of the building (Olnafirth Primary School) and the facilities available (e.g. computers) means more money will need to be spent in the future.
- There are factual errors concerning the building and facilities the building is claimed :
 - to be 50 years older than it is;
 - to have restricted disabled access when it does not;
 - and to lack a library when it does have a library;

Response

The mistakes relating to the school building which were made in the Proposal Paper were corrected at each of the public meetings and are now also published in Section 20 of this Consultation Report.

Issue: Democratic (or decision making process)**Points Made**

- Some parents have “voted with their feet” and have removed their children from the Olnafirth Primary School already.
- If on this occasion the school is not shut, that should be the final decision. Threat of closure is more disruptive to a child’s education than the closure itself would be, as children would adapt and settle into the new school.
- The drop in school roll directly correlates to the years where the Council discussed commencing the consultation process.
- Younger children moving to other schools while older siblings continue at Olnafirth Primary School is an indication that placing requests have, to an extent, been influenced by the threat of closure.
- “One of the parents who moved here a couple of years ago categorically stated that ‘if it hadn’t had a school, we would not have looked at Voe.’”
- Do not agree with the assumption that school rolls have fallen due to threat of closure – a number of families have moved to area with no intention of placing children at Olnafirth Primary School.
- Upset and concerned over management of “privately held meeting”, the minutes of which have been considered as part of consultation process; Olnafirth Primary School Parent Council and some parents directly affected

by the closure were not informed and not invited.

- Alternatives to closure, such as delivering savings with the school open, have not been properly addressed. No consideration has been given to becoming a true single teacher school with a teaching head teacher or to having a shared head teacher with no principal teachers.
- Comments from some councillors suggest the decision has been made beforehand and that consultation process is a formality.
- There have been factual errors in the Proposal Paper, many of them used to make the case for closure.
- Proposal fails on more points of the Shetland Single Outcome Agreement than it meets.
- There should have been further discussion of Shetland's long-term education strategy as a whole before individual school consultations were started.
- I do not feel that you (Children's Services) have satisfied the terms of the 2010 Act with the current consultation document and hence do not believe you have shown any real justification for closing such a high performing school.
- The Proposal document was in very small print and difficult to read.
- Would a whole new consultation process be required for Lunnasting to be considered as the receiving school?
- Brae parents are not best placed to comment on the receiving school issue; it is for Voe parents to decide.
- Is the catchment area restricted to only having one school?
- Public meetings were the only opportunity for people to respond verbally. Those who found it difficult to speak publicly or to disagree with the majority felt excluded.

Response

Children's Services have been working on the Blueprint for Education since 2007. During that time there have been three Shetland-wide community consultations to discuss the overall shape of future education provision in Shetland. In June 2010, a number of strategic proposals were put forward to Shetland Islands Council for the delivery of school education. These proposals were revised in September 2012, following an instruction from the Council to 'refresh the Blueprint'. Again, the revised proposals consider school education provision across the islands. The future of Olnafirth Primary School has been considered throughout this time and it is important to end this uncertainty by carrying out the statutory consultation process.

The Proposal Paper was produced in booklet form to reduce the costs of paper and photocopying. It can be viewed in full size on the Shetland Islands Council website.

Since the approval of the Admissions Policy, anyone making a placing request is required to specify their reasons for wishing their child to attend a different school from their catchment area school. Therefore, for the seven placing requests Children's Services have received this year out of Olnafirth concerning nine children, only two parents have explicitly mentioned uncertainty over the future of Olnafirth Primary School as a reason for their placing request. Other reasons specified were a lack of peers and that the child was settled at a nursery elsewhere and the parents wished to continue primary education in the same area.

Closure proposals involve changing the catchment area for a school and therefore a proposal must identify how this is to be done. A catchment area can be re-drawn to allocate children geographically to more than one school, but children cannot be given a choice year on year, otherwise how will Children's Services organise school transport or agree whether a placement request is valid?

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires a local authority to have a public meeting. If anyone does not feel able to speak out at a public meeting, then the Act allows for this by providing the opportunity to make a written response.

The new Community Plan for Shetland 2013-2020 has also just been agreed in August 2013. It incorporates the newly agreed Single Outcome Agreement. One of the priorities in the Plan is that Shetland has:

"financial sustainability and balance within each partner; and a better balance between a dynamic private sector, a strong third sector and efficient and responsive public services."

The proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School supports this outcome, as it will contribute to securing financial sustainability for Children's Services and will mean more efficient use of Council resources.

In addition, the new Community Plan describes how the public sector will work together with the private and third sector to improve the communities in Shetland. There are commitments in the Plan that are important to securing a sustainable future for all areas of Shetland, and these will be important for the community of Voe to consider if Olnafirth Primary School closes. Outcome 1 is: *"Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities"*; and Outcome 11 is: *"We have a strong voluntary sector and social enterprises, encouraging*

community enterprise and co-operatives, with increased capacity to deliver services based on needs and aspirations of local communities.” Within these there are clear objectives: to increase sustainable economic growth; increase the number of business start ups; secure population growth; increase the role of community enterprise; improve the sustainability of community groups; and involve communities in deciding what is needed to improve their area.

A proposal to alter the receiving school could be made during a consultation period. It would be viewed as a significant change to the proposal paper, and would require a corrected paper to be issued. Once publicised a consultation would then be held on the matter and a decision taken after the consultation.

During a statutory consultation process a local authority must be prepared to listen to all consultees who wish to make their views known. It was on this basis that officers from Children’s Services attended both the additional one asked for by a group of parents and one by the Olnafirth Parent Council.

There are other plans for primary school closure statutory consultations arising from the Blueprint for Education 2012-2017. One of these proposes the closure of Urafirth Primary School and Urafirth Primary School nursery department, and North Roe Primary School with transfer to Ollaberry Primary School. If this proposal went ahead, there would be one primary school in the Northmavine area of the Shetland mainland.

The three school communities involved here do not want any of the schools to close but if any have to, they wish to discuss with Children’s Services which school should be the receiving school.

Factual errors in the Proposal Paper are corrected in Section 20 of this Consultation Report.

Issue: Employment

Points Made

- The Proposal fails to address the impact of closure on three largest local employers (Johnson and Wood Ltd, The Pierhead and Tagon Stores).
- In the event the school is closed, an immediate attempt should be made to get the premises re-occupied and create sustainable employment in the village.

Response

Steve Westbrook, Economist, Nairn, in partnership with Sandy Anderson, was commissioned by the Director of Children's Services, to undertake a Socio-Economic Study on the potential impacts on the community of Voe of the Proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School, should it go forward. This study is attached to this consultation report as Appendix I. The study does not identify any specific impacts on local businesses of the school closing. As the proposed receiving school is so close to the village of Voe, and many parents currently place their children in alternative schools to Olnafirth Primary School yet have remained resident in the catchment area, it is difficult to consider that there will be a significant impact here. Voe's geographical location beside a busy main artery route through the Shetland Mainland will not change if Olnafirth Primary School closes.

The new Community Plan for Shetland 2013-2020 has also just been agreed in August 2013. This describes how the public sector will work together with the private and third sector to improve the communities in Shetland. There are commitments in the Plan that are important to securing a sustainable future for all areas of Shetland, and these will be important for the community of Voe to consider if Olnafirth Primary School closes. Outcome 1 is: *"Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities"*; and Outcome 11 is: *"We have a strong voluntary sector and social enterprises, encouraging community enterprise and co-operatives, with increased capacity to deliver services based on needs and aspirations of local communities."* Within these there are clear objectives: to increase sustainable economic growth; increase the number of business start ups; secure population growth; increase the role of community enterprise; improve the sustainability of community groups; and involve communities in deciding what is needed to improve their area.

Issue: Learning Environment / Resources

Points Made

- It is not true that Olnafirth Primary School does not have a library.
- The receiving of project materials from Brae High School is a very useful feature and applies to a number of other primary schools in the Northmavine area.
- The nine computers at Olnafirth Primary School that are suitable for upgrade to Windows 7 are sufficient for the projected school roll of eight

children.

- The figures in the Proposal Paper suggest that Brae High School has one interactive whiteboard per classroom – the same provision as Olnafirth Primary School – and fewer than one computer per child, meaning a full class cannot have a computer each and there must be children sharing.
- The IT spend per child at Brae High School Primary Department works out at £245 when Olnafirth Primary School spent only £100, so it would appear Olnafirth Primary School offers better value for money.
- Olnafirth Primary School has access to four different teachers to provide a broad spectrum of experience – Brae has five (six including the non-teaching head teacher); this is not a significant difference.
- The only other significant difference (in reference to Brae's larger teaching staff group) is two additional needs teachers and two additional support needs auxiliaries who are provided on a basis of need so not a fair comparison.
- A more creative vision is needed to consider how resources can be better shared across the rural areas of Shetland to enable children to access education close to their homes.
- Will the addition of extra children be reflected in the number of classroom assistants and additional support needs auxiliaries?
- Should be taking opportunity to explore and utilise new technologies.

Response

The future direction of numbers of computers per child in Shetland's schools is that children will share computers. There will be one computer to every two children. Our Information Technology Services is currently planning for how to implement this.

There will be no increase in classroom assistant time in Brae High School Primary Department if Olnafirth Primary School closes, as generic school support staff posts are currently under review. The allocation of additional support needs staff is based on the needs of children in a school. Therefore if Olnafirth Primary School were to close, Brae High School Primary Department's allocation of additional support needs staff would be reviewed.

Shetland has a large number of schools. Due to the spread of the population almost 60 % of our primary schools/departments are one or two teacher. The primary school estate is only 46.8% occupied based on the physical space per child we have available. The retention of so many school buildings, which are inefficiently used, gives us fixed costs, which are difficult to reduce. Reducing the number of buildings in which we deliver primary education would make the school estate more efficient and generate ongoing reoccurring savings.

Issue: Financial

Points Made

- Olnafirth Primary School costs a lot of money to maintain for a small roll – closure makes economic sense.
- Not to make this change in the current financial climate would be unacceptable.
- Do not believe the financial saving of £91,309 on page 39 of the proposal paper is realistic.
- The lost revenue in the grant-aided expenditure figures is wrong by over 20%.
- High staffing costs within Shetland Islands Council, such as those of the large centralised team at Hayfield House, should be the targets for spending cuts before schools.
- The money spent on staffing the consultations could have been used to keep the schools open, and once schools are shut there will be a lot of extra staff with nothing to do.
- Is it worth damaging a community and breaking up a demonstrably good school for such small savings (2.8% of the total target)?
- Even that 2.8% saving is an inflated and incorrect figure, due to errors in its calculation.
- Transport costs for visits to Brae High School are calculated for nine months, but visits are only six weeks a year.
- The visit to Brae High School Library is combined with the visit to the swimming pool at North Mainland Leisure Centre, results in no extra trips and is significantly less than nine months' worth (as stated in the proposal paper). The visits in fact occur for six weeks per year.
- If eight or more of the 102 children at Brae were admitted there following a placing request, then without those requests being granted the school would have moved to being a four teacher school, saving almost half the savings being sought from the closure of Olnafirth Primary School.
- Based on current project school rolls, if closure were to proceed, in the second year Brae High School Primary Department would only require five teachers due to the extra children from the Olnafirth catchment area; therefore reduced teaching staff costs are not an ongoing saving.
- Savings might not be sustainable due to rising fuel costs.
- If school building were to later be used as council office, it would reduce potential savings – refitting and fabric maintenance costs need to be considered, and cleaning costs would be maintained.
- If (the school building) is used as Council offices then the only real savings to the Council as a whole would be the staff costs – other costs would

simply be transferred to another area of the Council.

- Do the Council actually own the building and the land and, by the terms of the deeds, are they in a position legally to sell it?
- A cleaner employed directly by the school to clean on the 190 days it is open could save around £5,000 (at a cost of £54 per school day).
- The catering costs are very high, at an estimated £9 per child – if this was reduced to £2 (comparable to other schools) it would provide a saving of around £16,000 per year.
- Recharges for the central team amount to 7% of the total school budget, which seems very high; if this figure is proportional to school population the cost of the central administration team equates to roughly £1000 per child.
- Loss in grant-aided expenditure is likely to be £39,000, which is £9,000 more than stated in the Proposal Paper.
- The grant-aided expenditure figure is quoted as £2,300 but the Rural Schools report states this should be between £2,600 and £3,200. Shetland would also fall at the higher end of this scale.
- It is not clear why education materials cost significantly less at Brae High School than at Olnafirth Primary School, as these resources are centrally bought.
- Realistically closure of the school will only save around £10,000 that could not be found by other methods; this is also before looking at potentially increasing the use of shared administration resource.
- The proposed savings have fallen significantly since the previous consultation, so why should people trust the new figures are actually valid?
- The problem Shetland has with educational cost lies in secondary education, not primary.
- How long would the money set aside to maintain the school building last after closure?
- Has the Council considered approaching schools individually and asking them to independently make their share of the required savings?
- There needs to be a budget for all children in the catchment area to go to the receiving school, as those already at different schools might choose to move to the new receiving school.
- If the building is used as offices the associated heating/lighting will still be present, and in fact higher as most work places have a significantly longer day and work more days a year than the average primary school.

Response

On 28 August 2013 Shetland Islands Council agreed an update to its Medium Term Financial Plan. This reaffirms the indicative target budget for Children's Services for the financial year 2014/15 as £833,000 less than its budget for 2013/14. Almost all of this money is to come from the Blueprint for Education proposals. By saving almost £5.0 million from its budgets for schools since 2009/10, Children's Services believes it cannot save any more without affecting the quality of education offered to all Shetland's children, including those attending Olnafirth Primary School. In addition to the closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and Uyeasound Primary School, the following reductions in service have been made in the schools area of Children's Services:

- reducing expenditure on In-Service training;
- reducing numbers of central staff;
- reducing money available for supply;
- reducing money available for Continuing Professional Development;
- ending knitting instruction;
- charging for instrumental instruction;
- increasing charges e.g. for school meals;
- reducing operating costs in schools, particularly resources available for learning materials and equipment ;
- moving to national staffing levels in primary;
- reducing numbers of teaching staff in secondary;
- reducing numbers of Catering and Cleaning staff;
- reducing teacher input in nursery;
- securing more efficient use of resources for children and young people with Additional Support Needs;
- reducing music instruction;
- reducing Parent Council Clerks' honorariums;
- reducing school building maintenance.

as alternatives to closing schools.

Olnafirth Parent Council, in their response, argue that, if Olnafirth Primary School closes and the receiving school is Brae High School Primary Department, in two years' time, with Brae High School Primary Department's projected roll, it is only the addition of the Olnafirth Primary School children which will retain the department as a five-teacher department.

There are actually no savings in this argument. If all the children in Brae High School Primary Department who are placing requests from Olnafirth Primary School attended their local school, then Olnafirth Primary School would be two-teacher school and Brae High School Primary Department would be a four-teacher department. The Children's Services Admissions Policy was only approved in December 2012. There was no mechanism before then to cap placing requests. In effect then, between the two schools there are six classes now, and there would be six classes if all the children from the Olnafirth catchment area attended their local school. Next year, and the following year, based on current projections if all the children attended their local catchment school, Olnafirth Primary School should be a two-teacher school, and Brae High School Primary Department, a four-teacher school. The projected pattern of six teachers in total continues across the two schools, and based on home addresses

should be split as four in Brae High School Primary Department and two in Olnafirth Primary School. If Olnafirth Primary School were to close and the children transferred to Brae High School Primary Department, the overall staffing required at Brae High School Primary Department will remain as five teachers for the year 2014/15 and 2015/16.

An additional point made as part of this argument is that, if Olnafirth were to remain open and Brae High School Primary Department did not have the Olnafirth Primary School children, Brae High School Primary Department, once it became a four-teacher school, would have a teaching depute. This is not the case. Children's Services has a local agreement on management time for teaching head teachers in primary schools which includes a four-teacher school having a teaching head. However, Brae High School Primary Department is not a primary school but a department in a high school. Our local agreement for management time in our Junior Highs and our High Schools makes this depute post a non-teaching post whatever the school roll is.

In 2012/13, we removed £80,000 from schools' operating budgets as part of our savings proposals. We know now, as a result of that reduction that some schools are now asking children to buy things like pens and pencils for themselves. We cannot take any more from schools' operating budgets without damaging their ability to deliver the quality of education we expect of them, and they have nowhere near enough money in their operating budgets to meet the level of savings we are required to find.

Children's Services have made reductions in secondary teacher posts. For the new session 2013/14, we have 13.5 full-time equivalent fewer secondary teachers than the previous year.

Schools are now required to purchase a range of their resources through Scotland Excel which finds the best prices at any time for a range of school resources and equipment.

Shetland Islands Council does own the Olnafirth Primary School and surrounding land and would be in a position to sell it, subject to agreement by the Executive Committee of the Council.

The cost of the cleaning service at Olnafirth is made up of a part-time cleaner working twenty-one hours per week, term-time only. The Cleaning Service is part of Children's Services, and, as such, the post is graded according to Single Status terms and conditions. These would apply whether the post was held directly within the school or within the central service. In addition to this, budget provision of £400 is included for cleaning materials.

The cost of the catering service is made up of a part-time cook working twenty-five hours per week, term-time only. The Catering Service is part of the Children's Services, and, as such, the post is graded according to Single Status terms and conditions. These would apply whether the post was held directly within the school or within the central service. In addition to this, budget provision of £3,233 has been included for meal supplies.

The hours in the cleaning and catering posts are established posts, where it is very difficult to reduce hours. The hours in the respective posts relate to a time when

the school had many more children.

The Quality Assurance recharge is made up of two elements – a percentage for the core work of the service, which amounts to 0.81% for each primary school. This reflects the statutory responsibility of the service which does not change whether there is one child or a hundred children in a school, and an element based on pupil numbers, which for Olnafirth is 0.07%. The estimate for 2013/14 was set in January 2013 when numbers at Olnafirth totalled thirteen and therefore the reduction in children will be reflected in the actual amount recharged to the school at the end of the financial year. However, this will have no impact on the level of savings estimated from the closure of Olnafirth Primary School, as this cost will be transferred across the school estate. Since 2008/09, the quality assurance team has been reduced by 3.0 full-time equivalents, and staffing reductions have also been made within the administrative support team, through efficiency savings and to reflect the reduced school estate following the closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and Uyeasound Primary School. The closure of Olnafirth Primary School alone would not generate a reduction in the central team. However staffing is continually reviewed and opportunities to reduce the work force through voluntary redundancy and retirement are taken as they arise.

Transport costs have been reviewed, and the updated figures have been included in the savings summary. Transport costs cannot be inflated for future years. All costs have been included at current prices, in order for us to compare like for like.

The amount included for grant-aided expenditure (GAE) lost as a result of the closure of Olnafirth Primary School was calculated as follows, using the Scottish Government's 'Green Book' for Grant-aided Expenditure Local Government Finance Settlement 2012-2015:

2013/14 'Green Book' GAE allocation	£1.231M	
Number of primary pupils in Shetland in small schools	520	
	£	
2013/14 'Green Book' GAE allocation per pupil in small school	2367	(£1.231M/520 pupils)
GAE lost as a result of the closure of Olnafirth Primary School based on 13 pupils at the date of preparation of the proposal paper	30775	(£2,367 x 13 pupils)
Revised GAE loss figure based on current 8 pupils at Olnafirth Primary School	18938	(£2,367 x 8 pupils)

Note (from Scottish Government's 'Green Book' for Grant-aided Expenditure Local Government Finance Settlement 2012-2015):

Pupil numbers: 2011 based pupil projections

Percentage of pupils in small schools: pupils in primary schools of less than 70, in settlements in Scottish Government urban/rural classifications 5 and 6, as a percentage of all pupils averaged over two years

The statement in Paragraph 4.21(Page 17) of the Proposal Paper that children visit Brae High School weekly for a nine-month block each year” is incorrect. Olnafirth Primary School children attend Brae High School for swimming for only six weeks and therefore the saving would only be £480. This has been reflected in the updated financial information provided here in the consultation report.

Proposal to Close Olnafirth Primary School – Revised Estimated Savings

	2013/14
	Budget
	£
Olnafirth Primary School Total Cost	174,375
Additional Costs at Brae High School Primary Department	472
Savings at Mossbank Primary School	(927)
Costs Transferred Across the Estate	13,334
Residual Property Costs	5,901
Savings on Transport Costs for Current Visits to Brae	(480)
Revised Additional Transport Costs	39,900
Impact on Grant-aided Expenditure (GAE)	18,936
Revised Total Saving	97,239

The reduction in the loss of grant-aided expenditure, due to the fall in the roll at Olnafirth Primary School for 2013/14 from thirteen children to eight children, increases the potential savings from the proposed closure of Olnafirth Primary School. Even by adding in the revised transport costs and correcting the error about weekly trips to Brae High School for swimming, the estimated savings have increased from £91,309 to £97,239.

Issue: Health Concerns**Points Made**

- A shorter school day attending a school within walking distance represents a higher quality of life for a child than a longer day with additional time spent waiting for or travelling on a bus.
- Children will have a reduced level of physical activity if they are no longer able to walk to school.

Response

Two of the eight children who currently attend Olnafirth Primary School cannot walk to school and have to get there by school transport. As part of Curriculum for Excellence all primary children should have two hours of physical activity during their school week. Due to the rural and sparsely populated nature of Shetland, a large number of primary children already have to travel by bus to primary school.

A full Health Impact Assessment was carried out on this Proposal and can be found at Appendix G. This includes advice as to how potential negative impacts can be mitigated.

12. Summary of Consultation with Children

12.1

Meeting with Olnafirth Primary School Pupils**Points Made**

- Do not want the school to close, have been here for six years and father went to the school as well.
- Olnafirth is a good school – it has come second in the Junior Saltire Prize.
- I think it's quite sad.
- I hate it.
- I think that it's fine.
- I would not mind it.
- It would be stressful for my sister – we have been in a huge school and you hardly get noticed. I think it is stupid closing such a good school. I hate the thought of closing this school.
- Feel a bit scared about going to the big school, there will be tons of people there.

- Have spent more than half my life attending this school and all the time it has been threatened with closure.
- Pupil roll is slowly going down – would like to see how many children would come in if closure proposals were stopped for three years.
- If you make the school a different building, won't it cost money to run the other building?
- What will happen to the mushrooms and the art hut?
- I feel happy that I'm going to a bigger school.
- It isn't nice moving school.
- This is something children will always remember – some people might be scarred for life.
- How would you feel, ask yourself that.
- I feel depressed, angry and sad – what will happen to the play park and the mushrooms?
- Will there be a bus to Brae?
- How early would we have to get up?
- Why are they closing schools?
- Are there any other schools up for closure?
- You can always save money in other ways.
- What will happen to the school building?
- What will happen to the playground?
- Concern for the mushroom mosaics.
- Concern about access to the play park and the warm playground house.
- What would happen to the Up Helly Aa shields?

Response

Children's Services knows how important Olnafirth Primary School is to its children, and knows it will be a big change for everyone to leave. Children's Services will do its best to work with staff, children and parents to make this change, should it happen, as easy as possible. We will listen to children's concerns along the way, and make sure they are taken account of. If the school does close we will set up a Group to support you to make the change to Brae High School Primary Department and you can tell them all the things you would like to take with you. You will also be able to discuss the mushrooms and what is best for

them.

There is enough space in Brae High School Primary Department to take the children from Olnafirth Primary School without needing another teacher so it will cost less for you to go there to school.

Children's Services have done lots of things to try to save money in schools in Shetland. There is a big list in this report. We don't feel we can do anymore without damaging the education of all the children in Shetland. Where possible, by closing some small schools which are underused, we can protect the quality of education all children in Shetland receive.

Meeting with Brae High School Primary Department Pupils

Points Made

- If nursery and secondary age children can attend Brae then the primary children should as well.
- Olnafirth Primary School children might take a while to settle in, and Brae children will need to be friendly and help them.
- There should be transition days like the Brae High School has for those joining at secondary level.
- Olnafirth children will know everybody in the school when they go to the secondary department.
- The Brae High School Primary Department might run out of space.
- It should be up to the Voe children.
- The Olnafirth Primary School is a waste of money for the low pupil roll.
- Have to cover costs such as electricity for hardly any children.
- Waste of fuel for teacher to travel to teach only eight children.
- Cheaper to employ a teacher for more children.
- The Voe bus might be full and parents might be unable to take children to school themselves.
- Olnafirth children should visit the Brae school.
- Brae would need to buy new furniture for the incoming children.
- Olnafirth children would have a bigger group of potential friends.
- Some children have already started moving to Brae for primary.
- Could you not just get rid of the unused classrooms at Olnafirth Primary

School?

- The best for Olnafirth Primary School is to shut it down, they can make more friends at Brae and have a football team.

Response

Children's Services will set up a group to support the children from Olnafirth Primary School to make the move to Brae High School Primary Department, and children from Brae High School Primary Department will be able to put their good ideas forward as to how to support them.

Olnafirth Primary School has a lot of resources including things like tables. These can be moved to Brae High School Primary Department should the school close.

13. Summary of Consultation with Staff

13.1

Meeting with Olnafirth Primary School Staff

Points Made

- Why are staff members at Mossbank Primary School not being consulted? That school would be seriously affected by closure as they would lose a Principal Teacher.
- Are staff members free to speak to Human Resources about their future during the 30-day consultation period or must they wait until a final decision is made?
- At one point can the decision be called in by the Council and what would happen if the decision was called in?
- Who had taken the decision to remove Mossbank and Lunnasting as potential receiving schools and when was the decision made?
- Is it appropriate for staff to speak to members of the Parent Council if they had concerns or comments about the Consultation?
- What should teachers do if approached by a parent with concerns about how the Consultation is affecting their child?
- Staff pointed out inaccuracies in the proposal paper – the date the school was built and the disabled access to the school.
- It was felt that mistakes such as these reflected badly on the Shetland Islands Council and the perception of the consultation to the public.

- There was a feeling that the consultation was all about saving money, so staff were surprised that all Anderson High School children were sent information on the Skerries proposal given the small numbers involved.

Response

Staff in Mossbank Primary School are, like everyone else in Shetland, able to make a response to the statutory consultation. The statutory consultation commenced with a public notice in The Shetland Times and on the radio. The Proposal Paper is available on Shetland Islands Council's website. There is no specific requirement to consult with any staff at all as part of the statutory process. Children's Services do it as they feel it is vital to hear from staff who may be directly affected by a proposal. In a statutory consultation process there is only a requirement to have a public meeting.

Staff are free to speak to Human Resources at any time if they have concerns about their job.

Shetland Islands Council makes the decision as to whether or not Olnafirth Primary School should close. Education and Families Committee will meet first to make a recommendation on the decision to the Shetland Islands Council. Shetland Islands Council will then make the final determination. Education and Families meeting is on the morning of 10 October 2013, and Shetland Islands Council meeting is on in the afternoon. If the decision of Shetland Islands Council is to close Olnafirth Primary School, there is then a six-week period during which the Scottish Ministers have to decide whether or not to call-in the decision. Children's Services cannot take any steps to implement the decision until this period is over.

The decision to have Brae High School Primary Department as the receiving school for Olnafirth Primary School children, should the school close, was taken by Children's Services. The decision was taken following on from our experience of the statutory consultation on the proposed closure of North Roe Primary School in 2011, where parents there felt it was not possible to make a decision as to whether there was any benefit for their children in attending a different school to North Roe Primary School as we had put forward two options – Urafirth Primary School or Ollaberry Primary School as the receiving school and had not specified which was our preferred option.

Brae High School Primary Department was specifically identified as the receiving school for Olnafirth Primary School children should the school close for a number of reasons. Brae High School Primary Department remains the most popular place for nursery children from the Olnafirth Primary School to access nursery education. Children from Olnafirth Primary School go to secondary school in Brae High School Secondary Department. Olnafirth Primary School and Brae High School are only 5.08 miles apart, and although all children from Olnafirth will now require to be transported to school, instead of the current two, the longest single bus journey for any child is only 40 minutes. The transport links are good with most of the journey to school being along a main road. Transport to other suggested schools, Mossbank and Lunnasting, would take longer than this. The journey to Lunnasting Primary School for all the children from Olnafirth Primary School would, for a portion of the journey involve travelling over a single-track road.

For both Mossbank Primary School and Lunnasting Primary School as a receiving

school, children from Olnafirth Primary School would have to transfer school for secondary. Transfer to Brae High School Primary Department is surely an ideal option as it is the most accessible, and enables children not to have to make a transfer to a different school for their secondary education.

There are no catchment areas for nursery education, but Brae High School Primary Department remains the most popular choice for nursery education for children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area.

Of the fifteen children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area who currently do not attend Olnafirth Primary School, ten are at Brae High School Primary Department. It is by far the most requested alternative school for parents in the area seeking a placing request for their child. Moving all of the children to Brae High School Primary Department if Olnafirth Primary School closes therefore offers the opportunity to bring almost all of the children from the village together again in one school.

If, as a member of staff, you are also a member of the Parent Council, you can be involved in their response to the consultation so long as you are mindful of the Shetland Islands Council's Code of Conduct, and the General Teaching Council for Scotland's Code of Professionalism and Conduct (if you are a teacher).

As a class teacher you are responsible for the pastoral care of each child in your class, so you would listen to any parent who had concerns about their child's welfare, and if you then need support, you would ask for this from your line manager.

Required corrections to mistakes in the Proposal Paper were read out at each public meeting. They are also therefore now published on the Shetland Islands Council website and appear now in the consultation report at Section 20.

The Schools (Consultation) (Act) 2010, has a list of relevant consultees for each proposal. These include:

- the parents of the pupils of the affected schools;
- the parents of any children expected by Children's Services to attend any of the affected schools within two years of the date of the publication of the Proposal Paper.

An affected school includes the proposed receiving school, so that is why we had to send proposal papers to all the Anderson High School parents for the Skerries School Secondary Department proposal.

Meeting with Brae High School Primary Department Staff

Points Made

- How would a decision to alter a receiving school be made?
- Decision to alter receiving school to Lunnasting would be unfair on parents who have already submitted placing requests for their children to attend

Brae High School Primary Department.

- Financial benefit of moving children to Lunnasting Primary School would be negated as the pupil to teacher ratio would be much different to that at Brae High School Primary Department.
- Transport route to Brae is already in place to be built on and strengthen.
- One staff member felt this consultation was the “clearest cut” they had seen and did not divide the community to the same extent as previous consultations.
- Quality of roads between Brae and Voe meant fewer school days would be lost during winter months than if Lunnasting Primary School were to become the receiving school.
- Children would experience smooth transitions at Brae High School Primary Department and there would be a number of benefits of attending a 3-18 all-through school.
- How would the transition process be managed if the decision were made to close the Olnafirth Primary School?
- As Olnafirth Primary School is a feeder primary school to Brae High School, children already have a degree of familiarity with the Brae campus.
- Size of classes at Brae High School Primary Department gives the opportunity for good-sized peer groups.
- One member of staff wished to emphasise the need for effective transitions for children with additional support needs and to ensure there would be no adverse effects for children with additional support needs who already attended Brae.

Response

A proposal to alter the receiving school could be made during a consultation period. It would be viewed as a significant change to the proposal paper, and would require a corrected paper to be issued. Once publicised, a consultation would then be held on the matter and a decision taken after the consultation.

Children’s Services is not proposing to alter the proposed receiving school in this proposal. It intends to recommend that if approval is given to close Olnafirth Primary School that the children should attend Brae High School Primary Department.

There are still financial savings if the receiving school was Lunnasting Primary School as even with the addition of the Olnafirth Primary School children it would have a roll of less than seventy. Schools with rolls of less than seventy attract additional grant-aided expenditure from the Scottish Government.

If Olnafirth Primary School did close, a Transition Group would be set up immediately to work through all the concerns from parents, children and staff about the move. Through this Group, specific opportunities could be put in place for children who have previously attended Olnafirth Primary School to be together, and to share any worries with staff.

14. Education Scotland's Report

- 14.1 In line with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a Report was provided by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the Proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School. This Report is attached as Appendix B.
- 14.2 This section details the relevant points raised in the Report by Education Scotland and Children's Services response to these points.

Relevant Point

The Council needs to explain more clearly what educational benefits will accrue from the proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School.

Response

Building the Curriculum 3, published by the Scottish Government in 2008, gives the framework for all schools to follow in developing Curriculum for Excellence. Amongst the attributes and capacities which must be developed in each child are to:

- Learn independently and as part of a group;
- Relate to others and manage themselves;
- Communicate in different ways and in different settings;
- Work in partnership and in teams.

It is elements of these aspects of the requirements of the curriculum which, within a primary school where there are only a few children, and perhaps only one at a particular stage which can be more challenging. We know that all our staff do their utmost to fulfil absolutely all the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence, but with the limitations on the numbers available in the school, it is more challenging to secure these outcomes in the absolute best way possible. In 2014/15 Olnafirth Primary School is predicted to have seven Primary 1, one Primary 5, one Primary 6 and three Primary 7 children.

The Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, published in April 2013, considered the issue of the quality of education delivered in rural schools and made the following statement:

"Both Education Scotland's evidence and the Commission's visits to a wide range of rural schools confirmed that this process is more complex in small and very small rural schools where teachers are required to plan for a wider mixed age group in one composite class. Despite these challenges, there is clear evidence that there is no general difficulty in delivering Curriculum for Excellence in rural primary schools, including very small schools, and indeed it can work very well. The Commission noted evidence that rural schools can achieve the highest levels

of performance and outcomes, with a number of very small rural schools receiving very positive inspection reports, including the identification of sector leading practice.” (Page 21)

The Report goes on to say:

“Education Scotland did advise that meeting the different learning needs of a range of children at different ages and stages within one class in a very small school is difficult. Evidence from inspections of rural schools demonstrates that HM Inspectors frequently identify this as an area for improvement. In small rural schools where pupil numbers are low, opportunities for children to work collaboratively with peers of a similar age, stage and gender can be limited. Education Scotland’s evidence demonstrated that schools are sensitive to these issues and the overall quality of children and young people’s experiences is not diminished by these factors. (Page 21)

We know excellent high quality education is delivered in our small schools, and although Curriculum for Excellence is entirely able to be delivered to an equally high standard in a small school, for some aspects of it, delivery can be more challenging.

By transferring Olnafirth Primary School children to Brae High School Primary Department they will have easy access to a number of other children of their own age, who they can learn in groups with, form friendships with, play team games with, thus gaining more easily some of the key skills in Curriculum for Excellence of:

- Learn independently and as part of a group;
- Relate to others and manage themselves;
- Communicate in different ways and in different settings;
- Work in partnership and in teams.

Twelve of the children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area are already enrolled at Brae High School Primary Department, so this proposal has the potential to bring almost all of the children in the area together again for school.

Brae High School is traditionally where parents from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area access nursery education, and is still the most popular nursery for children from the area. Brae High School is also where children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area go for secondary education, from Secondary 1 to Secondary 6, so this proposal will eliminate one transition for all children from the area and two transitions for most.

Relevant Point

The Council needs to provide children and their parents with clearer information on how it will ensure health and safety with respect to travel and transport arrangements.

Response

If Olnafirth Primary School were to close, all the children in the area would be eligible for school transport, including those who are currently attending Brae High School Primary Department through placing requests.

In response to the concerns of parents in respect of selected children travelling on the existing secondary school bus, it is proposed that one vehicle transport of all the primary children from the Olnafirth catchment area to Brae High School Primary Department in the morning and from Brae High School Primary Department to the Olnafirth catchment area at the end of the school day. Pick-up times and pick-up points would be as follows:

- Dale at 0815
- Voe Hall at 0825
- Lower Voe at 0835
- Mulla at 0845
- Arrival at Brae at 0855

Therefore, departure at the end of the school day would be in line with a 1500 finish for all primary children at Brae High School Primary Department.

The estimated cost of this arrangement is £39,900. The original transport arrangements put forward in the proposal paper were an additional cost of £36,100.

The School Transport Policy makes it clear that children should be picked up from designated pick-up points. We do know that local circumstances, including the size of a vehicle and where it has to turn, may mean that some children do get picked up from nearer their home than the designated pick-up point.

Outline plans to improve the car park at Brae High School Primary Department have been drawn up. These will now be progressed. However it is acknowledged that as all the children from the Olnafirth catchment area would become eligible for transport were the school to close, that would mean a reduction in the number of cars dropping off and picking up children at Brae.

It is the responsibility of those who are awarded school transport contracts to take all reasonable steps to ensure the security, safety, dignity and comfort of those children in their care. The vehicles used must be suitable for the purpose and drivers must be Protecting Vulnerable Groups checked, adequately trained and qualified.

Drivers of home to school transport bear much of the responsibility for the safety of children. However, parents/carers remain responsible for the behaviour of their children and they should encourage their children to follow the instructions of the driver.

Children are supervised at Brae High School Primary Department from 8.40 am. Transport costs are based on existing contract prices, as those current contracts have been extended until March 2014.

Arrangements for adverse winter weather have not been included in the proposal as these are standard for all our schools. A Head Teacher can close their own school if they have concerns about the weather conditions. This can be done in advance of a school day starting, or an early close. The Director of Children's Services can take decisions for schools across the authority again either in advance of a school day starting, or an early close. There are well-rehearsed communication links from central staff to Head Teachers to advise them of weather

conditions, as well as all our Head Teachers having direct contact with their own transport operators.

Relevant Point

Parents expressed concern about the accuracy of school capacity, the description of the school building and school resources, and the accuracy of the projected savings.

Response

The reference to the capacity of Olnafirth Primary School in the Proposal Paper is to its physical capacity. This is identified as 125, and is based on the figure of 2.1 square metres per child. This figure is to indicate the level of the overall space in the building which is currently being made use of. The more efficiently a school building is used, the more the cost per child for that school can be reduced, as certain building costs are fixed, no matter how well used it is.

Taking account of the Points made by Olnafirth Parent Council that the school only has four classrooms, we can agree to consider the capacity as 100 based on the maximum size of a composite class which is twenty-five. This would mean that the school is currently operating at 8% capacity.

Olnafirth Parent Council also argue that due to the Admissions Policy, the maximum capacity of the school is actually nineteen, as this would reflect the projected roll, class sizes and the budget set for the school. However it is still the case, and would be for any school in Shetland, that if all the children in a catchment area wished to attend the school, that they would be accommodated in their local school. For example in August 2013, we provided an additional teacher in Hamnavoe Primary School and in Nesting Primary School due to the increased roll resulting from the numbers of children in the catchment area increasing. In the school session 2013/14 Olnafirth Primary School should have twenty-five children. If all of these children wished to attend Olnafirth Primary School they would be accommodated.

If we take this figure then, the maximum that Olnafirth Primary School could be operating at, at present, if all the children who could attend the school did attend it would still only be operating at 25% capacity.

Whichever way it is calculated, there remains significant under-used classroom space in Olnafirth Primary School which is increasing the cost per child. The physical capacity of Brae High School Primary Department is that it can support 160 children. There is no evidence in current projections for the department that it will get near this number. The secondary department is adjacent to the primary department at Brae High School and should it ever be required there may be scope there to utilise accommodation better.

School Building

There were errors in the proposal paper relating to the school building and its resources. These have been corrected in Section 20 (Page 81) of this Consultation Report. Section 20 also explains what action Children's Services took in response to

the inaccuracies, which were pointed out.

In the proposal paper the dates given for the School building was for the old building which is not the current school building. The old building had one classroom, not two as stated. The current school building was actually built in the early nineteen sixties.

In the proposal paper at 4.21 (page 17) it states that Olnafirth Primary School does not have a library. It also states in paragraph 4.21 (page 17) that Olnafirth Primary School children visit Brae High School once a week for a nine-month block. The children actually visit for a six-week block.

In the proposal paper at paragraph 4.22 (page 17) it states that there is no disabled access to the hut and that disabled persons can access the school through the main door as a ramp has been installed. There are actually no disabled-access problems to the hut as it does have a ramp in place.

These matters were corrected at the start of the two public meetings held in respect of the proposal at Voe Public Hall on 29 May 2013, and Brae High School on 30 May 2013. The transcripts of these public meetings have now been published on the Shetland Islands Council website.

Accuracy of Projected Savings

The specific challenges to the financial savings set out in the Proposal Paper were in relation to:

- What lay underneath the catering and cleaning costs;
- Why the recharges were so high;
- An error in the calculation of transport costs of trips to Brae High School for swimming; and
- The impact of grant-aided expenditure for small schools (70 children or less) on the savings.

Explanations for all of these issues have been provided in this Consultation Report in the response the Financial Issues section, and are also detailed here for completeness.

The cost of the cleaning service at Olnafirth is made up of a part-time cleaner working twenty-one hours per week, term time only. The cleaning service is part of Children's Services, and as such, the post is graded according to Single Status terms and conditions. These would apply whether the post was held directly within the school or within the central service. In addition to this, budget provision of £400 is included for cleaning materials.

The cost of the catering service is made up of a part-time cook working twenty-five hours per week, term time only. The Catering service is part of the Children's Services, and as such the post is graded according to Single Status terms and conditions. These would apply whether the post was held directly within the school or within the central service. In addition to this, budget provision of £3,233 has been included for meal supplies.

The hours in the cleaning and catering posts are established posts, where it is very difficult to reduce hours. The hours in the respective posts relate to a time when the school had many more children.

The Quality Assurance recharge is made up of two elements – a percentage for the core work of the service, which amounts to 0.81% for each primary school. This reflects the statutory responsibility of the service which does not change whether there is one child or a hundred children in a school, and an element based on pupil numbers, which for Olnafirth is 0.07%. The estimate for 2013/14 was set in January 2013 when numbers at Olnafirth totalled thirteen; therefore the reduction in children will be reflected in the actual amount recharged to the school at the end of the financial year. However, this will have no impact on the level of savings estimated from the closure of Olnafirth Primary School, as this cost will be transferred across the school estate. Since 2008/09 the quality assurance team has been reduced by 3.0 full-time equivalents, and staffing reductions have also been made within the administrative support team, through efficiency savings and to reflect the reduced school estate following the closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and Uyeasound Primary School. The closure of Olnafirth Primary School alone would not generate a reduction in the central team, however staffing is continually reviewed and opportunities to reduce the work force through voluntary redundancy and retirement are taken as they arise.

Transport costs have been reviewed, and the updated figures have been included in the savings summary. Transport costs cannot be inflated for future years, all costs have been included at current prices, in order for us to compare like for like.

The amount included for grant-aided expenditure (GAE) lost as a result of the closure of Olnafirth Primary School was calculated as follows, using the Scottish Government's 'Green Book' for Grant-aided Expenditure Local Government Finance Settlement 2012-2015:

2013/14 'Green Book' GAE allocation	£1.231M	
Number of primary pupils in Shetland in small schools	520	
	£	
2013/14 'Green Book' GAE allocation per pupil in small school	2367	(£1.231M/520 pupils)
GAE lost as a result of the closure of Olnafirth Primary School based on 13 pupils at the date of preparation of the proposal paper	30775	(£2,367 x 13 pupils)
Revised GAE loss figure based on current 8 pupils at Olnafirth Primary School	18938	(£2,367 x 8 pupils)

Note (from Scottish Government's 'Green Book' for Grant-aided Expenditure Local Government Finance Settlement 2012-2015):

Pupil numbers: 2011 based pupil projections

Percentage of pupils in small schools: pupils in primary schools of less than 70, in settlements in Scottish Government urban/rural classifications 5 and 6, as a percentage of all pupils averaged over two years

The statement in Paragraph 4.21(Page 17) of the Proposal Paper that children visit Brae High School weekly for a nine month block each year” is incorrect. Olnafirth Primary School children attend Brae High School for swimming for only six weeks therefore the saving would only be £480. This has been reflected in the updated financial information provided here in the consultation report.

Proposal to Close Olnafirth Primary School – Revised Estimated Savings

	2013/14
	Budget
	£
Olnafirth Primary School Total Cost	174,375
Additional Costs at Brae High School Primary Department	472
Savings at Mossbank Primary School	(927)
Costs Transferred Across the Estate	13,334
Residual Property Costs	5,901
Savings on Transport Costs for Current Visits to Brae	(480)
Revised Additional Transport Costs	39,900
Impact on Grant-aided Expenditure (GAE)	18,936
Revised Total Saving	97,239

The reduction in the loss of grant-aided expenditure, due to the fall in the roll at Olnafirth Primary School for 2013/14, increases the potential savings from the proposed closure of Olnafirth Primary School. Even by adding in the revised transport costs and correcting the error about weekly trips to Brae High School for swimming, the estimated savings have increased from £91,309 to £97,239.

Relevant Point

The Council needs to provide stakeholders with further information on the likely social effects of the proposed closure on the community.

Response

Taking on board the depth of previous community concerns about the impact a rural school closure might have in Shetland, Children’s Services commissioned a

Socio-Economic Study to be carried out on the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area.

Steve Westbrook, Economist, Nairn, in partnership with Sandy Anderson, were commissioned by the Director of Children's Services, to undertake a Socio-Economic Study on the potential impacts on the community of Voe of the Proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School, should it go forward. The full text of the study can be found as Appendix I.

The terms of reference for the study were to:

- provide information on the economy of Olnafirth Primary School's catchment area (i.e. employment, business output, etc);
- identify the workforce requirements of businesses based in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area;
- identify the direct and other impacts of closing the Olnafirth Primary School;
- identify the potential impacts relating to families leaving Voe as a result of the school's closure;
- investigate possible mitigating factors should the school close, such as the prospect for additional private and public sector employment in Voe.

The main conclusions from the Report are that:

- The net annual savings from closing Olnafirth Primary School are estimated by Shetland Islands Council to be some £91,000;
- There are 158 normally resident households in the school's catchment area, but there are also a number of properties rented by people not permanently resident who are working at Sullom Voe;
- Voe has a small percentage of homes in the social rented sector;
- Voe has an attractive location in Shetland, being a rural community well served by the road and transport network and having easy access to major employment centres;
- The majority of the Voe population who work full time have jobs elsewhere in the North Mainland or Lerwick;
- Important employers in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area (apart from the school) are the Voe Bakery, the Tagon Stores and the Pierhead Restaurant and Bar;
- Employment in Voe itself is very limited;
- The Olnafirth Primary School catchment area contributes some £2.5 million to the Shetland economy;
- Household income in Voe is estimated at some £6.5 million;
- There are currently 21 primary school age children in Voe, of whom 8 are attending Olnafirth school and 13 other primary schools – Brae, Lunnasting, and Mossbank [These figures differ from the number Children's Services has on its management information system];
- The direct impact of closing the school would be the loss of 3 part-time jobs held by people who live in the school's catchment area, although there would be a greater loss to the North Mainland;
- Some parents are clearly concerned at the possibility of the school

<p>closing, and while we found no evidence that any would immediately leave the village, the lack of a primary school would make the village less attractive for families moving to or within Shetland;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without a school, it is possible that homes that become available in Voe would increasingly be taken by older people and transient workers wishing to rent while maintaining a family home elsewhere rather than by families; • Land availability for new housing is limited; • The school building could be connected to a 100MB fibre optic cable, which would make it an attractive option for use by the Council for remote staff working, a community based social enterprise, and / or local small businesses, or as a rural office base for a development such as the proposed Viking Wind Farm.
<p>Relevant Point</p> <p>The Council needs to ensure that it has fully explored and explained the reasons for not pursuing any alternative options.</p>
<p>Response</p> <p>As outlined in the Proposal Paper, over the last decade Children's Services has conducted a number of reviews and consultations with the key aim of providing an education model for Shetland that is sustainable and ensures best value in the use of public funds. The reviews have seen the following changes to the school estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department (June 2011); • closure of Uyeasound Primary School (December 2011). <p>Children's Services has also implemented the following alternatives to school closures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing expenditure on In-Service training; • reducing numbers of central staff; • reducing money available for supply; • reducing money available for Continuing Professional Development; • ending knitting instruction; • charging for instrumental instruction; • increasing charges e.g. for school meals; • reducing operating costs in schools, particularly resources available for learning materials and equipment ; • moving to national staffing levels in primary; • reducing numbers of teaching staff in secondary; • reducing numbers of Catering and Cleaning staff; • reducing teacher input in nursery; • securing more efficient use of resources for children and young people with Additional Support Needs; • reducing music instruction; • reducing Parent Council Clerks' honorariums; • reducing school building maintenance.

The savings measures already implemented within Schools/Quality Assurance section of Children's Services, as detailed above, have resulted in a reduction in expenditure between 2009/10 and 2012/13 of over £5 million.

Children's Services has also in the past considered shared management for small schools when it has proven difficult to recruit to a teaching Head Teacher post. This has been possible when an opportunity arises through a vacancy and through agreement with Parent Councils. Olnafirth Primary School is currently in a shared management arrangement with Mossbank Primary School. The shared management model Children's Services operates does not save money as, by local agreement, each school in a shared management arrangement is allocated a principal teacher, and the principal teacher is allocated management time which in turn must be covered. The Olnafirth Parent Council in its response to the statutory consultation suggested a viable alternative would be to revert to the model of a teaching head teacher for Olnafirth Primary School. This option would save approximately £10,100 in teaching staff costs in Olnafirth Primary School. However, savings may not be realised for a period of three years from a change like this as staff salaries are conserved. Indeed, at the outset, this could incur additional expenditure if the existing head teacher in the shared management arrangement was successful in being appointed to one of the teaching head teacher posts, as the salary for the shared headship is greater.

The spare capacity in Olnafirth Primary School would not be resolved as there is no opportunity to address fixed costs. It is hard to see how the roll in Olnafirth Primary School could be increased with the number of respondents to the consultation who indicated that no matter whether Olnafirth Primary School closed or not, they would still prefer their children to be educated in a bigger school, where there were larger classes and more children at each stage of education to give a reasonable peer group.

Since the start of the Blueprint for Education process in 2007, three community-wide consultations have taken place in Shetland looking to consider the future of school education and the number of schools we should have. Two of these – in 2010 and 2012 have asked specifically about school closures. Olnafirth Primary School Parent Council participated in both those discussions, so they have been involved in discussions about alternatives to school closures.

The comprehensive list at the start of this section illustrates the amount of work Children's Services has undertaken over the past ten years, to avoid considering school closures. We still have a further £3.268 million to take out of the budget for school education by the end of the financial year 2016/17. We cannot take savings across the board further without impacting on the quality of education we can offer the children in Shetland including those who attend Olnafirth Primary School. We need to consider the spare capacity in our school estate, and how we can make changes to that to be more cost-effective and still protect the quality of education we offer.

There are clear educational benefits to accrue from this proposal of:

- better opportunities for children to learn together and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
- children having more regular access to specialist classes and staff;

- transition arrangements being able to be improved for children from the Olnafirth catchment area;
- bringing more children from the catchment area together in one school for their learning.

Children's Services believes that Olnafirth Primary School roll is now unlikely to recover. The statutory consultation clearly told us that there are many parents in the area who will not put their children to the school because they would like them educated in a bigger environment with a larger peer group. There are due to be seven Primary 1 children in Olnafirth Primary School in 2014/15. In that year, there are then no more children until Primary 5. The remainder of the school roll will be made up of one Primary 5 child, one Primary 6 child and three Primary 7 children.

This trend is very difficult to reverse when Brae High School Primary Department is very close by and transport links are good, Brae High School Primary Department is where most children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area attend nursery, and Brae High School is their associated school for secondary.

Taking account of all of these factors, and especially that there are educational benefits to accrue from the proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School and transfer the children to Brae High School, Children's Services is not pursuing any alternative options.

15. Review of the Proposal to discontinue education at Olnafirth Primary School

- 15.1 Children's Services has reviewed the Proposal taking into account relevant written and oral representations and the report from Education Scotland.

16. Integrated Impact Assessment

- 16.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and then reviewed in the light of the responses received during the statutory consultation period. A summary of the findings of the assessment is presented below. The full text of the Integrated Impact Assessment can be found as Appendix H.
- 16.2 There were sixty-four possible areas/groups assessed for impact. The impact from the intended outcome has been recorded as either:
- Positive;
 - Negative;
 - Neutral with no impact;
 - Neutral because of both positive and negative impacts.

A note was given for each answer. Further mitigation was then recorded for all Negative impacts.

16.3 In the Integrated Impact Assessment for the proposed closure of Olnafirth Primary School the intended outcome of school closure will have:

- seven Positive impacts
- seven Negative impacts
- forty-seven groups/areas experiencing no impacts. These are recorded in the document as “Neutral – n/a”.
- three groups/areas experiencing both positive and negative impacts. These are recorded in the document as “Neutral”, with Notes given to explain both the Positive and the Negative impact, with the Negative impacts receiving further mitigation

16.4 The Positive impacts can be summarised as follows.

The intended outcome has educational benefits of access to larger numbers of children with whom the Olnafirth Children can develop active learning opportunities, work and play in teams and socialise. Olnafirth Primary School children will have access to a wider peer group and a larger number of children with whom to socialise, and make friends with. There will be less energy consumption.

None of the operating costs required to run a school will be required if the school closes. Failure of the Council to reduce budgets will cause reputational damage. Closure will make an ongoing saving in Shetland Islands Council revenue budgets. One suggested future possible use of the school building is as a rural office base for Viking Energy, which offers much economic potential to the area (including its shop, bakery and restaurant). Capital spend would be required in future years to maintain the school.

16.5 The Negative impacts can be summarised as follows.

Olnafirth children will not be in their communities for as long as they are now. Some respondents feel that public access to the Voe Show will be affected. Currently there are events held in the school which community members attend. There are fifteen children who could attend Olnafirth Primary School currently who are placing request to other schools. Twelve of these attend Brae High School Primary, the proposed receiving school. Respondents feel that if Olnafirth Primary School closes, families will leave and this will affect trade the local pub/restaurant, the shop and the bakery. Children will no longer be able to walk or cycle to school. There will be more transport. An extra minibus is likely to be needed to transport children to Brae High School Primary Department. If Olnafirth Primary School closes, Olnafirth people who have fought to keep it open will feel their views have been ignored. Closing schools is not popular in affected communities. The closure will result in the loss of some part-time public sector jobs in the area.

16.6 Mitigation for Reducing Negative Impacts can be summarised as follows.

The receiving school is very close to the Olnafirth community, and Children's Services feel that close monitoring by relevant community planning partners will determine whether or not this concern comes to fruition. There will be similar opportunities at the receiving school and, as so many of the local children already attend Brae High School Primary Department, this change could potentially bring community members together. In line with the new Community Plan, partners will work with community groups to ensure they are involved in local matters where they can make a difference.

Any potential sale of the school and surrounding land can have the caveat of public right of access to the play park and the Voe Show field. Olnafirth children will have a short journey time home, and can still access community facilities like the play park and shop every day. Shetland Islands Council relevant policies for redundancy, redeployment, transfer and retirement will be used to support affected staff into positive futures. Every opportunity will be taken to merge with existing school transport, and public transport where this becomes feasible. Curriculum for Excellence requires all schools to provide primary children with two hours of physical activity each week.

17. Socio-Economic Study

- 17.1 In response to previous concerns expressed during statutory consultation periods about the potential socio-economic impacts closure proposals may have on rural communities in Shetland, Children's Services commissioned a socio-economic impact study to be carried out on the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area.
- 17.2 Steve Westbrook, Economist, Nairn, in partnership with Sandy Anderson, was commissioned by the Director of Children's Services to undertake a Socio-Economic Study on the potential impacts on the catchment area for Olnafirth Primary School of the Proposal to close the school, should it go forward. The full text of the study can be found as Appendix I.

18. Health Impact Assessment

- 18.1 Children's Services commissioned a Health Impact Assessment to be undertaken on the potential impacts of the proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School. The Health Impact Assessment was conducted by NHS Shetland in June 2013.
- 18.2 A Health Impact Assessment aims to identify and consider actual and potential health and equality impacts on a population. It also presents ways to minimise or mitigate negative impacts.
- 18.3 The Health Impact Assessment was conducted using the following information sources: review of Blueprint for Education documentation, review of Community Development data; survey of local community; and general interest-based literature research in line with concerns raised. A Health Impact Assessment Tool was used and the findings and recommendations presented.
- 18.4 The main health impacts identified which will be further considered and mitigated where possible are as follows:
- In relation to the school children: safety concerns linked to transport, reduction in the physical activity levels and social interaction;
 - In relation to the local community: potential reduction in local household incomes, consideration of use of school building.
- 18.5 The full Health Impact Assessment can be found at Appendix G.

19. Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 19.1 Shetland Islands Council as responsible Authority carried out under Section 8 of The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 a Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway screening of the Blueprint for Education.
- 19.2 The determination by Shetland Islands Council under Section 8(1) of the Act is that the Blueprint for Education is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.
- 19.3 Before making this determination, Shetland Islands Council sent a summary of its views as to whether or not the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects to Consultative Authorities (Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency) via the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway. Shetland Islands Council noted that the Consultation Authorities agreed with the view that the Blueprint for Education was unlikely to have significant environmental effects and made the determination to that effect under Section 8 (1) of the Act. In making that determination Children's Services applied criteria in Schedule 2 of the Act.
- 19.4 Shetland Islands Council notified the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway Manager and the Consultative Authorities of this decision. A public notice was also published in the local media on Friday 15 April 2011.
- 19.5 Further information and the responses of the Consultative Authorities can be found at www.shetland.gov.uk.
- 19.6 A copy of the Screening Determination is found at Appendix J.

20. Omissions or Inaccuracies

- 20.1 A number of inaccuracies in the Proposal Paper have been brought to the attention of Children's Services both during the consultation and in written responses. Children's Services accepts that a number of inaccuracies were made. In accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the details and the actions of Shetland Islands Council will be set out here.
- 20.2 In the proposal paper the dates given for the School building was for the old building which is not the current school building. The old building had one classroom, not two as stated. The current school building was actually built in the early nineteen-sixties.
- 20.3 In the proposal paper at 4.21 (page 17) it states that Olnafirth Primary School does not have a library. It also states in paragraph 4.21 (page 17) that Olnafirth Primary School children visit Brae High School once a week for a nine-month block. The children actually visit for a six-week block.
- 20.4 In the proposal paper at paragraph 4.22 (page 17) it states that there is no disabled access to the hut and that disabled persons can access the School through the main door as a ramp has been installed. There are actually no disabled-access problems to the hut as it does have a ramp in place.

- 20.5 These matters were corrected at the start of the two public meetings held in respect of the proposal at Voe Public Hall on 29 May 2013 and Brae High School on 30 May 2013. The transcripts of these public meetings have now been published on the Shetland Islands Council website.
- 20.6 Two sentences were also omitted from the proposal paper's 'Other Issues' section. The sentences are:
"This review will also include consideration of other factors, such as health, social exclusion and rurality, as an integrated impact assessment. This review will build on previous work, such as the Blueprint for Education Health Impact Assessment."
- 20.7 In addition, the Proposal Paper at 4.21(Page 17) indicates that Olnafirth Primary School children attend Brae High School once a week for nine months of the year to access the library there. This is incorrect. They attend Brae High School for one six-week block to go swimming. This total amount of savings which would be gained here is £480, not £2,880 as indicated in the Proposal Paper. This is explained in full in the Financial Response section of this Consultation Report.

21. Compliance with Section 12 of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

- 21.1 Throughout this consultation the Children's Services has given special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010.
- 21.2 Olnafirth Primary School is designated as a rural school. In terms of Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Shetland Islands Council has given regard to the three required factors as follows:

Factor
Any viable alternative to closure
Response
<p>As outlined in the Proposal Paper, over the last decade Children's Services has conducted a number of reviews and consultations with the key aim of providing an education model for Shetland that is sustainable and ensures best value in the use of public funds. The reviews have seen the following changes to the school estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department (June 2011); • closure of Uyeasound Primary School (December 2011). <p>Children's Services has also implemented the following alternatives to school closures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing expenditure on In-Service training; • reducing numbers of central staff; • reducing money available for supply; • reducing money available for Continuing Professional Development;

- ending knitting instruction;
- charging for instrumental instruction;
- increasing charges e.g. for school meals;
- reducing operating costs in schools, particularly resources available for learning materials and equipment ;
- moving to national staffing levels in primary;
- reducing numbers of teaching staff in secondary;
- reducing numbers of Catering and Cleaning staff;
- reducing teacher input in nursery;
- securing more efficient use of resources for children and young people with Additional Support Needs;
- reducing music instruction;
- reducing Parent Council Clerks' honorariums;
- reducing school building maintenance.

The savings measures already implemented within Schools/Quality Assurance section of Children's Services, as detailed above, have resulted in a reduction in expenditure between 2009/10 and 2012/13 of over £5 million.

Children's Services has also in the past considered shared management for small schools when it has proven difficult to recruit to a teaching Head Teacher post. This has been possible when an opportunity arises through a vacancy and through agreement with Parent Councils. Olnafirth Primary School is currently in a shared management arrangement with Mossbank Primary School. The shared management model Children's Services operates does not save money, as, by local agreement, each school in a shared management arrangement is allocated a principal teacher, and the principal teacher is allocated management time which in turn must be covered. The Olnafirth Parent Council in its response to the statutory consultation suggested a viable alternative would be to revert to the model of a teaching head teacher for Olnafirth Primary School. This option would save approximately £10,100 in teaching staff costs in Olnafirth Primary School. However, savings may not be realised for a period of three years from a change like this as staff salaries are conserved. Indeed, at the outset, this could incur additional expenditure if the existing head teacher in the shared management arrangement was successful in being appointed to one of the teaching head teacher posts, as the salary for the shared headship is greater.

The spare capacity in Olnafirth Primary School would not be resolved as there is no opportunity to address fixed costs. It is hard to see how the roll in Olnafirth Primary School could be increased with the number of respondents to the consultation who indicated that no matter whether Olnafirth Primary School closed or not, they would still prefer their children to be educated in a bigger school.

Since the start of the Blueprint for Education process in 2007, three community-wide consultations have taken place in Shetland looking to consider the future of school education and the number of school we should have. Two of these – in 2010 and 2012 have asked specifically about school closures. Olnafirth Primary School Parent Council participated in both those discussion, so they have been involved in discussions about alternatives to school closures.

The comprehensive list at the start of this section illustrates the amount of work Children's Services has undertaken over the past ten years to avoid considering school closures. We still have a further £3.268 million to take out of the budget for

school education by the end of the financial year 2016/17. We cannot take savings across the board further without impacting on the quality of education we can offer the children in Shetland including those who attend Olnafirth Primary School. We need to consider the spare capacity in our school estate, and how we can make changes to that to be more cost-effective and still protect the quality of education we offer.

Olnafirth Primary School roll is unlikely to recover. The statutory consultation clearly told us that there are many parents in the area who will not put their children to the school because they would like them educated in a bigger environment with a larger peer group. This trend is very difficult to reverse when Brae High School Primary Department is very near and is along a main road.

Factor

The likely effect on the local community in consequence of the Proposal (if implemented) with particular reference to:

1. The sustainability of the community
2. The availability of the school's premises and its other facilities for use by the community

Response

1. The implication of a school closure cannot be addressed in isolation. There are a number of complex socio-economic issues that influence rural areas, such as Voe and its surrounding area (the catchment area for Olnafirth Primary School). These issues are addressed as fully as is possible at this time by Children's Services in the response to the Impact on the Community Concerns section of this Consultation Report.

Taking on board the depth of previous community concerns about the impact a rural school closure might have in Shetland, Children's Services commissioned a Socio-Economic Study to be carried out on the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area.

Steve Westbrook, Economist, Nairn, in partnership with Sandy Anderson, were commissioned by the Director of Children's Services, to undertake a Socio-Economic Study on the potential impacts on the community of Voe of the Proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School, should it go forward. The full text of the study can be found as Appendix I.

The terms of reference for the study were to:

- provide information on the economy of Olnafirth Primary School's catchment area (i.e. employment, business output, etc);
- identify the workforce requirements of businesses based in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area;
- identify the direct and other impacts of closing the Olnafirth Primary School;
- identify the potential impacts relating to families leaving Voe as a result of the school's closure;
- investigate possible mitigating factors should the school close, such as the prospect for additional private and public sector employment in Voe.

The main conclusions from the Report are that:

- The net annual savings from closing Olnafirth Primary School are estimated by Shetland Islands Council to be some £91,000;
- There are 158 normally resident households in the school's catchment area, but there are also a number of properties rented by people not permanently resident who are working at Sullom Voe;
- Voe has a small percentage of homes in the social rented sector;
- Voe has an attractive location in Shetland, being a rural community well served by the road and transport network and having easy access to major employment centres;
- The majority of the Voe population who work full time have jobs elsewhere in the North Mainland or Lerwick;
- Important employers in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area (apart from the school) are the Voe Bakery, the Tagon Stores and the Pierhead Restaurant and Bar;
- Employment in Voe itself is very limited;
- The Olnafirth Primary School catchment area contributes some £2.5 million to the Shetland economy;
- Household income in Voe is estimated at some £6.5 million;
- There are currently 21 primary school age children in Voe, of whom 8 are attending Olnafirth school and 13 other primary schools – Brae, Lunnasting, and Mossbank [These figures differ from the number Children's Services has on its management information system];
- The direct impact of closing the school would be the loss of 3 part-time jobs held by people who live in the school's catchment area, although there would be a greater loss to the North Mainland;
- Some parents are clearly concerned at the possibility of the school closing, and while we found no evidence that any would immediately leave the village, the lack of a primary school would make the village less attractive for families moving to or within Shetland;
- Without a school, it is possible that homes that become available in Voe would increasingly be taken by older people and transient workers wishing to rent while maintaining a family home elsewhere rather than by families;
- Land availability for new housing is limited;
- The school building could be connected to a 100MB fibre optic cable, which would make it an attractive option for use by the Council for remote staff working, a community based social enterprise, and / or local small businesses, or as a rural office base for a development such as the proposed Viking Wind Farm.

2. If Olnafirth Primary School were to close, the Proposal Paper at 6.12 (Page29) suggests it could be retained to support the sustainability of the North Mainland. One suggestion is its use as a hub for remote working for Shetland Islands Council, or it could be let for local businesses. The socio-economic study in its conclusions set out above also recognises this potential.

Factor

The likely effect caused by any different travelling arrangements that may be required in consequence of the Proposal (if implemented) with reference in particular to:

1. The effect caused by such travelling arrangements including (in particular), that on the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities and any environmental impact;
2. The travelling arrangements are those to and from the school of (and for) the school's pupils and staff and any other users of the school's facilities.

Response

Currently six of the eight children who attend Olnafirth Primary School are able to walk or cycle to school. If Olnafirth Primary School closes and the children transfer to Brae High School Primary Department, then they will all require school transport. The journey for most is relatively short, and for most of the way is on a main trunk route which is well maintained and gritted as a priority in the winter. The maximum single journey time for a child in the catchment area will be 40 minutes. Most will have a much shorter journey.

In response to the concerns of parents in respect of selected children travelling on the existing secondary school bus, it is proposed that one vehicle transport all the primary children from the Olnafirth catchment area to Brae High School Primary Department in the morning and from Brae High School Primary Department to the Olnafirth catchment area at the end of the school day. Pick-up times and pick-up points would be as follows:

- Dale at 0815
- Voe Hall at 0825
- Lower Voe at 0835
- Mulla at 0845
- Arrival at Brae at 0855

Therefore, departure at the end of the school day would be in line with a 1500 finish for all primary children at Brae High School Primary Department.

The estimated cost of this arrangement is £39,900. The original transport arrangements put forward in the proposal paper were an additional cost of £36,100.

The School Transport Policy makes it clear that children should be picked up from designated pick-up points. We do know that local circumstances, including the size of a vehicle and where it has to turn, may mean that some children do get picked up from nearer their home than the designated pick-up point.

Outline plans to improve the car park at Brae High School Primary Department have been drawn up. These will now be progressed. However it is acknowledged that as all the children from the Olnafirth catchment area would become eligible for transport were the school to close, that would mean a reduction in the number of cars dropping off and picking up children at Brae.

It is the responsibility of those who are awarded school transport contracts to take all reasonable steps to ensure the security, safety, dignity and comfort of those children in their care. The vehicles used must be suitable for the purpose and drivers must be Protecting Vulnerable Groups checked, adequately trained and qualified.

Drivers of home to school transport bear much of the responsibility for the safety of children. However, parents/carers remain responsible for the behaviour of their children and they should encourage their children to follow the instructions of the driver.

Children are supervised at Brae High School Primary Department from 8.40 am. Transport costs are based on existing contract prices, as those current contracts have been extended until March 2014.

Environmental Impact

Shetland Islands Council as the Responsible Authority carried out under Section 8 of The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, a Strategic Environmental Assessment screening of the Blueprint for Education.

The determination by Shetland Islands Council under Section 8(1) of the Act is that the Blueprint for Education is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

Before making this determination, Shetland Islands Council sent a summary of its views as to whether or not the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects to Consultative Authorities (Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency) via the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway. Shetland Islands Council noted that the Consultation Authorities agreed with the view that the Blueprint for Education was unlikely to have significant environmental effects and made the determination to that effect under Section 8 (1) of the Act. In making that determination Children's Services applied criteria in Schedule 2 of the Act.

This assessment remains pertinent to this proposal and therefore does not need to be updated.

22. Representations to the Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15 (4) of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

- 22.1 The Scottish Ministers have six weeks to decide whether or not they are going to issue a call-in notice to Children's Services. The six weeks begins on the day Shetland Islands Council takes their final decision to implement a Closure Proposal.
- 22.2 There is a three-week period during which anyone can make representations to the Scottish Ministers requesting that they call in Shetland Islands Council's decision. This three-week period begins on the day Shetland Islands Council takes their final decision to implement a Closure Proposal.
- 22.3 Therefore, anyone who wishes to make representations to Scottish Ministers can do so until 31 October 2013. The Scottish Ministers will have until 21 November 2013 to take a decision on the call-in of the Closure Proposal.

- 22.4 If anyone would like to make a representation to Scottish Ministers requesting them to call-in a local authority decision to close a school then they are asked that they please send an email, clearly setting out which of the criteria they believe are grounds for the case to be called in, and provide specific evidence to support their request, to the following addresses: schoolclosure@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

or post to: The Scottish Government, School Infrastructure Unit, 2A (South), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ.

- 22.5 There is a section of the Scottish Government website which includes this information and the process etc:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/Buildings/changestoschoolestate

- 22.6 Shetland Islands Council cannot therefore implement its final decision until the six-week period has elapsed, unless Scottish Ministers have earlier informed the Local Authority that they do not intend to call-in the decision.

23. Conclusion

- 23.1 In recognition of the importance of school education to communities in Shetland, the required Refresh of Blueprint for Education involved further informal consultation across Shetland during the summer of 2012. This was in addition to the information collected through extensive community-wide informal consultations carried out in 2008 and 2010. All our consultations have endeavoured to share with stakeholders the challenges Shetland Islands Council faces in trying to secure a sustainable school estate for the future whilst continuing to deliver high quality education. This aim has even greater focus in 2013 with the financial position Shetland Islands Council faces and the resultant target savings Children's Services must make to meet these targets. It is Shetland Islands Council policy, through the Medium Term Financial Plan, that Children's Services saves a further £3.268 million over the next three years. Almost all of this money is to come from the Blueprint for Education proposals.
- 23.2 Formal proposals were developed from the outcomes of all the informal consultations and on 20 September 2012 Shetland Islands Council agreed a Statement for Education in Shetland 2012-17; Commitments for Education in Shetland 2012-17 and a Plan for delivering these. The Plan contained a number of proposals which require Children's Services, under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to undertake a number of statutory consultations. This proposal to discontinue education at Olnafirth Primary School is one of these consultations.
- 23.3 Throughout this consultation, Children's Services has given special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 23.4 The statutory consultation process was robust and provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to identify key issues of concern. These issues have been fully considered and Children's Service's response is detailed in earlier sections of this report.

- 23.5 The issue of an alternative receiving school for the proposal was raised during the statutory consultation. Some respondents including the Olnafirth Parent Council did not want Olnafirth Primary School to close, but, if it did, they wanted Lunnasting Primary School considered as the receiving school. This issue was further discussed during the consultation period and other respondents felt this view was not representative of the majority of parents' views in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area.
- 23.6 Children's Services has given due consideration to this option and are continuing to recommend Brae High School Primary Department as the receiving school should Olnafirth Primary School close. This decision is based on:
- The excellent transport links between Voe and Brae, and the relatively short journey time for children, compared to travel to Lunnasting Primary School;
 - The fact that most parents from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment still opt for Brae High School Primary Department for nursery education;
 - The fact that, of the 15 placing requests there are currently out of Olnafirth Primary School, 12 of these are to Brae High School Primary Department and only two are to Lunnasting Primary School
 - The fact that Brae High School is Olnafirth Primary School's associated school for secondary education.
- 23.7 To ensure we fulfilled the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 in their fullest regard, we commissioned a socio-economic study on this proposal and a health impact assessment. We also carried out an Integrated Impact Assessment.
- 23.8 The Standards in Schools (Scotland) etc Act 2000 requires local authorities *"to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential"*.
- 23.9 Education Scotland visited Olnafirth Primary School to speak to parents, children and staff. They had the opportunity to view the proposal paper and all written responses.
- 23.10 In summary, the report by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal recognises:
- that there are potential benefits to the children directly affected by the proposal and more widely across Shetland Islands Council;
 - that children would have better opportunities for learning together and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
 - that children would have more regular access to specialist classes and staff;
 - that transition arrangements have the potential to be improved further with this proposal;
 - that the Proposal has the potential to contribute Shetland Islands Council efforts in securing best value within the context of the over-capacity in the Council's school estate;
 - that as a result the Council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area.
- 23.11 We know excellent high-quality education is delivered in our small schools in Shetland, and although Curriculum for Excellence is entirely able to be delivered to

an equally high standard in a small school, for some aspects of it, delivery can be more challenging.

- 23.12 Brae High School Primary Department is only 5.08 miles away from Olnafirth Primary School and there is a well-maintained main road between Voe and Brae.
- 23.13 Only eight of the 25 children who could attend Olnafirth Primary School currently do go there, and of the 17 placing requests there are out of the school, twelve of these are to Brae High School Primary Department. Olnafirth Primary School children also mostly still attend Brae High School Primary Department for nursery education. Brae High School Secondary Department is their associated secondary school.
- 23.14 There is considerable spare capacity in Olnafirth Primary School and the children could be accommodated in Brae High School Primary Department without the need for any additional staffing.
- 23.15 Of the twenty-two written responses received during the consultation, only 50% disagreed with the proposal, 27% agreed with the proposal and 23% did not express an opinion.
- 23.16 Children's Services believes there are clear educational benefits to be gained for Olnafirth Primary School children, by moving them to Brae High School Primary Department. Brae High School Primary Department is a larger setting which would give the children better opportunities for learning, and better opportunities for social interaction with other children of the same age. As a result, this larger setting can more easily deliver on particular aspects of Curriculum for Excellence where skills development such as learning in groups, relating to others, communicating in different ways and working in teams are required. Currently there are twelve children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area being educated in Brae High School Primary Department so this Proposal will have the benefit of enabling more children from the community to be educated together. Brae High School remains the most popular choice for nursery education for parents from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area and it is the associated secondary school for secondary education from Secondary 1 to Secondary 6 for children from the area. Therefore this Proposal also offers the benefit of eliminating transitions for children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area.
- 23.17 This proposal, if implemented, has the potential to provide recurring savings to Shetland Islands Council of £97,239. This proposal makes an ongoing contribution to Children's Services meeting its target budget agreed in the Medium Term Financial Plan. This amount has been revised from the estimated savings of £91,309 in the Proposal Paper as a result of:
- a correction to the cost of Olnafirth Primary School children attending Brae High School currently for a six-week block;
 - the agreement to revise transport arrangements and provide one dedicated minibus to transport all of the children from the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area.

24. Recommendation

Children's Services therefore recommends that:

- 24.1 education provision at Olnafirth Primary School be discontinued with effect from 4 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- 24.2 the pupils of Olnafirth Primary School continue their education at Brae High School Primary Department from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- 22.3 the catchment area for Brae High School Primary Department be altered to include the current catchment area for Olnafirth Primary School.



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

Appendix A – Proposal Paper



Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services
Proposal Paper
May 2013

The following schools are affected by this Proposal:

- **Olnafirth Primary School**
- **Brae High School**

This Proposal Paper has been issued by Shetland Islands Council Schools Service in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Contents

	Section Name	Page Number
1.	The Proposal	3
2.	Summary of the Process for this Proposal Paper	4
3.	Background Information	8
4.	Present Position	12
5.	Educational Benefits Statement	20
6.	Consideration of Factors Affecting Rural Schools	27
7.	Other Issues	31
8.	Conclusion	35
	Appendices	36

NB: Services Committee was replaced in part by Education and Families Committee in May 2011.

Schools Service, Education and Social Care was replaced by Schools/Quality Improvement, Children's Services in May 2011.

These terms are used somewhat interchangeably throughout this document.

Shetland Islands Council

Children's Services

THIS IS A PROPOSAL PAPER

1. THE PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Proposal Paper has been prepared by Children's Services in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (the Act).
- 1.2 The Act sets out a consultation procedure which a Local Authority must follow for certain proposals affecting schools in their area. The current Proposal is to discontinue a school and is therefore subject to the consultation procedure.
- 1.3 The first step of the consultation procedure is the publication of the Proposal Paper. The Proposal Paper sets out the details of the relevant Proposal and contains the Educational Benefits Statement in respect of the Proposal.

Detail of the Proposal:

That subject to the outcome of this Proposal exercise and statutory consultation process as set out in The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010:

1. Education provision at Olnafirth Primary School be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
2. The pupils of Olnafirth Primary School continue their education at Brae High School Primary Department from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter and
3. The catchment area for Brae High School Primary Department be altered to include the current catchment area for Olnafirth Primary School.

PROPOSED DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL

- 1.4 The proposed date for the implementation of the Proposal is 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter.

2. SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS FOR THIS PROPOSAL PAPER

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Proposal Paper Published

2.1 The Proposal Paper will be available for inspection, free of charge, at Olnafirth Primary School, Voe, Shetland, ZE2 9PT, Brae High School Primary Department, Brae, Shetland, ZE2 9QG, at the Shetland Library, Lower Hillhead, Lerwick and published on the Shetland Islands Council website: www.shetland.gov.uk.

2.2 Copies of this Proposal Paper are also available on request from:

Children's Services
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
Shetland
ZE1 0QD

2.3 This Proposal Paper is available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. Please apply to:

Children's Services
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
Shetland
ZE1 0QD

Telephone 01595 744000 or

Email: blueprintforeducation@shetland.gov.uk

2.4 Information on the Proposal will be made available, free of charge, to the consultees listed as follows:

- the Parent Councils of the affected schools;
- the parents of the pupils of the affected schools;
- the parents of any children expected by Children's Services to attend the affected schools within two years of the date of the publication of the Proposal Paper;
- the pupils at the affected schools in so far as Children's Services considers them to be of a suitable age and maturity;
- the staff (teaching and other) at the affected schools;
- any trade union which is a representative of the staff;
- the Community Councils of the affected areas;
- Shetland Partnership (the Community Planning Partnership);
- any other users of the affected schools that Children's Services considers relevant;
- the constituency Member of the Scottish Parliament;
- the constituency Member of Parliament;
- the List Members of the Scottish Parliament.

Advertisement in Local Media

- 2.5 An advertisement will be placed in the relevant local media on Friday 10 May 2013 giving the dates for the Consultation Period and public meetings.

Consultation Period

- 2.6 The Consultation for this Proposal will run from Tuesday, 14 May 2013 and will end on Friday, 28 June 2013. This period allows for the statutory minimum of 30 school days.

Public Meetings

- 2.7 Public meetings will be held on:
Wednesday 29 May 2013
at
Voe Public Hall
Voe
ZE2 9PT
7.00pm to 9.00pm

and

Thursday 30 May 2013
at
Brae High School
Brae
ZE2 9QG
7.00pm to 9.00pm

A record will be taken at the meeting of questions, responses and views. This record will be published on the Shetland Islands Council website and a copy will be made available on request.

Meetings with Pupils and Staff

- 2.8 Meetings will be held with pupils (who are considered to be of a suitable age and maturity) and staff in the affected schools. A record will be taken of questions, responses and views. This will be published in the Consultation Report.

RESPONDING TO THE PROPOSAL

- 2.9 Interested parties are invited to respond to the Proposal by making written or electronic submissions on the Proposal to:

Children's Services
Blueprint for Education (Olnafirth Primary School Consultation)
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
LERWICK
ZE1 0QD

or

email: blueprintforeducation@shetland.gov.uk

- 2.10 A response form is available from Children's Services, Hayfield House, Hayfield Lane, Lerwick, ZE1 0QD, or online at www.shetland.gov.uk for the convenience of those wishing to respond. Its use is not compulsory.

If you wish to respond by letter or electronically you are invited to state your relationship with the school – for example, “pupil”, “parent”, “grandparent”, “former pupil”, “teacher in school”, “member of the Community” etc. Responses from Parent Councils, staff and Pupil Councils are particularly welcome.

Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically, should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be made publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: “I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Councillors and council officers of Shetland Islands Council.” Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available.

All written responses must be received by the last day of the consultation period, Friday, 28 June 2013.

INVOLVEMENT OF EDUCATION SCOTLAND (previously HMle)

- 2.11 When the Proposal Paper is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland by Shetland Islands Council. Education Scotland will also receive a copy of written representations received by Shetland Islands Council from any person during the consultation period or, if Education Scotland agree, a summary of them. Education Scotland will be invited to the public meetings. Education Scotland will further receive a summary of any oral representation made to Shetland Islands Council at the public meetings that will be held and a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the Proposal not later than three weeks after Shetland Islands Council has sent them all representations and documents mentioned above or within such longer period as is agreed between them. As a result of the summer holiday period, Children's Services

has agreed with Education Scotland that the three-week period will commence on Monday 26 August 2013.

In preparing their Report, Education Scotland may enter the affected school and make such reasonable enquiries of such people there as they consider appropriate and may make such reasonable enquiries of such other people as they consider appropriate.

FIRST REVIEW PERIOD

- 2.12 Once the Consultation Period has ended, Shetland Islands Council will review the Proposal having regard to the report by Education Scotland, written representations that it has received and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. Children's Services will then, on behalf of Shetland Islands Council, prepare a Consultation Report.

CONSULTATION REPORT

- 2.13 The Consultation Report will be published in electronic and printed formats. It will be available on the Shetland Islands Council website, from Hayfield House, the Shetland Library, as well as the affected schools, free of charge.

Anyone who made written representations during the Consultation Period will also be informed about the Consultation Report. The Consultation Report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the Consultation Period, a summary of the written representations, a summary of the oral representations made at the public meetings, as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the report by Education Scotland, the Authority's response to that report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled.

The Consultation Report will also contain a statement explaining how it complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the report by Education Scotland and representations (both written and oral) that it received.

SECOND REVIEW PERIOD

- 2.14 The Consultation Report will be published and available for further consideration for a period of three weeks, before it is presented to Education and Families Committee.

SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL DECISION

- 2.15 The Consultation Report, together with any other relevant documentation, will then be considered by Education and Families Committee, who will make a recommendation. This recommendation is then subject to Shetland Islands Council approval.

SCOTTISH MINISTERS CALL-IN

- 2.16 As set out in The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the Authority is required to notify the Scottish Ministers of the decision made by Shetland Islands Council, and provide them with a copy of the Proposal Paper and Consultation Report.

The Scottish Ministers have a six week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Within the first three weeks of that six-week period, Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the six-week call-in process has been notified to Shetland Islands Council, the Council will not proceed to implement the decision made as regarding the Proposal. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the Proposal they may refuse to consent to the Proposal or grant their consent to the Proposal, subject to conditions, or unconditionally.

NOTE ON CORRECTIONS

- 2.17 If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this Proposal Paper, either by Shetland Islands Council or any person, Shetland Islands Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or there has been an inaccuracy. It will then take appropriate action which may include the issue of a correction or the re-issuing of the Proposal Paper, or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period if appropriate. In that event, relevant consultees and Education Scotland will be advised.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In June 2007, Children's Services was given a remit by Shetland Islands Council, through the Corporate Plan, to "develop a modern blueprint for the shape of the service across Shetland for 10 years time". Children's Services has been working on developing a Blueprint for Education since being given this remit. Some of the key milestones are set out below.
- 3.2 In November 2007, the Services Committee of Shetland Islands Council considered a report "Developing a Blueprint for the Education Service". Following consideration of the report Councillors agreed that:
- the key drivers should be to provide the best quality educational opportunities and best quality learning environment for all;
 - in so doing, the opportunity for savings to bring budgets to a sustainable level should be considered; and
 - the final Blueprint was presented to Shetland Islands Council Services Committee with an action plan to look at all schools, internal management, the necessary investment required, quality of education, new ways of delivering education and the potential for each school within a realistic timescale.

- 3.3 Membership of a Member/Officer Working Group was agreed in early 2008 in order to help take forward the development of a Blueprint for Education.
- 3.4 As a result of the issues emerging from the Working Group, Shetland Islands Council gave approval for Children's Services to undertake a community-wide informal consultation consisting of a widely distributed questionnaire and comprehensive series of meetings in order to inform the direction of the Blueprint for Education. Following analysis of the consultation outcomes Councillors approved the following Principles for Education in March 2009:
- to ensure strategic planning, effective leadership and quality assurance to bring about improvement;
 - to ensure effective partnership working;
 - to ensure that all families have access to quality early education and childcare provision;
 - to ensure all schools deliver Curriculum for Excellence: specifically, a broad curriculum, a breadth of experience, social interaction and learning experiences;
 - to ensure all learners experience smooth transitions between stages of learning, supported by the highest possible professional standards;
 - to ensure all learners in Shetland have equal opportunity throughout their educational experience to enable them to achieve their full potential;
 - to ensure that these principles are delivered within Shetland Islands Council's budget.

These principles are Shetland Islands Council policy and underpin the development of the Blueprint for Education.

- 3.5 Children's Services undertook work on various aspects of education service delivery. Informed by this work it was agreed by Shetland Islands Council that Children's Services undertake a consultation process to gather information on options for change across all schools in Shetland. This informal consultation took place between January and March 2010. Further information can be found at www.shetland.gov.uk
- 3.6 Following an evaluation of the Informal Consultation, nine proposals were presented to Shetland Islands Council Services Committee in June 2010.
- 3.7 Services Committee and subsequently Shetland Islands Council agreed to take forward Primary Proposal 2 and Secondary Proposal 2.
- 3.8 Primary Proposal 2 included:
- "Formal consultation would begin for the closure of Uyeasound Primary School, Burravoe Primary School, North Roe Primary School, Olnafirth Primary School and Sandness Primary School."
- 3.9 Secondary Proposal 2 included:
- "Formal consultation would begin for the closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and Skerries School Secondary Department."

- 3.10 Between August 2010 and May 2011 Children's Services undertook Statutory Consultation on the proposals in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. As a result of these consultations and subsequent approval from Shetland Islands Council and the Scottish Minister education provision was discontinued at Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department and Uyeasound Primary School.
- 3.11 The planned Statutory Consultation on education provision at Olnafirth Primary School due to take place in August 2011 was deferred following the implementation of a national year-long Moratorium on Rural School Closures in June 2011. A Commission on the Delivery of Rural School Education was also established. Shetland Islands Council agreed on 20 September 2012 to further postpone the Statutory Consultation on the proposed closure of Olnafirth Primary School until after the Commission on the Delivery of Rural School Education had reported its findings. The key recommendations made by the Commission have been considered during the development of this Proposal.
- 3.12 In February 2012 Councillors asked Children's Services to "undertake a refresh of the Blueprint for Education using existing information, taking account of the outcome of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural School Education deliberations and guidance, when available, considering the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, the Senior Phase, the National Qualifications range and links with further education/other learning settings and based on the underpinning principles of the Blueprint for Education project of equality, quality and value for money, and taking account all new learning methods and Information Communication Technology links and facilities".
- 3.13 Children's Services reported back to Councillors on 20 September 2012 and approved the following:
- Shetland Islands Council's Statement for Education 2012-2017

"We will ensure the best quality education for all our pupils to enable them to become successful learners, who are confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. We will achieve this through the highest standard of teaching and learning delivered in modern, well equipped school buildings which are financially sustainable".
 - Shetland Islands Council's Commitments for Education 2012-2017. These commitments were made taking account of the Principles of Education agreed by Councillors in March 2009. See 3.4.
 - Primary Education: we will provide primary education in all our remote isles with pre-school provision as and when required. We will organise primary education in establishments which are viable both educationally and financially.
 - Secondary Education : we will organise education to provide the breadth of curriculum to best develop a young person's skills and particular interests in viable establishments/schools.
 - Childcare: it will be developed in line with the Childcare Strategy. We will work with voluntary and private sector

providers to secure more integrated and flexible services that meet local need.

- Youth Strategy: we will develop a Youth Strategy for Shetland which encapsulates activities children and young people are involved in across Shetland.
- Catchment Areas: we will consult on any change to a school's catchment area as part of any future statutory consultation process.
- Travel Times: we will organise transport to ensure that, as far as possible, pupils will not travel for longer than the current maximum single journey time in 2011/12.
- Transport: we will ensure School Transport is given high priority.
- Community involvement in Schools: we will work to ensure that: children's community identity is protected, opportunities are put in place for them to be participating in any new school community they are part of and the Youth Strategy is developed to enhance young people's participation in the communities they are part of.
- Use of Buildings: we will ensure that the potential use of school buildings will be part of the statutory consultation process.

- Shetland Islands Council's Plan for Delivering Education 2012-2017

Phase 1

Closure Proposal	Receiving School	Statutory Consultation	Proposed Transfer Date
Aith Junior High School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2013	August 2014
Skerries School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2013	August 2014
Olnafirth Primary School	Brae High School Primary Department	2013	August 2014
*Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2013	August 2016

Phase 2

Closure Proposal	Receiving School	Statutory Consultation	Proposed Transfer Date
Burravoe Primary School	Mid Yell Junior High School Primary Department	2014	August 2015
North Roe Primary School	Ollaberry Primary School	2014	August 2015
Urafirth Primary School	Ollaberry Primary School	2014	August 2015
Urafirth Primary School Nursery Department	Ollaberry Primary School	2014	August 2015

Phase 3

Closure Proposal	Receiving School	Statutory Consultation	Proposed Transfer Date
Whalsay School Secondary Department	Anderson High School	2015	August 2016
Sandness Primary School	Happyhansel Primary School	2015	August 2016

*The statutory consultation regarding the proposed closure of Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department was moved from Phase 3 to Phase 1 following a formal request from Sandwick Parent Council. This was approved by Education and Families Committee on 23 January 2013 and Shetland Islands Council on 18 February 2013.

- 3.14 On 20 September 2012 the Medium Term Financial Plan was approved by Shetland Islands Council. This included an identified saving of £3.249 million from the implementation of the Blueprint for Education.

4. PRESENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Shetland Partnership Community Plan 2012 – 2020 has a purpose “to work together and with communities to make Shetland a place where people want to live, because of our quality of life, employment opportunities, our strong sense of community and our stunning environment”.
- 4.2 It sets out its commitments in relation to priority areas:
- Equalities “we will actively monitor equal opportunities and adhere to statutory duties”.
 - Sustainability “we will make sustainable decisions and work to ensure that our actions meet our present needs without impinging on future generations”.
 - Community Engagement “we will support the development of strong, active and inclusive communities that are involved in decision-making”.

- Prevention and Early Intervention “we will work together to prevent problems for individuals arising in the first place and to stop problems becoming more serious than are already evident”.

4.3 The Community Plan 2012 – 2020 sets out specific priorities. One of these priorities relates to learning and support. The local outcomes associated with this priority are defined as:

- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens;
- We have improved the life choices for children, young people and families at risk.

Children’s Services is strongly committed to the Community Plan, and in particular, to this section. Children’s Services is leading on some of the key workstreams including fully implementing Curriculum for Excellence. This proposal, concerning Olnafirth Primary School, supports the first outcome detailed above by increasing opportunities and increased peer interaction for pupils.

The Community Plan also articulates a priority for communities to be wealthier and fairer with one of the key outcomes relating to public sector financial sustainability which this Proposal also supports.

4.4 The multi-agency Single Outcome Agreement 2012/13, led by the Local Authority, reiterates the commitments set out in the Community Plan in relation to both learning and support, and wealthier and fairer. This Proposal is thus also in line with the Single Outcome Agreement.

4.5 Shetland Islands Council’s priorities were approved within the Medium Term Financial Plan on 20 September 2012 by Shetland Islands Council. The core themes set out as Council priorities were:

- a soundly-led and managed council, living within its means;
- focussed on delivering essential services efficiently and effectively, particularly those critical services for children and the elderly, and transport;
- being mindful of how change could affect the vulnerable and disadvantaged;
- conscious that a healthy economy and strong communities underpin Shetland’s long-term viability;
- awareness that we must all work together across the Council and with all our partners to achieve the best results.

This Proposal supports these priorities, in particular the first two. An updated Council Corporate Plan is currently in draft form and whilst the Plan has not yet been submitted for approval it is expected that it will be developed using the above priorities and including the key Council plans and actions set out in the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement. That being the case, this proposal will also be in line with the upcoming Corporate Plan.

4.6 The Proposal to discontinue primary education at Olnafirth Primary School is one part of a group of proposals agreed by Shetland Islands Council on 30

June 2010, to take forward the Blueprint for Education in Shetland. Children's Services sought further approval regarding statutory consultation on education provision at Olnafirth Primary School at the meeting of Shetland Islands Council on 20 September 2012.

- 4.7 The Blueprint for Education is a management project with significant changes to determine the future of education in Shetland, remitted by Shetland Islands Council Services Committee in June 2007. At the time, the principal drivers were, given the projected decline in the pupil population across Shetland, to create an educationally and financially sustainable model of education for the future.
- 4.8 Shetland Islands Council now faces significant strategic challenges and the Blueprint for Education must be considered in this context. The Blueprint for Education addresses strategic priorities, allocation of resources based on need, a Best value Option Appraisal, and choices concerning value for money.
- 4.9 In presenting the Blueprint for Education Proposals to Shetland Islands Council Services Committee in June 2010 Children's Services presented Councillors with a number of strategic proposals for the future of education in Shetland. All of these took account of the outcomes of a number of community consultations and provided options for increasing levels of change. They also took account of the implications of Curriculum for Excellence for Shetland's school estate and presented significant levels of savings in Children's Services revenue budgets.
- 4.10 Up until recently, Shetland Islands Council has been in a position to use reserves to support the school estate within this community in terms of the numbers of schools and the levels of staffing within them. As a result Shetland provides high quality education to all its pupils as evidenced in almost all reports by Education Scotland. However, due to the spare capacity and the high levels of staffing, this comes at a significantly higher cost per pupil than the Scottish average. The national figures for 2013/14 are not available. The latest published figures are for 2011/12 and show that the average cost per primary pupil in Shetland is £6,614 and in Scotland is £4,090.
- 4.11 Overall, across Shetland the primary school estate is only 46.8% occupied. There are 3822 pupil places available in primary schools in Shetland and in May 2013, only 1789 of those pupil places were occupied.
- 4.12 In 2009 the Scottish Government also articulated its vision for the future school estate in Scotland, in 'Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future'. Local Authorities are required to take account of these aspirations in planning changes to their school estate, namely:
- all children and young people will be educated in, and community users will use, schools that are 'fit for purpose' in terms of condition, suitability and sufficiency;
 - schools are well-designed, accessible, inclusive learning environments that inspire and drive new thinking and change and which support the

delivery of high quality educational experiences through Curriculum for Excellence;

- schools are integral parts of the communities they serve, with pupils making use of community facilities and communities accessing school facilities;
- schools accommodate and provide a range of services, activities and facilities that make a difference to people's health and well-being, to sustaining economic growth and to the strength and vibrancy of communities;
- a sustainable school estate whose design, construction and operation is environmentally and energy efficient; contributes directly to delivering the year-on-year reductions in greenhouse gas emissions introduced by The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, which is resilient to the impact of climate change and which leads by example in matters of environmental performance;
- a school estate that is efficiently run and that maximises value for money;
- a school estate which is flexible and responsive — both to changes in demand for school places and to learners' and teachers' requirements and wishes, and where the beneficial impact of change is maximised by thorough consultation and engagement with users and stakeholders.

4.13 Shetland Islands Council must take account of all of these aspirations in making changes to the school estate.

4.14 In addition, Education Scotland, an executive agency of the Scottish Government, continues to provide external evaluations of the quality of education in Scottish schools, through their regular cycle of school inspections. The last school inspection report for Olnafirth Primary School was published on 12 June 2007. The key strengths identified were:

- relationships between staff and pupils;
- well-behaved pupils who were keen to learn;
- opportunities for pupils to achieve success in a wide variety of activities;
- the commitment of the Head Teacher and staff to school improvement.

The last inspection report for Brae High School was published on 09 December 2008. The key strengths identified were:

- the high quality of support for learning, including the support which children and young people gave each other, which was helping them achieve well;
- the willingness of children and young people to learn and their confidence in expressing their views;
- the strong commitment shown by staff at all levels to the life and work of the school;
- the range of work and activities for children and young people which the school and community have undertaken together and which help improve children's skills and self-confidence.

Olnafirth Primary School

- 4.15 Olnafirth Primary School is a non-denominational primary school situated in Voe in the North Mainland of the main island of Shetland. The school serves the community of Voe and the surrounding area as per the catchment area map attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.16 Four pupils in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area are eligible for school transport. All other pupils can walk or cycle to school.
- 4.17 In May 2013 the school roll was 13. The school does not have a nursery department. Pre-school children access pre-school education at Brae High School Nursery Department, Lunnasting Primary School Nursery Department or Mossbank Primary School Nursery Department, and return to Olnafirth Primary School for primary education. Thereafter, they transfer again to Brae High School for Secondary 1 to Secondary 6.
- 4.18 Olnafirth Primary School consists of one main building and a hut.

The main building was constructed between 1903 and 1905. It is of traditional stone construction with a pitched slate roof. It has two good sized classrooms and in the early 1960s the property was subject to a major extension to provide a large general purpose hall, toilets and kitchen facilities. In 2007 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education assessed the accommodation and facilities as 'weak'. A limited refurbishment was carried out in 2009 to bring the school up to a satisfactory condition (B rating). Some elements of the external fabric and the roof covering were replaced, while internally the toilets and kitchen were refurbished. There is a hut which is located within the grounds that houses the Art and Music classrooms and the school office. The hut is in fair condition, consistent with its age and use. The hut is a fixed building with a floor area 158.1m². It does not have disabled access due to the design of the building.

- 4.19 The school is currently part of a shared management arrangement with a full-time non-teaching Head Teacher managing Olnafirth Primary School and Mossbank Primary School.
- 4.20 In addition to the Head Teacher the school is staffed by two part-time Principal Teachers (job-share), a part-time management relief teacher, a part-time classroom assistant, a part-time supervisory assistant, a part-time clerical assistant, a part-time cleaner and a part-time cook. There is one part-time additional support needs teacher.

The school has access to business management support from the Devolved School Management Officer for the North Mainland based in Brae High School. The school also has a number of visiting teaching staff who support the teaching of PE, Music and Art.

- 4.21 Pupils take PE in the school, using either indoor or outdoor facilities; they also use the North Mainland Leisure Centre together with pupils from Brae High School Primary Department, Lunnasting Primary School and Mossbank Primary School for swimming lessons.

Olnafirth Primary School does not have a library but receives project material from Brae High School each term and pupils visit Brae High School weekly for a nine month block each year.

- 4.22 Olnafirth Primary School has some access problems, for example disabled access to the hut. However, disabled persons can access the school through the main door as a ramp has been installed for access. The main doors were renewed in 2012 to allow easier wheelchair access. There is also a new disabled toilet located at the main circulation area, fitted during the upgrade of the existing toilets.

In terms of the Scottish Government Condition Assessment, the building is assessed as Condition B (Satisfactory).

In terms of the Scottish Government Suitability Core Fact, the building has been assessed as Condition B (Satisfactory).

The school has an outdoor play area.

- 4.23 The capacity of Olnafirth Primary School is that it has space for 125 pupils. With a current roll of 13 pupils, the school is operating at 10% capacity. The school roll for Olnafirth Primary School has fluctuated in the last ten years, with high in 2009/10 of 31 pupils, however recently the roll has seen a decline.

Year	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/08
Roll	30	28	26	22	21	25
Year	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	
Roll	27	31	22	19	13	

The projected roll for Olnafirth Primary School is 8 pupils in 2013/14 and a projected roll of 12 pupils in 2014/15. This decline has been due in part to placing requests by parents.

There have been seven placement requests from or into Olnafirth Primary School in the last five years. Of the nine placing requests from Olnafirth for 2013/14, five are placed at Brae, the remaining four at other schools.

Placing Requests	Into Olnafirth Primary School	From Olnafirth Primary School
2013/14 (to date)	0	9
2012/13	0	4

Brae High School Primary Department

- 4.24 Brae High School Primary Department is a non-denominational primary department situated in Brae in the North Mainland of the main island of Shetland. The school serves the community of Brae and the surrounding area as per the catchment area map attached as Appendix 2. The Primary Department forms part of Brae High School. Brae High School provides secondary education to all pupils in the North Mainland of Shetland. Thirty-five pupils in the Brae High School Primary Department catchment area are

currently eligible for school transport. There are an additional two pupils who can access transport during the winter months. The remainder of pupils can all walk or cycle to school.

- 4.25 In May 2013 the Brae High School Primary Department's roll was 101 pupils. The school has a nursery department.

- 4.26 Brae High School Primary Department is a well resourced and spacious building which consists of seven good sized classrooms and a number of communal and specialist areas.

The primary and nursery departments were completed in 1976, new windows were fitted in the mid-1990s and a new roofing membrane was fitted approximately five years ago.

- 4.27 In terms of the Scottish Government Condition Core Fact, the building has been assessed as Condition B (Satisfactory).

In terms of the Scottish Government Suitability Core Fact, the building has been assessed as Condition A (Good).

- 4.28 The school is staffed by a full-time Depute Head Teacher, five class teachers, one part-time clerical assistant, one part-time classroom assistant and 2.26 full time equivalent cleaners. Catering staff also provide for the Secondary Department and the current staffing is 6.07 full time equivalent. There is one full-time additional support needs teacher and 60 hours of additional support needs auxiliary time per week.

The Primary Department has access to business management support from the Devolved School Management Officer for the North Mainland based in Brae High School. The school also has a number of visiting peripatetic teaching staff who support the teaching of PE, Music and Art; this includes staff based at the Brae High School Secondary Department.

- 4.29 Pupils take PE in the school, using either indoor or outdoor facilities; they also use the Shetland Recreational Trust's North Mainland Leisure Centre.

- 4.30 Brae High School Primary Department Primary is wheelchair accessible and has accessible toilet facilities.

The school has an outdoor play area.

- 4.31 The capacity of Brae High School Primary Department is that it has space for 160 pupils. With a current roll of 101 pupils, the school is operating at 63% capacity.

The school roll of Brae High School Primary Department increased over the last ten years, to a high of 120 pupils in 2005/6. The roll then decreased to 98 in 2011/12. It is slightly up this year, 2012/13 to 101.

Year	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8
Roll	98	101	115	120	110	110
Year	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	
Roll	107	107	107	98	101	

The projected roll for Brae High School Primary Department is 102 in 2013/14, 102 in 2014/15 and 93 in 2015/16.

STAFFING

Olnafirth Primary School

4.32 Olnafirth Primary School is staffed by the following:

- A full-time non-teaching Head Teacher (shared with Mossbank Primary School);
- Two part-time principal teachers;
- A part-time management relief teacher;
- A part-time classroom assistant;
- A part-time supervisory assistant;
- A part-time clerical assistant ;
- A part-time cleaner;
- A part-time cook.

4.33 The school has access to business management support from the Devolved School Management Officer for the North Mainland who is based in Brae High School.

Pupils at Olnafirth Primary School access approximately 2.5 hours of instrumental music tuition a week.

Brae High School Primary Department

4.34 Brae High School Primary Department is staffed by the following:

- A full-time non-teaching depute head teacher;
- Five full-time equivalent primary teachers;
- A part-time clerical assistant;
- A part-time classroom assistant;
- A full-time additional support needs teacher;
- Two part-time additional support needs auxiliaries;
- Six part-time cleaning staff;
- Ten part-time catering staff shared between the primary and secondary departments.

4.35 The school has access to business management support from the Devolved School Management Officer for the North Mainland who is based in the school.

- 4.36 The school also has a number of visiting teaching staff, and input from Secondary teaching staff that support the teaching of PE, Music and Art.

They total 0.6 full-time equivalent.

Pupils at Brae High School Primary Department access approximately 39.5 hours of instrumental music tuition a week.

5. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT

Introduction

- 5.1 The Educational Benefits Statement has been prepared by Children's Services in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 5.2 In preparing an Educational Benefits Statement, The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, requires Local Authorities to take account of a number of factors, and evidence how it has done this. These are:
- current and future pupils of the affected schools;
 - current and future users of the facilities of the affected schools;
 - how the Local Authority will minimise any adverse impacts arising from the proposal;
 - the likely effects on other pupils in the Local Authority.
- 5.3 The Act does not limit or list the matters which need to be included in an Educational Benefits Statement. However Statutory Guidance does highlight to Local Authorities that they must demonstrate in their Educational Benefits Statements how a proposal will:
- improve the quality of the curriculum and create positive environments for more effective learning and teaching better matched to the needs of learners;
 - improve the depth, breadth, coherence, relevance, challenge and enjoyment provided by the curriculum;
 - provide more opportunities for greater personalisation and choice in learning and improved progression which will enhance children's experiences; this will include the use of information and communications technology and arrangements for assessing and planning learners' progress;
 - impact on the overall ethos of the school, including the care and welfare of pupils and their personal and social development;
 - improve equality of opportunity for all within an inclusive educational experience, in the widest sense, for pupils and achievement, and for interdisciplinary learning and beyond.
- 5.4 The Statutory Guidance on the Act also provides Local Authorities with a number of other issues which may be relevant to the educational benefits of a proposal. These are:

- the condition and suitability of the school buildings and facilities (and where a proposal would involve pupils moving from one school to another, the relative condition of both);
 - changing patterns of demand for school places if there is a growing mismatch between supply and demand;
 - the travel and transport context and implications of a proposal if, for instance, they would impact differently on pupils' broader social experiences and opportunities to participate in and benefit from out-of-hours learning;
 - financial and budgetary considerations may also be relevant in situations where disparities in the costs of the delivery of education may have grown, to the detriment of the greater good, at least to the point where an authority considers that they require to be reviewed.
- 5.5 The Educational Benefits Statement is also the place for the Local Authority to set out the relationship between a proposed change and their education-related statutory duties, and how the proposal fits with the continued fulfilment of these other obligations.
- 5.6 The key statutory duties for a Local Authority in relation to the delivery of school education are:
- **The Education (Scotland) Act 1980**, which requires authorities to secure for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education; and the provision of sufficient school accommodation;
 - **The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000**, which requires Local Authorities to endeavour to raise standards and secure improvement in the quality of school education provided in their schools; and to ensure that the education it provides is directed to the development of the personality, talents and the mental and physical abilities of the children or young people to their fullest potential;
 - **The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland) Act 2009**, which requires authorities to identify and provide support for any children with additional support needs and prepare co-ordinated support plans for those with the most extensive needs.

Educational Benefits of the Proposal

- 5.7 As outlined in the Background Information and in the Present Position contained in this Proposal Paper, the Proposal to discontinue Primary Education in Olnafirth Primary School which following the Moratorium on Rural School Closures was further considered by Shetland Islands Council on 20 September 2012. It was agreed to progress the Proposal in 2013.
- 5.8 The Blueprint for Education is a significant strategic piece of work to determine the future of education in Shetland, remitted by Shetland Islands Council Services Committee in June 2007 and again by Education and Families Committee in February 2012. The principal drivers are to create an educationally and financially sustainable model of education for the future.

- 5.9 Children's Services has a duty to deliver a service which meets the criteria for best value, in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, economy and equal opportunities.
- 5.10 Children's Services is able to demonstrate that it delivers a good quality service overall, evidenced through good attainment and achievement results and the outcomes of Education Scotland inspections.
- 5.11 However, Shetland Islands Council's current model cannot demonstrate equality of opportunity or efficiency in delivery.
- 5.12 The Proposal to discontinue primary education in Olnafirth Primary School is one element of the Blueprint for Education Proposals which addresses issues around equality of provision for all pupils in Shetland and seeks to achieve a more efficient, cost-effective and sustainable model of delivery.
- 5.13 Olnafirth Primary School is operating at 10% capacity; Brae High School Primary Department is operating at 63% capacity. The latest information on costs per pupil indicates that in this financial year, the estimated total cost per pupil at Olnafirth Primary School is £13,413; the total cost per pupil at Brae High School Primary Department is £5,726. National figures for 2013/14 are not available, the latest published figures are for 2011/12 and show that the average cost per primary pupil in Shetland is £6,614 and in Scotland is £4,090.
- 5.14 Brae High School Primary Department offers a better quality physical learning environment, with modern spacious classrooms and dedicated social spaces. There are adequate and accessible toilet facilities, suitable office spaces and a staffroom. There is a canteen and dining hall at Brae High School Primary Department, and outdoor sporting facilities.
- 5.15 Transferring pupils from Olnafirth Primary School will offer the opportunity for pupils to join more viable cohorts of pupils for taking part in group learning activities, team events and sporting competitions. It will mean there is access to a larger peer group of a similar age, stage and gender for learning.
- 5.16 All the children currently attending Olnafirth Primary School could move to Brae High School Primary Department without the need for any increase in teaching staff numbers.
- 5.17 The Proposal has the potential to save a significant amount of the staffing costs currently incurred at Olnafirth Primary School, and reduce the cost per pupil at the receiving school. There are also financial savings which will be made at Mossbank Primary School due to the Shared Management Arrangement coming to an end.
- 5.18 Both schools affected by this Proposal are staffed by experienced teaching staff.
- 5.19 One of the Agreed Principles for Education in Shetland is to ensure smooth transitions which Children's Services has interpreted to include minimising the number of transitions a child experiences in their school education. Currently, children who attend Olnafirth Primary School, if they remain in school

education up to the end of Secondary 6, and if they have attended pre-school education, will have experienced two transitions. Moving the pupils to Brae High School Primary Department would reduce transitions to zero (if parents choose to access pre-school provision at Brae High School Nursery Department).

- 5.20 Children's Services recognises that Olnafirth Primary School offers a very high quality education to its pupils. This was confirmed by Education Scotland in the Report on the school published on 12 June 2007. The same is true of Brae High School and this was confirmed in their report published on 09 December 2008.
- 5.21 Children's Services considers that there would be no educational detriment to the pupils currently attending Olnafirth Primary School should they attend Brae High School Primary Department. Pre-school children from Olnafirth Primary School catchment area already attend Brae High School nursery department, Lunnasting Primary School Nursery Department and Mossbank Primary School Nursery Department for pre-school education.

Curriculum

Olnafirth Primary School

- 5.22 The curriculum, 5–15 Broad General Education, which is taught at early, first and second stage of Curriculum for Excellence, is taught to all pupils together in one multi-composite primary class. The curriculum is taught by the two principal teachers, who share the post on a job-share basis, with support from the part-time management relief primary teacher and other Children's Services staff. Olnafirth Primary School has developed strong links with other schools. This includes Brae High School and pupils are well supported through their transition to secondary education.

The school also has a number of visiting teaching staff that support the teaching of PE, Music and Art.

Brae High School Primary Department

- 5.23 The curriculum, 5 – 15 Broad General Education, which is taught at early, first and second stage of Curriculum for Excellence, is taught to pupils in five composite primary classes. The curriculum is delivered by class teachers with the support of the Depute Head Teacher and other Children's Services staff. The school has excellent links with its cluster primary schools which helps with effective transition to secondary.

The school also has a number of visiting teaching staff that support the teaching of PE, Music and Art. Some of these staff are based in Brae High School secondary department.

Learning Environment/Resources

- 5.24 Pupils at Olnafirth Primary School would benefit from access to a wide range of facilities available at the primary department of Brae High School. These include a library, all the teaching areas within the same building, social spaces where they can interact with peers and access to specific classrooms in the secondary department.

Pupils would benefit from access to sporting facilities, a games hall and outdoor sports fields.

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

- 5.25 Glow is available within all Shetland schools. Glow is the Scottish national intranet for education and gives access to information and activities including interactive educational games, revision papers, links to other sites and news features. It also includes email and basic video conferencing facilities and provides facilities for pupils and staff to collaborate remotely. The effectiveness of its use depends in part on the equipment available in the school and in part on the level of staff expertise in this area.

Olnafirth Primary School

- 5.26 At present, the school has network and internet provision through a 12 megabit (Mb) Pathfinder link. The Scottish Government-funded Pathfinder project however ceases in March 2014. The proposed replacement solution is to link into a fibre-optic cable provided by Shetland Telecom. This will give the school bandwidth of approximately 100MB. The cost of this is estimated at £7000 capital costs.

The school has 17 computers in total, comprising 2 desktop computers and 15 laptops. There are two interactive whiteboards and a range of peripheral equipment to support teaching and learning. As of January 2013 only 9 of the 17 machines in Olnafirth are suitable for upgrade to Windows 7, and therefore could not be used past April 2014.

Based on the last three years the average yearly ICT spend at Olnafirth Primary School is £1300.

Brae High School Primary Department

- 5.27 The Department has 77 computers in total, comprising 22 desktop computers, 33 laptops and 25 netbooks. There are seven interactive whiteboards and a range of peripheral equipment to support teaching and learning. As of January 2013, 67 of the 77 computers are suitable for upgrade to Windows 7, and therefore suitable for use past April 2014 (these 67 computers capable of running Windows 7 have already been upgraded).

Based on the last three years the average yearly ICT spend at Brae High School Primary Department is £25,000.

Additional Support Needs

- 5.28 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 both place statutory responsibilities on Local Authorities and on schools in respect of supporting all pupils with additional support needs. All schools in Shetland are resourced in order to meet the needs of pupils with additional support needs. The Managing Inclusion Guidelines ensure appropriate interventions are in place for all pupils with additional support needs.

In a rural Local Authority there are challenges associated with providing targeted and joined-up support for children and young people with more complex additional support needs. Drawing together the necessary support systems in order to meet the needs of a child or young person with additional support needs in this position can present significant challenges.

Olnafirth Primary School

- 5.29 Olnafirth Primary School, in line with all schools in Shetland, submits an annual audit which specifies how many children require additional support to meet their learning and pastoral care needs. This fluctuates, therefore, according to the requirements of the pupils. At present the school has allocated to 0.1 FTE input from a teacher of additional support needs.

Brae High School Primary Department

- 5.30 Brae High School Primary Department, in line with all schools in Shetland, submits an annual audit which specifies how many children require additional support to meet their learning and pastoral care needs. This fluctuates, therefore, according to the requirements of the pupils. At present the school has allocated to it one full-time equivalent teacher of additional support needs, and 60 hours of additional support needs auxiliary support per week.

Capacity

Olnafirth Primary School

- 5.31 The capacity of Olnafirth Primary School is that it has space for 125 pupils. With a current roll of 13 pupils, the school is operating at 10% capacity.

Brae High School Primary Department

- 5.32 The capacity of Brae High School Primary Department is that it has space for 160 pupils. With a current roll of 101 pupils, the school is operating at 63% capacity.

Extra Curricular Activities, School Trips and Exchanges

- 5.33 The current provision is:

Shetland Recreational Trust's North Mainland Leisure Centre provides activities after school for all children in the North Mainland area.

Voe Junior and Senior Youth Clubs one evening each per week;
Brae Junior Intermediate and Senior Youth Clubs one evening each per week.

A wide range of after school activities have been offered by both schools affected by the Proposal. These have, and will, change according to need and demand. They have recently included:

- junior science;
- activities facilitated by Active Schools, these include at:
 - Olnafirth Primary School:
 - Field Sports
 - Brae High School:
 - After school fencing
 - After school netball
 - Wednesday afternoon – sport afternoons with lots of activities available including golf, mountain biking, athletics, football.

Staff Transfer

5.34 Any staff transfers, and alternative arrangements for staff resulting from the closure of Olnafirth Primary School, will be conducted according to the appropriate Shetland Islands Council policies and agreements. Shetland Islands Council has recently approved new policies on:

- early retirement;
- voluntary redundancy;
- organisational review;
- transfer for teachers.

5.35 The proposal would have implications for teaching and support staff. All staff will be properly consulted about their future, as will relevant trade unions. The individual wishes of each member of staff will be taken into consideration within the context of appropriate Shetland Islands Council policies and agreements.

Likely Effect on the Local Community

5.36 The closure of Olnafirth Primary School would have little resource effect in terms of the community's educational access to the school and its resources. Currently the school is used by the community for photocopying and to access a fax machine. The school is also used as a venue for Parent and Community Council meetings and for the local Parent and Toddler Group.

Other factors affecting the local community are looked at in more detail under Consideration of Factors Affecting Rural Schools.

Summary of Educational Benefits

5.37 Closing Olnafirth Primary School and moving the pupils to Brae High School Primary Department would provide the following benefits to Olnafirth Primary School pupils:

- being educated in a modern fit for purpose learning environment with dedicated social and dining facilities; and adequate toilets;
- the elimination of two transitions if pupils are moved to Brae High School Primary Department;
- daily access to a larger peer group of similar age, stage and gender;
- creating a more viable cohort of children for a variety of group and team activities;
- access to a larger teaching staff group who are able to work collaboratively to benefit each pupil's learning;
- larger staff provision which creates more collegiate time to commit to the school improvement agenda;
- more efficient use of financial resources.

5.38 Closing Olnafirth Primary School and moving the pupils to Brae High School Primary Department would provide the following benefits to all pupils in Shetland:

- a more efficient cost-effective model of school education delivery would be created thus contributing to the sustainability of the excellent quality of education provided to all pupils in Shetland, in the current challenging financial climate;
- greater equality of opportunity.

6. CONSIDERATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING RURAL SCHOOLS

6.1 In terms of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Olnafirth Primary School is a rural school. Consequently special regard has been given to the following factors in the preparation of this Proposal Paper.

Viable Alternatives to Closure

6.2 The only viable alternative to closure of Olnafirth Primary School would be to maintain stages of education at Olnafirth Primary School and Brae High School Primary Department.

Maintaining primary education in both locations does not offer best value in the use of public money. There are surplus primary places across these two schools in the North Mainland which therefore means inefficiency in the use of revenue funds of Shetland Islands Council. Primary pupils at Olnafirth Primary School attend either Mossbank Primary School, Lunnasting Primary School or Brae High School for pre-school education and Brae High School for secondary education.

There are currently 285 primary places available across the two schools offering primary education. In May 2013 the combined total primary roll of the two schools is 114 pupils. By placing all the primary pupils from the two schools into Brae High School Primary Department it would still only be 71% occupied but would be operating considerably more efficiently than at present.

- 6.3 Over the last decade Children's Services has conducted a number of reviews and consultations with the key aim of providing an education model for Shetland that is sustainable and ensures best value in the use of public funds. The reviews have seen the following changes to the school estate:

- closure of Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department (June 2011);
- closure of Uyeasound Primary School (December 2011).

Children's Services has also implemented the following alternatives to school closures:

- reducing expenditure on In-Service training;
- reducing numbers of central staff;
- reducing money available for supply;
- reducing money available for Continuing Professional Development;
- ending knitting instruction;
- charging for instrumental instruction;
- increasing charges e.g. for school meals;
- reducing operating costs in schools, particularly resources available for learning materials and equipment ;
- moving to national staffing levels in primary;
- reducing numbers of teaching staff in secondary;
- reducing numbers of Catering and Cleaning staff;
- reducing teacher input in nursery;
- securing more efficient use of resources for children and young people with Additional Support Needs;
- reducing music instruction;
- reducing Parent Council Clerks' honorariums;
- reducing school building maintenance.

- 6.4 The savings measures already implemented within Schools/Quality Assurance section of Children's Services as detailed above, have resulted in a reduction in expenditure between 2009/10 and 2012/13 of over £5 million.

- 6.5 Children's Services has also in the past considered shared management for small primaries when it has proved difficult to recruit to a teaching Head Teacher post and Olnafirth Primary School is currently part of such an arrangement. This has been possible when an opportunity arises through a vacancy and through agreement with Parent Councils. However, the shared management model Children's Services operates does not save money, as by local agreement, each school in a shared management arrangement is allocated a principal teacher, and the principal teacher is allocated management time, which must be covered.

- 6.6 During a previous informal consultation, the parents at that time expressed a preference for the option of Brae High School Primary Department rather than Mossbank Primary School or Lunnasting Primary School as a receiving school for their children, although their preference was for Olnafirth Primary School to remain open. Furthermore the majority of parents choose to place their pre-school children in Brae High School Nursery Department, therefore any other option would necessitate one more transition. For these reasons we have not fully developed either Mossbank Primary School or Lunnasting Primary School as viable alternative options.
- 6.7 Children's Services therefore believes that the only alternative to closure of Olnafirth Primary School would be to maintain primary stages of education at Olnafirth Primary School and Brae High School Primary Department.
- 6.8 The two schools are 5.08 miles apart and transfer of pupils from Olnafirth Primary School would not result in unacceptable travel time for pupils.

Likely Effects on the Local Community

- 6.9 Voe has one community hall (Voe Public Hall) that is a well used resource by the community and may account for the limited use of the school building. Voe has a local shop, Tagon Stores, who are general merchants with petrol pumps.
- 6.10 The school provides a number of part-time employment opportunities for people in the community. It is likely that these posts would be lost should Olnafirth Primary School close, although staff will be offered redeployment opportunities elsewhere in accordance with Shetland Islands Council policies.
- 6.11 There is currently a healthy level of demand for Local Authority housing in the Voe area. This may be as a result of the increased economic activity in the North Mainland more generally. The greatest proportion of demand is for smaller sized accommodation (1-2 bedrooms).
- 6.12 The school building in Voe, if the school closed, has the potential to be used to support the sustainability of North Mainland. It could be used as a base for remote working if it were to be retained by Shetland Islands Council, and this would make it more feasible for some Shetland Islands Council employees to live in North Mainland. The building could also be let to businesses for office space or sold.
- 6.13 If it were considered surplus, it would be sold by Shetland Islands Council.

Likely Effects on the Wider Community

- 6.14 As described in the Background section, the wider strategic driver for this proposal is Shetland's current context within which it must deliver education. There is already a significant surplus of vacant school places. In addition, Shetland Islands Council faces a requirement to make a significant reduction in its spending. This is, in part, due to the current economic picture, and the

reduction in central government grant, but also as a result of its own policy to protect the Council's reserves.

- 6.15 In order to preserve a minimum level of Council Reserves, and eradicate the structural deficit that has been created, savings of £38.6 million are required between 2012/13 and 2016/17. Shetland Islands Council needs to achieve these savings to become sustainable. In approving the 2013/14 budgets on 20 February 2013 the Council will be over 70% of the way there by the end of the year. The Blueprint for Education is critical in the coming years to achieving the remaining 30% of savings required.
- 6.16 The Proposal to discontinue primary education in Olnafirth Primary School is one element of the Blueprint for Education Proposals which addresses issues around equality of provision for all pupils in Shetland and generates a more efficient, cost effective and sustainable model of delivery. This is a positive outcome for all pupils across Shetland as a whole.

Support which would be provided to the Community Should the School Close

- 6.17 If Olnafirth Primary School were to close as a result of this Proposal, the Community Planning and Development Service will continue to support the community to build capacity, regenerate declining areas, and achieve the outcomes agreed with the Scottish Government in its Single Outcome Agreement.
- 6.18 If mitigation measures are deemed priority the Community Planning and Development Service will work with partners to support community initiatives to make effective use of the vacant school buildings, supporting funding applications, community consultation and project planning.

Likely Effect Caused by Different Travelling Arrangements that may be required in Consequence of the Proposal

- 6.19 The travel implications for pupils currently attending Olnafirth Primary School, if they were transferred to Brae High School Primary Department would be as follows:
- There is not sufficient capacity to accommodate the projected 16 pupils from the Olnafirth catchment area for session 2014/15 including those on placing requests on the existing secondary route. However, four of the pupils who live at Mulla, Voe could be accommodated at no additional cost.
 - The remaining pupils would be transported using two eight seater vehicles.
 - Minibus one would depart Lower Voe at 0820 and minibus two from Dale at 0820. Collections would be made en route with arrival at Brae High School at 0855.
 - The estimated additional cost of these transport routes is £36,100 per school year (based on 190 days).
- (The figures above are based on current contract prices.)

7. OTHER ISSUES

Management of Proposal

- 7.1 It is intended that pupils from Olnafirth Primary School will be integrated within Brae High School Primary Department, from the start of the first term of the 2014/15 school session, which commences on 18 August 2014. This will allow Children's Services time to conduct the necessary consultation in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 7.2 It is acknowledged that should the Proposal be approved and implemented, careful forward planning would be required from Children's Services to support the transition of the pupils. Existing transition arrangements are well established for pupils transferring at the end of Primary 7. These would be built upon and enhanced to allow the transition of all pupils.
- 7.3 A Transition Support Group would immediately be set up after a decision is made by Shetland Islands Council if it agrees to close Olnafirth Primary School. This Group would be chaired by the Quality Improvement Officer for Olnafirth Primary School and Brae High School Primary Department and would include relevant school staff, Parent Council representation and pupil representation from both establishments.
- 7.4 The role of this group would be to plan the effective transition of pupils. It will ensure pupils are supported in getting used to being in Brae High School Primary Department for five days per week.
- 7.5 The Proposal would also have implications for teaching and support staff. All staff will be properly consulted about their future, as will relevant trade unions. The individual wishes of each member of staff will be taken into consideration within the context of appropriate Shetland Islands Council policies and agreements.

Legislation

- 7.6 The key statutory duties for a Local Authority in relation to the delivery of school education are:
- **The Education (Scotland) Act 1980**, which requires authorities to secure for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education; and the provision of sufficient school accommodation;
 - **The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000**, which requires Local Authorities to endeavour to raise standards and secure improvement in the quality of school education provided in their schools; and to ensure that the education it provides is directed to the development of the personality, talents and the mental and physical abilities of the children or young people to their fullest potential;
 - **The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland) Act 2009**, which requires authorities to identify and provide support for

any children with additional support needs and prepare co-ordinated support plans for those with the most extensive needs.

Equal Opportunities Legislation: Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.7 An assessment has been carried out on this Proposal and it is believed that introducing this proposed change will not have an adverse impact on the following groups: age, gender, religion, racial group, disability and sexual orientation. The Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed in light of all responses received during the Consultation Period.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 7.8 Shetland Islands Council as responsible Authority carried out under Section 8 of The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, a Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway screening of the Blueprint for Education.
- 7.9 The determination by Shetland Islands Council under Section 8 (1) of the Act is that the Blueprint for Education is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.
- 7.10 Before making this determination, Shetland Islands Council sent a summary of its views as to whether or not the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects to Consultative Authorities (Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency) via the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway. Shetland Islands Council noted that the Consultation Authorities agreed with the view that the Blueprint for Education was unlikely to have significant environmental effects and made the determination to that effect under Section 8 (1) of the Act. In making that determination Schools Service applied criteria in Schedule 2 of the Act.
- 7.11 Shetland Islands Council notified the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway Manager and the Consultative Authorities of this decision. A public notice was also published in the local media on Friday 15 April 2011.
- 7.12 This assessment remains pertinent to this Proposal and therefore does not need to be updated.
- 7.13 Further information and the responses of the Consultative Authorities can be found at www.shetland.gov.uk.

Financial Considerations

- 7.14 Shetland Islands Council's approved Medium Term Financial Plan 2012-2017 sets out the roadmap for Shetland Islands Council to achieve financial sustainability over the term of this Council and to align resources in accordance with the priorities of Members.
- 7.15 Aligning resources to Councillors' priorities ensures that Shetland Islands Council maximises the use of resources at its disposal.

- 7.16 Children's Services has been prioritised in the Medium Term Financial Plan, so its target budgets are protected as far as possible from the full extent of the cuts required.
- 7.17 Shetland Islands Council approved its budget for 2013/14, on 20 February 2013. The budget set adheres to the Medium Term Financial Plan, and therefore contributes to the strategic aim of realigning more available resources towards Children's Services, Community Care and Transport, so that a larger percentage of the Council's budget will be spent in those areas by the end of the Council term. In addition, it ensures that Shetland Islands Council continues to provide the best funded services in Scotland, whilst maintaining the fourth lowest Council Tax (which has been frozen for the sixth consecutive year).
- 7.18 In 2013/14, Children's Services budget was approved at £41.262 million, which equates to 36% of the total Shetland Islands Council General Fund budget. By the end of this Council term, Children's Services will receive 38.6% of the total budget.
- 7.19 The cost of providing education in Shetland is significantly higher than the Scottish average. It is estimated that in 2013/14, the total cost per pupil at Olnafirth Primary School will be £13,413, and the total cost per pupil at Brae High School Primary Department will be £5,726. National figures for 2013/14 are not available, the latest published figures are for 2011/12 and show that the average cost per primary pupil in Shetland is £6,614 and in Scotland is £4,090.
- 7.20 The high cost per pupil at Olnafirth Primary School, could increase further in 2013/14, if parents of the latest primary one intake exercise their right to place their children elsewhere, as has happened with the current P1 and P2 intakes (there are no children in these classes at Olnafirth Primary School). At 2012/13 levels, the cost would increase to £23,045 per pupil, which is 3.78 times higher than the cost per pupil at Brae High School Primary Department.

Financial Implications

- 7.21 The current cost of Olnafirth Primary School and the financial impact of the preferred option as set out in this Proposal Paper is summarised below:

	2013/14
	Budget
	£
Olnafirth Primary School	174,375
Additional Costs at Brae High School Primary Department	767
Savings at Mossbank Primary School	(927)
Costs Transferred Across the Estate:	13,334
Residual Property Costs	5,901
Savings on transport costs for current visits to Brae	(2,880)
Additional Transport Costs	36,100
Impact on GAE (Grant Aided Expenditure)	30,771
Total Saving	91,309

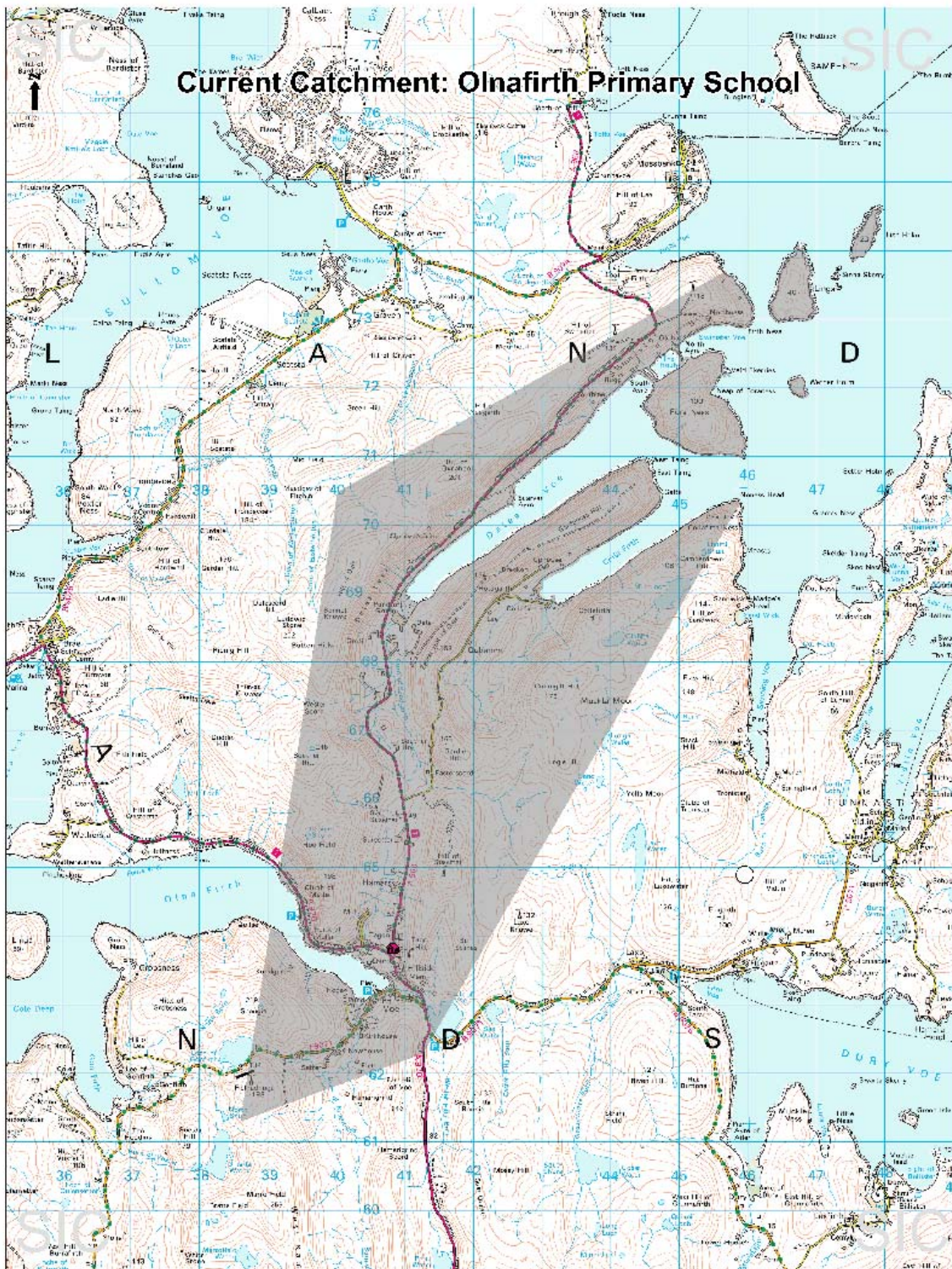
- 7.22 This information is based upon the budgeted School Estates Review for 2013/14. See Appendix 4 for a full financial breakdown.
- 7.23 The total estimated on-going annual savings made from the closure of Olnafirth Primary School is £91,309. These savings will go some way towards meeting the total savings which require to be delivered as part of the Blueprint for Education.
- 7.24 There will be minimal impact on Brae High School Primary Department. Budget for learning materials, meal supplies and school meals income would transfer, overall this would amount to a total of £767.
- 7.25 Initially there would be a saving of £927 at Mossbank Primary School. This is due to the current Joint Head Teacher becoming Head Teacher at Mossbank Primary School only. This post would be a teaching post, therefore there would be reduction of 0.7 FTE Teacher at Mossbank Primary School to accommodate this. The existing postholder would have their salary preserved for three years, after which, additional savings of £4,000 per annum would be

achieved. In addition, as a result of the shared management arrangements coming to an end, Mossbank Primary School would no longer require a Principal Teacher. Again after a three-year period of preservation for the postholder, a further £5,000 would be realised from this post.

- 7.26 Recharges in to the Olnafirth Primary School for support provided by the Quality Assurance, Schools Executive Manager and Devolved School Management services would be transferred across the remaining schools within the estate. However, any savings found within these areas would result in an overall reduction in these recharges.
- 7.27 Property costs have been reduced to reflect that there may still be some requirement to pay for Rates, Repairs and Maintenance, Electricity and Insurance even if the building was not occupied. However, these costs would be removed altogether if the building was sold, and a capital receipt would be realised. Advice from Asset Services is that if the building was found to be surplus, given the level of activity currently being undertaken in the North Mainland, it is highly likely that the property would prove to be marketable.
- 7.28 Additional transport costs of £36,100 have been allowed for in the estimated total savings of £91,307.
- 7.29 The closure proposal will impact on Grant Aided Expenditure. Currently we receive Grant Aided Expenditure in the region of £2,300 per pupil in a small primary school (with a roll of less than 70), this Grant Aided Expenditure would be lost if the proposal were implemented, as the 13 pupils at Olnafirth Primary School would be transferring to a primary department with a roll of over 70 pupils. This loss of Grant Aided Expenditure has been allowed for in the total savings of £91,309.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 strengthens the statutory consultation practices and procedures that Local Authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools. It ensures that the consultation process is robust, open, transparent and fair.
- 8.2 The required Proposal Paper, of which this is one, forms the basis of any such statutory Consultation Process. Thereafter, during the statutory Consultation Period set out in this Proposal Paper, Children's Services invites responses to its Proposal to discontinue primary education at Olnafirth Primary School.
- 8.3 The Proposal is that pupils transfer to Brae High School Primary Department.
- 8.4 All views, comments and questions will be considered for the Consultation Report which will follow this consultation period.



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Appendix 4

Olnafirth Primary School	2013/14 Budget £	Costs Transferred Across Estate £	Impact on Brae High School Primary Dept £	Impact on Mossbank Primary School £	Residual Property Costs £	Total Costs Transferred £	Annual Saving £
Employee Costs (incl Visiting Staff)	107,133	0	0	(927)	0	(927)	108,060
Liability Insurance	274	0	0	0	0	0	274
Water & Sewerage Rates	1,622	0	0	0	811	811	811
Repair & Maintenance	7,367	0	0	0	1,842	1,842	5,525
Electricity	11,253	0	0	0	2,813	2,813	8,440
Cleaning Contractor	10,399	0	0	0	0	0	10,399
Property Insurance	435	0	0	0	435	435	0
Learning Materials	4,540	0	2,353	0	0	2,353	2,187
Catering Contract	22,618	0	2,470	0	0	2,470	20,148
Direct School Costs	165,641	0	4,823	(927)	5,901	9,797	155,844
Sale of Meals - Pupils	(4,000)	0	(4,056)	0	0	(4,056)	56
Sale of Meals - Staff	(600)	0	0	0	0	0	(600)
Direct School Income	(4,600)	0	(4,056)	0	0	(4,056)	(544)
Controllable Costs	161,041	0	767	(927)	5,901	5,741	155,300
Quality Assurance	12,053	12,053	0	0	0	12,053	0
DSMO	573	573	0	0	0	573	0
Schools Executive Manager	708	708	0	0	0	708	0
Recharges	13,334	13,334	0	0	0	13,334	0
Non Controllable Costs	13,334	13,334	0	0	0	13,334	0
TOTAL COST	174,375	13,334	767	(927)	5,901	19,075	155,300
Saving on Transport Costs for Current Visits to Brae Additional Transport Costs Impact on Grant Aided Expenditure							(2,880) 36,100 30,771
Total Savings							91,309



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

**Appendix B – Education Scotland's Report on the
Proposal**

Consultation proposal by Shetland Islands Council

Report by Education Scotland addressing educational aspects of the proposal to discontinue education provision at Olnafirth Primary School from 4 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter, for pupils of Olnafirth Primary school to continue their education at Brae High School Primary Department from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter and to alter the catchment of Brae High School Primary Department to include the current catchment area of Olnafirth Primary School.

Context

This report from Education Scotland is required under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act. The purpose of this report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of the council's consultation proposal. Section 2 of this report sets out the views expressed by consultees during the initial consultation process. Section 3 sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal and the views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include a copy of this report and must contain an explanation of how it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision.

Introduction

1.1 Shetland Islands Council proposes to:

- discontinue education provision at Olnafirth Primary School from 4 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- continue the education for pupils of Olnafirth Primary school at Brae High School Primary Department from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- to alter the catchment of Brae High School Primary Department to include the current catchment area of Olnafirth Primary School.

1.2 The report from Education Scotland is required under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act.

1.3 HM Inspectors undertook the following activities in considering the educational aspects of the proposal:

- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related

consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others;

- consideration of further representations made directly to Education Scotland on relevant educational aspects of the proposal; and
- visits to the site of Olnafirth Primary school and Brae High School Primary Department, including discussion with representative groups of parents, staff and children.

1.4 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children and young people of the school, any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children and young people in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- benefits which the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.5 As the proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school as defined in the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, HM Inspectors also took account of the council's consideration of:

- viable alternatives to the closure of Olnafirth Primary school.
- the likely effect on the local community with regard to sustainability and on the community's access to the buildings, grounds and facilities if the school were to close, and
- the likely effect of different travelling arrangements on the environment and on children and young people and other school users occasioned by the closure.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Shetland Islands Council undertook the initial consultation on its proposals with reference to the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

2.2 Parents of children at Olnafirth Primary School and many members of the local community strongly oppose the proposal. They feel that Olnafirth Primary School provides very high quality learning experiences for their children as evidenced through success in national competitions and achieving national awards. They feel there are no educational benefits for their children in the proposal. Parents feel very strongly that there are factual inaccuracies in the proposal paper and in particular dispute the capacity figures for Olnafirth Primary School and the accuracy

of the savings which would be accrued. They raised particular concerns about health and safety regarding congestion at Brae High School with additional buses and cars arriving. Parents feel their children's educational experience would be lessened through missing out on after-school clubs, which they are currently able to access, as they would need to use school transport to get home at the end of the school day. They feel the children would lose the close 'family' relationship which exists in Olnafirth Primary School through moving to a larger school. Parents and other members of the community have concerns about the possible impact to the community of Voe should the school close. They do not feel that the council has considered alternatives to the closure of the school and discussed any such alternatives with stakeholders.

2.3 Overall, parents who presently live in the Olnafirth catchment area and whose children attend Brae High School Primary Department are in favour of the proposal. They see educational benefits in the proposal through their children working with similar aged children. Parents whose children attend Brae High School Primary Department are in favour of the proposal. They feel the small numbers of children involved would not affect their school.

2.4 Staff at Olnafirth Primary School are not in favour of the proposal. They feel that the school provides very good learning experiences and a safe environment to walk or cycle to school. Parents and other members of the community provide strong support to the school. Staff have developed very strong links with local schools and businesses. They are concerned about the impact on the local community if the school closes. Staff and parents felt that should the school close there were better, alternative options in schools more similar to Olnafirth Primary to continue education. Staff expressed concern that they were prevented from expressing their professional opinion at public meetings. All staff felt that there were potential educational benefits for children who were sole children in a year group moving to a larger school.

2.5 Almost all children at Olnafirth Primary School are opposed to the proposal and expressed similar views to those put forward by their parents. They are concerned that staff at the new school would not know them as individuals, that they would not be able to walk or cycle to school and that they would miss out on after-school activities. They are concerned about the impact in the local area should the school close. A few children felt it would be good to have opportunities to make new friends.

2.6 Children at Brae High School Primary Department are in favour of the proposal and would welcome the children from Olnafirth Primary School.

3. Educational aspects of the proposal

3.1 The council has correctly identified educational benefits which it believes would arise as a result of its proposal. At present, some children attend nursery class at Brae High School Nursery Department, move to Olnafirth Primary School at P1 and then return to Brae High School at the end of P7. The council's assertion that children may benefit through the reduction in the number of these transitions as a result of its proposal is reasonable. Children would potentially benefit from having

better access to a larger peer group. A larger cohort of children could provide greater opportunities for social interaction and enhance learning activities by allowing more group and team activities.

3.2 Olnafirth Primary School is operating at 10% occupancy and is therefore underutilised. Although this figure is being challenged by stakeholders in Olnafirth Primary School, the school is operating well below its capacity. Brae High School Primary Department is operating at 63% occupancy and could take all Olnafirth children with no additional staffing costs. Olnafirth Primary School consists of one main building and a hut. It has two good sized classrooms and a large general purpose hall, toilets and kitchen facilities. The building is rated as being in satisfactory condition for Scottish Government Condition and Suitability Core Fact. (B rating). There are some inaccuracies in the proposal which states there is a lack of disabled access to the school hut that houses the Art and Music classrooms and the school office, and that the school has no library. The council accepts there are inaccuracies in the proposal relating to school provision and resources. Brae High School Primary Department is a well-resourced and spacious building which consists of seven good sized classrooms and a number of communal and specialist areas. In terms of the Scottish Government Condition Core Fact, the building has been assessed as Condition B (Satisfactory). In terms of the Scottish Government Suitability Core Fact, the building has been assessed as Condition A (Good). The council feels that children currently attending Olnafirth Primary School would benefit from being educated in Brae High School Primary Department which offers a better quality physical learning environment, with modern, spacious classrooms and dedicated social spaces. While Brae High School Primary Department offers more modern accommodation, the accommodation at Olnafirth Primary School is suitable to meet the needs of a 21st century curriculum.

3.3 Children currently attending Olnafirth Primary School would be required to travel to Brae High School Primary Department. The council estimates that no child currently attending Olnafirth Primary School would have a journey time greater than 35 minutes. The council needs to clarify the supervision arrangements on buses, particularly for those children from the Mulla, Voe area, who will be travelling with secondary aged children. The travel arrangements appears to exclude children from the Voe area from after-school activities. The council needs to identify what steps it will take to provide access to after-school activities. There are legitimate health and safety concerns at Brae High School at drop off and pick up times. The council now needs to provide children and their parents with clearer information on how it will ensure children's health and safety.

3.4 The council's proposal would enable efficiencies accruing from the closure to contribute to the overall benefit of children and young people elsewhere in the council's area. The council has detailed information about the likely savings, taking into account additional transport.

3.5 The proposal will lead to the closure of a rural school as defined in the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. The only viable alternative considered by the council was to maintain provision of primary education at Olnafirth Primary School. The council considers there would be no educational detriment to the pupils currently attending Olnafirth Primary School should they attend Brae High School

Primary Department. However, they have not fully explained the educational benefits. In finalising their report, the council now needs to fully explain their reasons for not pursuing any alternative options and discussing these with stakeholders.

3.6 The council believes there would be limited impact on the local community should the school close. Voe has a community hall which is well-used by the local community. The only access to the play park in Voe and to the field used for the annual Voe Show is via the school grounds. The council needs to clarify how the local community will access these, should the school close. The school provides a number of part-time employment opportunities for people in the community and it is likely that these posts would be lost as a result of this proposal. The council has identified several possible alternative uses for the school building should it close.

3.7 The existing capacity of the bus taking young people from Voe is insufficient to accommodate the additional projected 16 children from the Olnafirth catchment area. The four children from Mulla, Voe will be accommodated on the existing secondary bus. As a result the council will provide an additional two eight seater buses. Travel arrangements resulting from this proposal, including any supervision on buses and arrangements made for children at the end of the school day, need to be clarified by the council.

4. Summary

4.1 The proposal from Shetland Islands Council to close Olnafirth Primary School and transfer children to Brae High School Primary Department with effect from July 2014 offers some potential benefits to the children directly affected by the proposal and more widely across Shetland Islands Council. Children could have better opportunities for learning together and for social interaction with others of similar ages. They would have more regular access to specialist classes and staff. Although staff at Olnafirth Primary School make good provision to ensure that children are well supported in moving from nursery into P1 and from P7 into S1, transition arrangements have the potential to be improved further with this proposal. The proposal has the potential to contribute to the council's efforts in securing best value within the context of over-capacity in the council's school estate. As a result, the council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to the benefit of children and young people throughout its area. In taking forward its proposal the council needs to explain more clearly what educational benefits will accrue from the proposal.

4.2 Parents are justifiably concerned about the travel and transport arrangements for children in the Olnafirth catchment area. In taking forward the proposal, the council needs to provide children and their parents with clearer information on how it will ensure children's health and safety. Staff and parents from Olnafirth Primary School expressed concerns as to the accuracy of school capacity, the description of the building and school resources. They also expressed concern as to the accuracy of the projected savings. In taking forward the proposal, the council needs to ensure it clarifies the accuracy of these. The council needs to provide stakeholders with further information on the likely social effects of the proposed closure on the

community. In finalising its proposal, the council needs to ensure that it has fully explored and explained the reasons for not pursuing any alternative options.

**HM Inspectors
Education Scotland
September 2013**



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

**Appendix C – Transcript of the public meeting held
at Voe Hall on 29 May 2013**



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



Wednesday 29 May 2013, 7pm, Voe Public Hall

- Chairperson – Councillor Vaila Wishart
- Lead Officer – Helen Budge
- Other Officers – Audrey Edwards, James Gray, Councillor George Smith
- Public attendees – 28
- Note Takers – Heather Summers, Katherine Sandison

Good evening everyone and welcome to this public meeting.

This public meeting is being held under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Its purpose is to give interested parties the opportunity to ask questions and air their views on the Proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School and transfer pupils to Brae High School Primary Department.

My name is Councillor Vaila Wishart and I will Chair tonight's meeting. The others on the Panel are: Director of Children's Services Helen Budge, Executive Manager Quality Improvement Audrey Edwards, Executive Manager Finance James Gray, and Vice Chair Education & Families Councillor George Smith

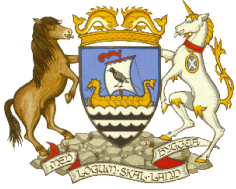
Tonight's meeting will last for two hours and will open with a short presentation on the process we are engaged in, and an outline of the Proposal for discussion. Thereafter the meeting will be opened to the floor for questions and views.

As referred to in the Notice for this meeting, the proceedings at this public consultation meeting are being recorded by note takers. The transcript of this meeting will be published in due course on the Council's website, and will form part of the Consultation Report. It would therefore be useful if, when you speak, you first give your name, if you feel comfortable doing that, and state what your relationship is with Olnafirth Primary School, for example, parent, pupil, grandparent, member of public, etc. Parents who are teachers or council employees can make their views known in the same way as any other member of the public as the SIC Code of Conduct makes clear. Any questions on that?

Helen Budge corrected information from proposal document which included:

- The year Olnafirth Primary School was built. The school was built in the 1960s, not 1902 – 1904 as stated in the proposal.
- The pupils attend Brae High School on a six week block, not as stated 9 months
- Disability Access to the but have been rectified and now have a ramp in place

These corrections will be highlighted in the Consultation Report when it is published.

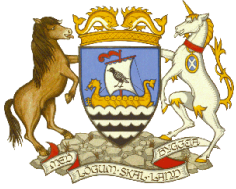


Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



Question Number	Name of Speaker	Note of Question Asked / Note of Reply
1	David McDowell Vice Chair Parent Council	<p>It is good to see that you have picked up on some of the mistakes you have made in the document. You have missed one mistake in 4.2.1, and that is that the school does have a Library.</p> <p>I would like to say that the view from the Parent Council is very clear that the school should not close and your document does not provide a valid case to be honest about it. I think if you are honest about it there is not much of a case at all for closing it.</p> <p>It is disappointing to see the mistakes that were in the document. I know the Council has been trying for approaching 10 years to close this school so you would have thought they would have had some of the details correct by now. Previously this school have had previous concessions to try and remain open, including accepting a shared Head Teacher. We have accepted cuts, Capital Projects have been pushed back, every time with the understanding that it would keep this school open as a viable prospect, and now we still find ourselves in this position. I would just like to say that is very disappointed.</p> <p>One of the things I would like to clear up is capacity, it would be very nice if you could explain how you decide and designate capacity, and be clear on that. When you have done the calculation for Olnafirth, it appears you have done it on floor space, but if you take we only have 4 classrooms and a maximum of 25 pupils per classroom and when it comes to a composite class it would actually come out as only 100 pupils, not 125. Your own policy for admissions actually says that your capacity does not count size it actually counts the budget and projected school roll, in which case the capacity would only be 19. It would be really good if you could be very clear on what the capacity is, is it 125, 100, or is it 19. When you do your calculations as to how utilised we are, it makes a bit of a difference. When you look at Brae, it is calculated in classroom which is inconsistent and makes them look different from us. I think that you actually need to remind yourself why we are here. I would like to point out it is not about education, it is all about money. You need to find savings and you are going after closing schools, in your view this is the only way that you can get the savings that you need to make. Given that it seems a bit disappointing that some of the figures are wrong and there has been very little consideration as far as I can see in this document. We have had a quick look at the figures and things like catering. The catering contract if you actually work it out at</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



£9 per head for a meal is a ridiculous figure that cannot possibly be correct or someone is not managing costs. Other schools, Anderson High, Brae they all operate at a £1 per head, there seems to be an obvious saving to be made there if that figure is correct, that would be savings of roughly £17,000.00 and that does not require any schools to close or any major changes. Education materials magically cost half when you move Olnafirth to Brae. I fail to see how moving 5 miles along the road when everything is centrally bought makes any difference to how much Jotters, pens and pencils cost. When you calculate transport costs they seem to be slightly confusing and slightly out of proportion. The transport costs for the swimming works out at £480.00 per trip and if you use that same figure for transporting pupils to Brae once you close the school that would give you transport costs in the region of £91,000, if I have done my maths correctly. When you actually take the transport costs you then claim that it will cost you buses to Brae at £95.00 per bus. There is something going wrong there and it is disappointing when the fundamental reason here is money that these things do not add up. We really need to know what figures are wrong, as they don't all hang together to me. The Grant Aid expenditure (GAE) it is interesting to note that you have that down as £2,300.00 that is £300.00 less than it is actually physically possible for it to be. If you read the Rural Schools report you will find it is £2,600.00 up to £3,200.00. Shetland actually finds itself at the higher end of that, so you have actually underestimated by roughly £700.00 per pupil, that is another £9,100.00 that you can chop off your savings. So having a quick look at your figures, I make it that you may be about £28,000.00 out so you can certainly knock that off of your £91,000.00 you are claiming is savings. Whilst we are on that the second year that Olnafirth moves to Brae you can knock off another full time equivalent teacher as Brae would only remain a 5 teacher school because of the people going from Voe to Brae. So claiming the £91,000.00 plus the loss of a teacher is slightly dishonest, this is not an ongoing saving. One of the other aspects is community. You have made a couple of comments saying that you do not think this will affect the community that is clearly wrong. You have not considered it at all. Things that have not been considered are things like access to the Voe Show be guaranteed which is an important part of the community and important for most of the north mainland which has been totally missed. The play park and the access to the play park. How do you guarantee access to the only playground which we have which is guaranteed for the future? What do you think it will do to the demographic of this society? You made a passing reference to Lerwick seems to be where people are moving to, that is chicken and egg scenario if you keep removing facilities from the rural areas, how do you expect people to move



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



there. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy. It seems odd that we have had Councillor talking specifically this week about lack of housing and the problems that have been and you are physically almost creating that by closing schools in rural areas. Moving on to educational benefits there does not seem to be one thing there other than the savings. I have already said you can find a third of the savings without touching the school, without closing it. This would just take a bit of better management. This school has performed very, very well it is the first school in Shetland to be a Rights Respecting School, winning the Saltire prize 2 years running which was a competition nationwide competition and I think that you have to understand that we were punching way above our weight for a small school. The Junior Saltire prize was won outside school time this was pupils staying back at school and walking home that is something that this proposal will fundamentally remove as a possibility. This school should not be pinned as a small school as the school is actually part of the community and spend that extra bit of time there. Looking at the transport. The transport proposal that you put into the document is inconsistent and does not seem to fully consider everything. There seems to be disparity if you happen to live in Mulla, you get shoved onto the high school bus. You go into great detail of actually going to the school but you actually miss out the return journey. That would mean that the children coming from Mulla would have to wait an extra 25 minutes as opposed to their peers. That is an extra 25 minutes that they will not get back so you have to think that will alienate them, not only from the children, here but also the children there. That is 25 minutes of their time that they do not have and this seems to be purely so that you can make more use of the bus that you have. When you look at Brae High School, they have known problems in their car park and known transport issues. There was a vehicle collision in 2010 that was described as serious and could have threatened injury. There was letters to parents and this has been part of Capital Programme since 2011 to actually make some changes to the car park because of very real concerns about the car park. Nothing has been done, that car park has been the same as it has always been and now you are going to put on extra buses with extra children and you are exposing more people to this risk. It would be good to actually see you sort the transport issues before making them worse. Basically the summary report seems to be factually incorrect a lot of the actual factual errors makes the school sound worse, made it sound older, makes it sound there is no disabled access, makes it sound there is no Library facilities and they are not true, they really are not true. The savings, with a very quick look, we can find at least a third of the savings and that is without touching the school. It is disappointing that we can find this quickly and yet



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



you go straight down the close, don't close route. There are no exploring viable alternatives options and that is very short sighted. There has been no consideration on other schools; there are other schools within this area that we could go to. There is a point made that apparently we have a lot of connection with Brae and actually we have had more to do with Lunnasting and Mossbank. We have shared more resources, we have shared more time, and we have spent more events with them. The only time we have had anything to do with Brae is when pupils move up to the high school, that is the high school, not the primary school. I would also point out that it would make more sense to me as they are more of a comparable as they are both small schools, they are rural, and would offer a similar level of education you would have felt. One thing that bothered me was there is a section in your costs called non-controlled costs, they are not actually non controllable costs, they are perfectly controllable, and these are recharges that you charge us. They are not controllable from us because you tell us what we have to pay, you just do not want us to control these costs. They look like they are per capita prices effectively each school, if I am reading figures correctly, every child is being charged roughly a £1,000.00 in this re-charge. £1,000.00 per child, if you take that across Shetland that is 15% of the education. The educational cost of each child is actually back billing from yourselves, from the central team and if you want to check the Skerries document, if I am reading the Skerries document correctly, that actually goes up to £3000.00 per child for secondary education or 30% of the cost of educating secondary pupils. Maybe you are looking in the wrong place for savings, do you think? That seems an awful big proportion of the money going elsewhere and bearing in mind we have spent a lot of time I would like to hand back.

Councillor Wishart – Thank you Mr McDowell for the questions.

Helen Budge – I think we are here to hear people's views and those questions have been recorded and we will go into the detail. I take your point where these are many of your views and that is why we are here tonight. One thing I would like to pick up on is you refer to you have more to do with Lunnasting and Mossbank. As part of this proposal paper we have made a decision, which is to suggest that Brae is the receiving school, the school where the bairns would go. If that is something you feel strongly about, that is something you need to let us know as well because that is something that is part of this whole process, this consultation. We need to listen to all your points so if that is something you want us to consider then these are the points you need to make.

In respect of, we will come to you. The Chair will keep an eye





Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



	Scott	No, no, I'm just saying if that were a council employee's view, would they be permitted to express it without any repercussions?
	Scott	<p>Councillor Wishart – If that's what they think, yes.</p> <p>I think, and I'm sure other people will want to comment on it. For me, there is one real issue with the consultation aside from those facts that David has mentioned which seems to suggest that a lot of homework hasn't been done here. The likely effect on the local community from 6.9 to 6.13 seems to basically say there will be no effect on the community, none whatsoever, in fact what it actually seems to do is make a series of statements none of which is actually relevant to what that section should be about. As a business owner, the school closure would have a direct affect on my business because I supply milk to the school just as a small issue a lot of the children use the school on their way home, a lot of the parents use the shop. If they were to feel that they couldn't live in Voe any more and move to Brae because of rising fuel costs which obviously Tagon Stores has publicised and is well known throughout the island, if they wanted to therefore to move elsewhere, that would directly affect the custom that we receive so it seems to me the thoughts on the local community effects have basically just been completely ignored. There is obviously the bakery and the pub as well – just two other small businesses. OK, the children are not directly affected by that but if the parents move away can't afford to get the fuel to come back to work in those places for example, that is going to affect their businesses as well, so to say there is very little or no effect is frankly completely wrong.</p> <p>Councillor Wishart – Thank you for that.</p>
4	Chris Brown	<p>I am a historian, and just a member of the community. I do have children but they are long, long, grown up I can assure you. David seems to have demolished a fair proportion of your costing arguments, but a year and a half ago or thereby, closing Olnafirth was going to save £249,000. Now it is going to save, how much did you say, £91,000? Is that right?</p> <p>Helen Budge – That's what's in the proposal paper.</p>
	Chris Brown	<p>Right, so given that the arithmetic was clearly just plucked from thin air a year and a half ago when you were saying a quarter of a million, unless the £160,000 funding gap has been sorted somewhere along the line, given that it was so profoundly wrong then, given that David has just demolished a third of your costing and evaluation this evening, is there any reason why we should</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



		<p>think what remains of the costing is actually valid? Also, I think people might be a little more sympathetic to cost saving needs if the SIC and the Council were to accept a bit of responsibility. I believe two of you are Councillors, is that correct? And have you been councillors for a long time or just in the current periods? Have you been councillors for ages?</p> <p>Councillor Smith – Since May last year.</p> <p>Chris Brown I think you are off the hook. If you have been a Councillor for longer then.</p> <p>Councillor Wishart – No, since May last year.</p> <p>Chris Brown Since May last year then. Well, ok you are both off the hook. I think that is very good fortune as the Councillors have been, well, there are [perfectly good word but I'm not going to use them tonight] they've really not been terribly good, SIC management is clearly not good, it is immensely top heavy. I think more people would be inclined to be sympathetic to the idea of closing school if the immensely top heavy management structure was rectified in some way but I don't think we have heard any suggestions about that. I may be wrong, have we? No, I thought probably not. Any reason we should trust your figures now, they have been so desperately wrong in the past? That was a question for just now rather than later.</p> <p>Helen Budge – I'll ask James Gray to answer the financial point then I'll come back to the management structure later.</p> <p>James Gray – Well the first thing I would say, you ask about management structure, those costs sit in Corporate Services and the Council decided in its' Medium Term Financial Plan that Corporate Services would take a proportionally bigger cut than Children's Services so its Development Service and Corporate Services are actually going to get a smaller percentage of the overall budget. As I was saying Children's Services is going to go from 36 % to 38% so the intention of that is to address some of those costs that are in the centre which will have a knock-on effect on the re-charges, you would expect those to go down in the future.</p> <p>With regard to the £249,000, I think that was a year and a half ago, I think that was before my time, but what I did do was I looked up the figure for the report that went to Council on 20 September, the Blueprint report and the figure in there was £167,000 and I had anticipated there might be a question as to why the figure had changed. I suppose it's to say that finance is a moving picture. The £167,000 is based on the 12/13 budget</p>
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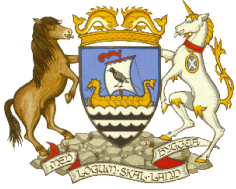


Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



		<p>so we take the costs within the 12/13 budget and work out what they were and what the expected savings would be from moving to another school. The most recent figure of £91,000 that you have, that came from the 13/14 budget so I suppose the big difference was that in the 12/13 budget there were two teachers budgeted for where now there is one so that accounts for about £40,000 of the difference and £30,000 of the difference is Grant aided Expenditure and the figures in September that had not been factored in but this is something that going forward will now have GAE impact. It's not something that the Council has been terribly good at in the past but it's certainly something we are going to make sure we take those into consideration in the future so that's why the figure is different from September but I will look into the £249,000 from before that so as to get an explanation as to why it's moved from that.</p>
	Chris Brown	<p>Even with what you have just said which I have to take in good faith but we are still £90,000 out. There is still £90,000 not accounted for terribly well.</p>
		<p>Helen Budge – If I can add to that because if we go back to the original figure there were some alterations to the support staff that we have in schools so we've reduced our budgets over the past, well I think now it's probably since about 2005 so quite a number of years and it's part of a previous reductions we've had. We've looked at reducing support staff so the original figure you quoted, the £249,000 there has been reductions. Some of you may be aware there used to be knitting instruction in schools, for example. We don't have that any longer. Some of you will be aware that there used to be staff that came from the secondary department into the primary to deliver modern foreign languages and such like. Those types of resources that we used to have in the school at one time no longer happen, so we would have a number of things that brought it down from £249,000 to £160,000 and the big difference for us is the fact that there is not two teachers any more, there is one teacher and that made a big difference because there is the on costs as well as the salary of that teacher to pay. As James has already said, for this proposal, because of the difference in the schools we have to factor in GAE but that won't be for all proposals, that will just be for certain ones where that is a factor.</p>
	Chris Brown	<p>The knitting teacher and the visiting foreign language teachers, they disappeared before the £249,000 figure. They are really not relevant figures. Sorry but this is just an irrelevance and is not valid. So we are still 90 grand out. If your figures are so bad in the space of 18 months, looking back, is there any reason why we should have any faith in the figures you offer now?</p>

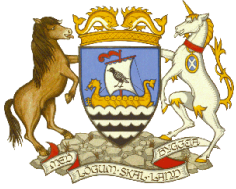


Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



	Chris Brown	<p>Audrey Edwards – Can I just finish a point that Helen has picked up on already. £249,000 did not feature in a formal proposal paper, it was in committee reports that went along with our 2010 different proposals that we put forward for increasing levels of change in the school estate and what that did is underlining all of that within each of those proposals was a proposal across the whole of the school estate to reduce support staff which included clerical staff, classroom assistants staff, cleaning staff, catering staff so the baseline that we had for that in any of those groups of proposals would have included all the support staff reductions in and around the proposal so in that world we were looking at Olnafirth going to possibly Brae so included all of the savings that there would have been in the receiving school as well for that proposal that we would save support staff across the whole of the school estate. There is a factor in there about savings in the receiving school as well.</p> <p>I'm sorry but that would be an incredibly incompetent way to approach budgeting. I'm quite sure that nobody did it that way, it makes no sense at all.</p> <p>Audrey Edwards – it wasn't part of the budgeting, it was put forward as part of the costing for possible proposals for the school estate.</p> <p>Councillor Smith – I just want to make a comment. Yes, I've been a Councillor since May 2012. I have been around the Council for a long time and I've been involved in discussions around the Blueprint and I think the one consistent thing I hear all the time is that the Council has one set of figures and the community consistently challenges those and questions those. I think, from my position, I want to see us arriving at a position where there is an understanding, if not a liking perhaps of what those figures are, but understanding that they stand up to scrutiny. This is the only way, I think, that Councillors can have confidence in making the decisions. Sorry, can you let me finish, please? I will lose my train of thought if I am interrupted. I want to see and be confident in making the decision, whatever way I make that decision, that the information in front of me stands up to scrutiny and I think communities need to feel confident in that but equally, the need to feel confident in the information that is being presented to them because it is very easy to criticise and knock down, it is very difficult sometimes when you are on a platform here to respond to the kind of comments that's being made but we clearly need to have a coming together at some stage as we work through this process so as that there is a common understanding of where and how</p>
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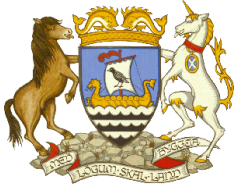


Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



		<p>those figures have been arrived at then we'll see if it's £90,000 of savings or £60,000 of savings or indeed £150,000 of savings. We'll be able to understand. This is, as I see it, it's the start of this process and I think that the first contribution, there were some very interesting comments made there. I would personally, as a Councillor, want to see them explored and understood a bit better. I don't come here with any closed mind at all. I believe in ensuring that we can deliver the best possible education that we can to all of our pupils wherever they are in Shetland and that's what I want to achieve so anything that helps me to arrive at a decision is going to be beneficial so I am not going to be criticising that I hear tonight and I would like to think that you would accept that the information that is being presented to you tonight is in good faith and has substance to it that we might want to explore further and see if it needs refining or whatever. Nobody is coming here to give you false information. The information is based on the best that was available at that time and if it is challengeable then that's great as well. We'll have that discussion.</p>
	Chris Brown	<p>I have to say that clearly the figures are going to be altered from last year... I used to be part of the parent council I've never seen that before today. If the figures are to be challenged we've got to be given proper answers.</p>
	Chris Brown	<p>What I thought was insignificant and ... in the past, is there any reason why we, selectively as a community, should trust them now? I have to say, hand on heart, if I was out looking for a job I analyse based on capital income?</p> <p>Councillor Wishart – Could I just let someone speak who hasn't spoken.</p>
5	Laurence Thomson	<p>(did not use microphone so may not be verbatim)</p> <p>I was going to ask the Councillors themselves, I was led to believe on the radio that a new post with a salary of £53,000 a year for two years had been created to deal with the Blueprint carry on. It was also on the radio that they've lost £300,000,000 from the oil reserves and a lot of that money has gone towards education and social work and mostly staffing. It was also on the radio that the workforce has gone from 300 odd folk to 900 odd staff. I want to know why have so many people been taken on? Why is there so many folk in Hayfield House? They must have taken on a lot of this staff in the last 13 years. Why does this new post cost £53,000 for two years when this £53,000 could help this school here for a lot of months? Too much money is spent on management in Hayfield House and across the whole</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



	<p>Laurence Thomson</p>	<p>of the council as far as I can see.</p> <p>I want to know why so many folk are taken on? I want to know why £300,000,000 out of the oil reserves, that was meant tae pay for education and to look after the old folk, has been squandered. I want to know if the council have looked into, because I think they could be saving a lot of money, not closing schools but management costs across the whole of the council. I want staffing levels and wages to be looked into at Hayfield House. Then they might think not to close primary schools and keep them in the communities.</p> <p>Councillor Smith - That's a good point. Part of what James spoke about the medium term financial strategy of the Council is to reduce the spending by a significant amount, £36 million or thereabouts a year and that's what's accumulated, if you like, along with some capital spend on projects that haven't worked out for one reason or another. That's where the £300,000,000 million comes from. It's mostly from that draw on the reserves year after year that isn't matched by the income that's coming in. James can probably describe it better than me. So a lot of that as you quite rightly say does appear to have gone on staffing. Now we certainly have a strategy in the lifetime of this Council and that's what I can speak about. I can't speak about what's been done previously and we have a clear strategy that, by the end of this Council, we will be in balance. We won't be drawing more from the reserves so that situation shouldn't crop up again. Clearly, there is a consequence. The consequence is that we are having to reduce services from what we have had and while the elected members have priority around children and older people, I think from the presentation from the chair we said that the percentage spend at the moment is about 36% of the Council budget is spent on children and young people and Children's Services and that will go up to 38% obviously of a reduced amount so there is a real cut in terms of spend there. Now some of that is already biting. £3.3 million that Helen spoke about in this financial year is about staff mostly. Whether it is secondary teachers, whether it is support staff, whether it is additional support needs or whatever, that is staff will be disappearing. That is a resource schools have had that they no longer have. We also have the added complication of a change in the demographic. We spoke about the fall in the number of school age bairns. Our population, if anything, is slightly on the increase but, what it is reflecting is an increase in the number of older folk and, as folk live longer, as we know, the demands in terms of service provision to meet their needs increases so we have a double whammy if you like. We have less money, we have greater demands in terms of older members of the community</p>
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Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



and we are still trying to maintain a quality education system. I think another easy target is to say staff in Hayfield are too many and you raised the question about the post. This post is actually not a new post, it is a replacement, there was a post holder providing support for the Blueprint for Education who has gone back to school so the post is, if you like, to compensate for the loss of that, to give some capacity. I know from being in Hayfield quite a lot in terms of being the vice chair of the committee just how the hours and the workload that Helen and her colleagues are having to put in. I would ask you to believe me that they are by no means sitting wondering where the next piece of work is coming from. They are flat out all the time trying to deliver on this and meet all the requirements that are coming from national sources such as the Curriculum for Excellence, such as coming from the Inspectorate of Children's services, whether it's the Schools service or the wider learning community, they are flat out. If you don't want to take my word, I can only say what I see, so I think they need, if they are going to do this job in the way that you want them to do it and come with credible information to you, they need to have the resources to be able to do that. So it is a difficult position and nobody wants to be in that position. Councillors don't want to be in that position and neither do the officers and so I think a peerie bit of understanding of the circumstances they are working in would help the process along Rather than just being seen as an easy target. I understand where you are coming from.

Councillor Wishart – Helen has just passed me a note saying that representatives of the Parent Council could come to Finance and go over the figures if that would be helpful.

Helen Budge – That's certainly what parent councils have done in the past so that you understand where the figures are coming from and what each individual figure is about and I think we've found that quite helpful to enable you to fully understand where these figures are because, as we've said, it is not £240,000 anymore, it is not £160,000. What we are looking at is £91,000 and so James has confirmed that they would be more than willing to meet with representatives if you wanted to come, say, 3 or 4 of you to go over that.

Audrey Edwards – And I think as well it is important to say in the proposal papers we have produced in the last round of the Blueprint and the schools that we ended up closing, Uyeasound Primary and Scalloway Junior High School secondary department, the savings that we ultimately made from each of those closure proposals was more than we had in the proposal papers initially.



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



6	Barbara Cheyne	<p>I used to be councillor for the area from 2003 – 2007 during which time we struggled to keep Olnafirth alive and succeeded. There were 5 schools under threat at that time. We have moved on since then and I am surprised tonight to notice that Helen Budge seems to have no knowledge of the parent council's wishes regarding the future of their bairns' education. That is putting the bairns to Lunnasting. I think some more communication would be a great benefit.</p> <p>Councillor Wishart – Thank you.</p>
7	Councillor Duncan	<p>Thank you very much, Chair. I would just like to follow up on Mr Laurence Thomson's statement there. I am the Chair of Audit and Standards in the Shetland Islands Council and when he mentioned levels of staffing and costs, I have already, at the last meeting, asked questions about that and I will be following up on that because I require further information which I am getting at the present time. May I say to Mr Thomson that over the past 2 years there's about 284 full time equivalent jobs gone from this Council and we are now back to the staffing levels of 2008, but if he wants any further information I will be very glad to give it to him and I am talking here with some facts and in broad and general terms. Thank you.</p>
8	<div style="vertical-align: top;">David Leask</div> <div style="vertical-align: top; margin-top: 20px;">David Leask</div>	<p>I am a former pupil of Olnafirth Primary and a member of the community. I have a two-stage question. One of it might concern the Audit and Standards. The first one is, when was this document created, this document I am holding, when was it actually created?</p> <p>Helen Budge – It was created for this proposal in early May. The first 2 weeks of May is when we started. We probably did some work before then, but all the detail was pulled together in May.</p> <p>The second question I would raise from that is in the summer of 2012 an employee of the SIC could tell me - quote – the closure of the Olnafirth Primary was a done deal. I was told in the summer of 2012 by a council employee that the closure of the Olnafirth Primary School was a done deal. Well in light of all the other conflicting information we have seen tonight and we have seen some belters, it really questions the validity of this document and the integrity of it and really we would need to see more facts or even an independent investigation by the Scottish Parliament into how it has been handled.</p> <p>Helen Budge – There is the opportunity for the Minister to call in a decision should it get to that stage as part of this legislation</p>





Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



		<p>community because of the loss of the school. I see in your costings that there is an amount of money laid by to keep the building up - to pay for the insurance on it and such like. I think the figure mentioned was £7,000 just simply to keep up the building and I don't know for how long that would be? What I wanted to do is simply reiterate some of the things that David has said which is this building is very much part of the community. You can actually access the other things that happen through the school playground. For example the play park has been there since 1980. It's not part of the school at all it is just adjacent to the playground. Now it's a really important thing especially for preschool bairns. Presumably you have to allow access. One of the brilliant things about the Voe school, out with the excellent education is that the school gate is not shut. We live near a very very busy main road that can get heavy traffic at various times. The play park has always been a haven for peerie bairns to cycle in and use. The play park is a really key part of the community. How can you have a council building that is not vacant? Are you going to provide access to the play park? Also there is somebody who lives in the School House and he has to get access to his house which is at the back of the school. He accesses it through the play ground. Also the car park at the back of the school is the main car park for the Voe show – okay it's a once a year event but it's a pretty big event. And access is provided through the gate of the play ground. Now there will maybe be Voe Show committee members who will tell you how important the car park is but it seems to me that access has to be left for this. Is this not going to be another cost for you?</p> <p>Helen Budge -These are all things that as part of the consultation process that we need to hear and then we would then answer that in the consultation report – taking on board all of what everyone is saying around the different options for this.</p> <p>The building itself is used for the community show for the kitchen facilities and dining area. I would like to say that I feel that the constant threat of closure that's been hanging over this school for the past few years is without a doubt had influence on placing requests that you've put in your report. It has to have made a difference. If you tell the story often enough that the school is going to shut it does have an effect.</p>
11	Phoebe	<p>To my mind it seems that the council's role is to provide services. I come from an engineering and industrial background. If a factory needs to save money it doesn't stop making its products, the council's products are its services, it finds</p>

Eileen
Johnson

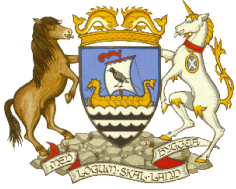


Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



		<p>efficiencies. It makes things more efficient still to the same quality. I would ask the council you have to save £3.3 million out of £41 million, which by my calculations is approximately 7.5%, by being more efficient. There is a saying in industry: “with every pair of hands you get a free brain”. Has the council considered approaching every single school, every single department within the council and saying over across the board we have to as a group save 7.5% of our total budget? How is your department going to help us save that money and provide a more over reaching approach, rather than appearing to pick on certain schools and certain departments and not others. And so you carry on providing services that the council is there to provide rather than making cuts.</p>
	Phoebe	<p>Councillor Wishart – If you look on page 28 of the document you can see the number of things that have had to be reduced in the last while and it’s a pretty expensive list and a lot of things have been squeezed.</p>
	Phoebe	<p>But that’s not what I’m suggesting. I’m trying to suggest things shouldn’t have to be squeezed that there are economies that can be made just by doing things differently not by cutting things.</p>
	Phoebe	<p>Councillor Wishart – I’d love to hear the suggestions. What would you suggest?</p>
	Phoebe	<p>That’s not what I’m saying if you ask the people on the ground floor if you like.</p>
	Phoebe	<p>Councillor Wishart – We are asking.</p>
	Phoebe	<p>No but we don’t work for the council we don’t know the inner workings of the council. We don’t know how the administrator for a certain department works. If you asked that administrator – how can you save 7.5% of what you spend and show them what they spend they can tell you. That’s how it works in industry. We were about 50 years behind the Japanese before we clicked that actually if you ask the people that do the job they can usually find savings for you because they’ve been sitting there thinking well what do we do about this.</p>
		<p>Helen Budge – In respect of Children’s Services we year on year meet with our Head Teachers and have that conversation around where we can look for those efficiencies. We are the biggest area of spending cuts across the council. We can’t take away from that. We realise that. To do that we have looked at what efficiencies can we find and the list at 6.3 sets out some of the ways at which this department has looked at other</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



	<p>alternatives to not go to look at closures. We have to try to do what is educationally best for our young people. So we agree that efficiencies have to be made before considering some of the proposals that we have to do. I think those staff that work in schools currently, will see that it is a different level of support that they have, compared to two or three years ago even. The amount of operation costs and resource costs has been cut year on year. And that's all done in conjunction with our Head Teachers who – exactly as you're suggesting – feed into that process and tell us where they feel some efficiencies can be made.</p> <p>Phoebe</p> <p>Is there any plan to actually give Head Teachers control of the budgets of their schools and say this is the budget you've got for this year? This is what you have to make the school work with.</p> <p>Helen Budge – We do that to some extent. It's very difficult to do that in some areas particularly when we have such small schools because if we were to say for example here is your supply budget for the year and somebody goes off for a whole year that supply budget would very quickly be used up. So we do have to have some central contingencies for positions like that. So, yes we give where we possibility can we give the budget to the schools operating costs for example. Additional Support Needs is another example where, to allocate an amount of money to a school where a child may then move on or a new child may come in, we need to have some sort of central flexibility around that. So as far as possible we can but because of the small size and number of our schools and the types of things that may require additional budget we have to have some contingencies centrally.</p>
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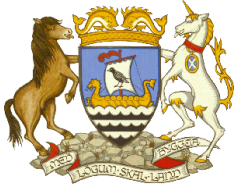


Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



12	Name given not given	<p>I would just like to make the point, you say about the budgets and buying things: does the education department on a whole cover all the needs, all the school's books, all the other stuff that they need and buy them all in bulk? Or do they allocate to each school to buy their own?</p> <p>Audrey Edwards – Well we allocate for learning materials for each school. Centrally the council now is part of Scotland Excel and part of the Scottish Government Procurement Scheme. James will keep me right here in case I get this wrong. That means that there are preferred suppliers that they put down for best prices for jotters pencils and all of those resources. Schools have to buy their resources from those suppliers.</p> <p>Name given not given</p> <p>So are the schools buying their own resources, basically, out of a budget that's allocated to them? Okay point. Would they not be better off keeping the budget in one lump and do the buying and bulk buying by the education department themselves? To save themselves a lot of money that way.</p> <p>James Gray – I think we are already getting the benefit of that through Scotland Excel no even getting the benefit Shetland wide this is a Scotland wide contract so the prices have been negotiated based on the whole people using the same suppliers or a very small number of suppliers so the prices have been brought down by that so we've just bought into that and gone through Scotland Excel.</p> <p>Helen Budge – The other side of that is that some Head Teachers like the flexibility that the previous lady spoke about, which is where we allocate the budget to them and they have control over that. So there is a balance there around what we class as devolved school management, and that central purchasing.</p>
13	Scott	<p>Just a very brief point on what Mr Smith said earlier on. You said that obviously there is good faith in these figures and that is the intention behind the proposal and I completely agree with you and I'm sure there has been no intent to mislead anybody. My thought on that is, if you are talking about affecting the community in such a dramatic way isn't there some form of responsibility that says these figures shouldn't be able to be slashed by a third within a matter of two weeks of this proposal being put out by the community council surely there's a sense that says "oh yeah 10 grand here or there that somebody can find for the council who haven't noticed is fine but when we're talking £30,000 - £40,000 - £50,000 difference surely somebody should be saying hang on we've really got this wrong we really</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



		<p>should be looking at this properly.</p> <p>James Gray – We’ve heard the comments you’ve said tonight. We’re still very keen to – you know - if you wanted to come in and identify us look at what we’ve done. What I want to say is that, I at the moment don’t accept that you’ve found 30% things you haven’t given me any fact. We’ve worked on the budget, which is fact. We’ve looked at every single line and looked at what the savings might be. Now I’m not saying that what you’ve said is wrong in the hope that in the same way I wouldn’t want you to say what we’re saying is wrong and this point. We maybe have a different understanding but I would appreciate it if you gave us the opportunity to go into detail to explain how we got these figures and you to tell us how you got yours so we can understand what the true figure is. So there is an open invitation for you to come in and look at what we’ve done and tell us how you got your figures.</p>
	David McDowell	<p>Well it’s really not easy depending on the amount of children and on the amount of days. If that really is what you are paying on your staffing - something is wrong.</p> <p>James Gray – So there is a part time cook? Is that right? We are limited to £22,000 is the cost of providing meals to the children in this school every single day of the term. £22,000! How much are you paying someone to do that and then you’ve got all the materials of doing that and then you’ve got to go and prepare the stuff and bring it into the school.</p>
	David McDowell	<p>The report and the planning for the extra staff costs ... the way you write it in the report ... that’s even employees.</p> <p>Helen Budge – We are on page 39.</p>
	David McDowell	<p>When you look at what you claim is employees you’ve ... employees and then you go to the figures at the back – you’ve got employee costs. Now to my understanding that would imply that the employee costs are for all the employees. The catering contract – certainly with other school proposals, the Skerries one, it seems to me implying the costs of the meals. Certainly what you transfer across implies the cost of the meals. Either way £9 a head is extortionate. You could find efficiencies there.</p> <p>James Gray – It’s just the way that we have internally set up our systems in that the catering staff sit in a catering area of the budget. It’s just an internal budget thing. So the catering staff sit inside the catering line inside the staff box. There are presentational things – we know – we maybe made things</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



	David McDowell	<p>difficult to understand. Like I say if you were to come in we could explain more stuff and you could feed back to people in the community. There is staff time for catering; the catering staff is included in the £22,000.</p> <p>There is one other thing I'd just like to pick up on – you claimed you were saying that each of you have to budget for about £40,000. I believe that's how you said it. So you can actually chop that off after the first year of the proposal. The very presence of the Voe children in Brae keeps it as a 5-teacher school. So it's not fair to claim it's £91,000 a year, you should be down to £50,000. It's £91,000 for year one, £50,000 for year two. I think you need to make that clear because if the councillors are voting trying to find £91,000 worth of savings you know are here – they're not.</p> <p>James Gray - The starting numbers is not something I'd be able to answer. The schools – I don't know about.</p>
	David McDowell	<p>You've projected wrong for year after they move into Brae. The presence of our children in Brae make it a 5 teacher school. So to be fair and to really be clear on year on year savings which is what you are going after you have to chop off that teacher saving.</p> <p>Helen Budge – We would certainly have to look at that. The figures for 2014/15 for Brae on its own is 102. Then if we go on - and I've not found it in the book yet - but the year after that currently as far as the figures that we have at the moment is that it would be 93. Now, as you say that would put it under 100, but again we are looking two years forward. Once we come to the start of next session, we would have a better indication for the year ahead because each year we have to look at the figures and look at what the projected rolls is and also what the actual rolls is for that year. Some of our projections do change and we do recognise that. In the consultation report we will highlight this point because it's been raised and at that point we will know better what next year's figures will be and confront a projection for the year after. So that will be taken into consideration.</p>
	David McDowell	<p>Yeah it is important point because when the Councillors vote they need the proper information. They need to know whether they are getting £91,000 worth of saving or £50,000 worth of saving - and it really is a fair reflection. This will damage communities, this will damage children's education and it is not something to be taken lightly. It needs to be right.</p> <p>Helen Budge - I agree. I also would like to say that we have to</p>





Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



	given	<p>blueprint for education. You probably have some frightening figure put on to it including all the staff and everything. This could have kept schools open. Basically it's keeping people in a job until the schools are shut. Then you'll have a whole load of extra staff and nothing to do because the schools are shut. Will we be getting that figure? Will it be available? I mean it's being going on for years.</p> <p>Helen Budge - We would have figures starting back at 2008/09 for staffing figures. We class it as operating costs, which is the printing that you've all received tonight - those types of costs as well. Starting in 2008/09 it was £14,000. Going onto this year, which is 2013/14, which we've started, we've predicted both staffing and operating costs for this year.</p>
16	Name given not given	<p>We're just speaking about one part of it (the proposal) here it says in 6.11: "There is currently a healthy level of demand for Local Authority housing in the Voe area. This may be as a result of the increased economic activity in the North Mainland more generally. The greatest proportion of demand is for smaller sized accommodation (1-2 bedrooms)." That might have something to do with the fact that at least all of the 1-2 bed roomed houses that are council houses in the Voe area. I think there are three – possibly four still council owned three bedroom houses. There is one council owned house in Isles road. The rest have all been sold off.</p> <p>Helen Budge - This information came from Housing so I'll take that back from tonight's meeting back to the housing department.</p>
17	Name given not given	<p>Voe has been very unfortunate in the last two or three years. The situation where some houses will be available. Can I pick up on that point? We have the problem here at the moment that the houses are being rented out to oil workers. That is only going to be going on for the next probably 18 months. Those houses might become available again. The whole problem with Voe is that it's gotten stuck on family sized houses. I do believe that if more family sized houses became available then there would be more people to go to the school. It has also made an influence on young couples. That is going to be families coming up so with the numbers now that doesn't really effect what is going to happen in a few years time. The numbers you have now could be substantially more. I don't know if the council have to get the debt, well - if they get that sorted out do they have any plans for building houses in the Brae area or Voe or whatever for families. It's a big question. There is going to be more work going on at Total.</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



		Helen Budge – I wouldn't actually have the answer about the housing question I'm afraid. We can certainly look for that and get that information from Housing.
18	Councillor Cooper	The situation is that there are ten houses going to be developed in Brae at the moment. The council is not going to build any more houses in this council's live, at least until 2017. Hyaltland will be building houses in Brae at the moment. Then they will be concentrating on central mainland because everybody wants to live near Lerwick. There is real pressure for the council to identify land near Lerwick.
19	Name not given	Can I just point out that it's not that folk, well there are folk that want houses in the central area – fair enough, but that's because you are trying to empty the rural community by constantly doing this. That's why there is demand in the central areas.
20	Barbara Cheyne	The argument that's being proposed regarding empty properties coming on was exactly what was used to keep the school alive last council. There were empty houses in Mulla that's when all the ones moved out and private folk were buying them. I discussed that with the Director of Housing at the time... Western Isles ... Anyway, he said that the education figure was 1 and a half children per house likely to come to the school and I figured that it was less than that. There was something like 13 houses. That largely was what kept the school open at that time – the promise of that. And it succeeded because there were no bairns that came to the school. You don't know what's going to happen in the future regarding these houses but it was reality before why can it not be reality again. I don't know I can't answer that figure.
21	Name not given	<p>Going back to the housing situation, as Alistair said and the SIC and Hyaltland which in turn should be a positive effect on the school numbers for the Brae school. If you suddenly put Voe's numbers in with that knowing it will grow and Brae ultimately has to pass its capacity - then what do you do? Where's the savings if you have to extend that school? When you had to spend money closing this school.</p> <p>Helen Budge – Brae currently in the primary has 101. So they do have enough capacity currently to take ones from Voe and some further capacity for some of the house building work that's ongoing.</p>
22	Name not given	House building is another very relevant point. There are a lot of private house building going on all through the whole of the North Mainland and so much so I think the boy from 'Buildbase' said that the private house building there is so big that the

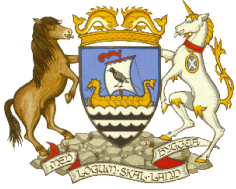


Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



		<p>branch in Lerwick is currently the best performing branch in the United Kingdom. So you've also got population and house potential there where you would need to make sure you had adequate school capacity and that would usually include keeping plenty of rural schools open.</p> <p>Helen Budge – That's certainly something that, at the moment, more than 50% of our schools are less than 50% capacity so currently with the schools that we have we do have quite a bit of capacity in our rural schools and within the Brae Secondary department there is some spare capacity there as well. Because there are certainly not at the full capacity in their secondary classrooms so there should be some ability to look at capacity there should all of these things happen and it go beyond the expectations that we have currently.</p>
23	Name given not	<p>Have you taken into account the industry here: the Gas Plant, Sullom Voe the redevelopment of the airport, all these things going on, all the house building going on? It is actually going on around us.</p> <p>Helen Budge - I appreciate that and that's why I think it comes back to the points that were made earlier around the detriment on the local community. We are very conscious that there is a number of projects - I shall call it - that is ongoing, not in this particular community but in the surrounding communities. Yes we do understand that.</p>
24	Councillor Cooper	<p>Have we taken account of the children and the parent's decisions regarding Lunnasting and Mossbank? Are you assuming that the bairns will continue going to that schools? Are you assuming that the total potential roll from Voe is going to go to Brae because that is not how it looks in the proposal?</p> <p>Helen Budge - Your assumption is correct. We are assuming that those young folk that have chosen Mossbank and Lunnasting will remain there. That's what we are hearing tonight that our proposal might not be what the parent council would want to wish for and again we need to take that on board tonight as well.</p> <p>Surely it used to be costing for the worst-case scenario and then everything after that was a bonus. That's effectively changed I think.</p> <p>Helen Budge – Well to be fair when we've costed a variety of different models in the past for some of our previous proposals we were criticised because there wasn't a clarity around which of</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



		<p>the proposals we were actually suggesting. We had a situation where some folk in some communities were not happy because we were saying 'well they could go here or they could go here'. If I use the Sandness example we said that they could go to Happy Hansel or they could go to Aith. The people in Sandness made it very clear to us that they didn't want the school to close, but they certainly didn't want to go to Aith if proposed they would rather go to Happy Hansel. That's the type of thing in the past that we've taken on board not to take on two options but giving clearly one. This whole process is about us listening to what the community is saying and if that is something that you want us to explore that is certainly something we will do.</p>
25	Phoebe	<p>Going back to something Helen said earlier about the fact that it's not all about money that it's about the children's education. I'd just like to jump and take you Section 5 of your document, to the Educational Benefits statement. If you read through the statements an awful lot of them are financial. The question in that is that, according to the Schools Consultation Scotland Act 2010, which is the piece of legislation we are actually following in this process: it says that you have to show an educational benefit. Now I don't think anything in Section 5 actually shows a benefit. In fact, in the statement at the end, 5.21: 'The Children's Services considered there would be no education detriment.' That isn't an education benefit that's just educationally neutral. That you don't think it will do the kids any harm to go to Brae. You're not showing any benefit. There is nothing to be gained for our children going to Brae.</p> <p>Helen Budge - I appreciate that if you go on to 5.37, then you would restate there that closing Olnafirth – this is a summary of the whole of this section - and moving the pupils to Brae would provide the following benefits to the Olnafirth pupils. At 5.38 it then goes on to say two on the benefits for all of the pupils across Shetland. That summarises that whole section.</p>
26	Chris Brown	<p>Most people will find the print is ludicrously small and unreasonable. I've got printed legislation that I spend a lot of time reading. If I find this a challenge I would think most people would. I think what we've got to hear is what specifically would you envisage as being the educational benefit for Voe children to go to Brae or indeed anywhere else?</p> <p>Helen Budge – Can I first of all pick up your point about the size of the print. We are trying to reduce the operational cost of the document, which is why it is printed in this size. When we are under statutory obligation to present it to parents, to post out an envelope of this size is obviously much cheaper than double the</p>

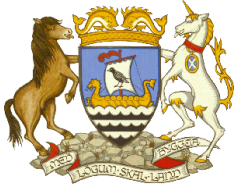


Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



	Chris Brown	size. I take your point about vision, but we can provide ones in a bigger print if you would wish and also on the internet you can go to the website and you can enlarge it to whatever size is more suitable to your eyesight.
	Chris Brown	<p>It is a small point ... but never mind that. The real point was: what do you see as the educational benefit for the Voe children? But what do you see as being the actual physical beneficial outcome.</p> <p>Helen Budge – The educational benefit is set out in this and I'm sorry that you cannot read it.</p> <p>Oh I can see it ...It includes the coherent and such like.</p> <p>Helen Budge – Okay I understand that sometimes it's easier to understand clearer language. One of the points is where we would say that the young people in the schools – the pupils - would have the ability to play with other children of the same age its called peer group. That's young folk that would be at the same stage, which again is the same ability and also the same whether they are boys or girls. Sometimes it's the case that in very small schools where there is a boy of five – there may not be another boy of similar age or a boy that would be able to play with him. So what we are looking at is that they would be more children that they would be able to play with of similar age.</p> <p>I understand peer groups and I have to say you've just been very condescending. I completely understand this. I'm a reasonably well-educated sort of person. This is just words and what you've just said is... The school here is fine and ...</p>
27		Councillor Wishart – We are running out of time and there are a few who haven't spoken yet.
28	Emma McDonald	I have pupils at the school. The things you've just listed there, they're not educational benefits - they do that already. They're really good mates. But I don't see how that's an educational benefit.
29	David McDowell	Also picking up on that, if you move the children to Brae if you look at the last Annual Reports of Brae there is only one single class that has gone through three years with a stable year. The classes have been split differently year on year. They've been split up. Sometimes they've been split in half with half of them in the year below and half of them in the year above. I fail to see how that can be good for a child compared with being in the same classroom with the same children year on year.



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



	David McDowell	<p>Helen Budge – We take these points on board. There are also some children that find it not the best experience to be in the same class year on year.</p> <p>I've not heard that complaint from any children at the school.</p>
30	Scott	<p>My point, just briefly, is aside from acknowledging play, what people are asking for is how are these children going to benefit in Maths, in English, in Science and all those subjects and become better educated by going to Brae? Going to the school that provides them something better than what they get now – that's a benefit? Otherwise, you're just – as Chris said – using just words.</p> <p>Audrey Edwards - I think one of the most important points that we need to try and make here is that the impact that the Blueprint for Education would have – if we didn't have it. What impact would the savings we have in Maths have on education of all our bairns in Shetland, and the educational disbenefit which would result? James - in the medium term financial plan, which was agreed by council made it clear that we really should save all the money that we have to save in two years. They have given us three years to save £3.249 million through the blueprint for education proposals. They've given us three years in which they wanted us to save that money actually in this financial year. We can't do that. I think it's important for everybody here to consider if we did take that amount of money out across all schools in one year – what educational disbenefit that would have for the education of all the bairns in Shetland. And we have in our primary school estate now – as Helen presented earlier – nearly two thirds of our primary schools, and I include our Junior High School Primary departments in that, that are only one or two teacher schools. Nearly two thirds of our school estate. It is not unreasonable for us, as an education service, to suggest to you that we think that that's maybe not the best way to provide education. There might be other ways that might actually be beneficial. We can organise that in different ways – put bairns together in bigger classes so they can play team games, so they can have that experience in PE, so they can do more active learning in different types of groups, in different age groups - all of those things. I'm not suggesting anyone in this room agrees with me, but you're asking us put forward what we think and that's what we think. There is nothing unreasonable about thinking we want our bairns together in bigger groups so they've got more classmates and better opportunities to play and learn together.</p>



Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



	Scott	<p>Just really briefly I completely understand where you are coming from, absolutely 100%. This consultation is a statutory consultation; the law requires you to provide an educational benefit. I'm sorry but having people to play with is not an educational benefit.</p> <p>Audrey Edwards – I said play and learn.</p>
	Scott	<p>But they are not gaining anything. You're not demonstrating in your point that they are gaining anything. I understand what you're saying across the whole estate but we're talking about Olnafirth. That's what this consultation is about and the law requires you to provide the reason and the benefit for those children. Not across the whole estate, but those children.</p> <p>Audrey Edwards - Okay, if we weren't to close Olnafirth Primary School and we weren't to put forward any of the other closure proposals that's in our plan for the next three years, instead of that we would still have to save £3.249 million across all our schools. That is not doable because that would mean that schools just wouldn't be able to function at all and that is an educational disbenefit.</p>
31	Peter Leask	<p>I would just like to go back to the point, the reason we're here. A small number of pupils at the school is (because of) the Blueprint for Education and the one before that and the years of threats. If we hadn't had the years of threats we'd have double the pupils here and we wouldn't be under threat. It's nearly terrorism for the people. It's just a lack of confidence. Nobody wants to put their bairns here – they don't know what's happening. That's why we are here tonight. Now you can speak about figures all you want but that is why we are here – years of threats. Simple.</p>
32	Name not given	<p>Just to pick up on what Audrey said there about it being unreasonable suggesting cuts across the whole of education in Shetland. I would suggest that it's unreasonable to be asking Shetland to enable this percentage of cuts in education. That is the root of this problem. That is what we should all collectively be fighting because if it can't be done without these massive closures and all this consultation, then that is the root of the problem.</p> <p>James Gray – What the members agreed was to get the council into a financial balance. Somebody or other is always speaking about how the council spent £325 million out of its reserves over the last 12-13 years. The council has decided it doesn't want to blow all the reserves, it wants to try and keep some for future</p>

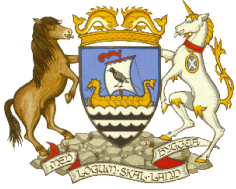


Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth Primary School



		<p>generations. The only way to do that is to cut spending to a level that is closer to the amount of income. Now the members also decided that they would focus the saving total and target more on Development Services and Corporate Services. In actual fact, Children's Services is the most well protected now – it may not be particularly comfortable for you to hear that tonight. In relative terms Children's Services will have a bigger part of the budget in five years time than it has now. It will be a smaller budget, which is why the savings – but it will have a bigger share. That was the decision when the medium term financial plan was agreed. If this £3.29 million doesn't come from schools – where does it come from? Is it care homes? Is it ferries? You know there are only so many places you can take it from and they are difficult choices. What I'm saying is that if the council wants to get to a financially sustainable position and if the public think the council should live within its means, then it will mean in one place or another the savings will come. So if they are taking away from education they will just fall somewhere else. That's what I'm saying.</p>
33	Name not given	<p>We're here to discuss education. This is a consultation on education in a school where the capacity issues are being particularly permanent to this school. Yet the commission for rural schools is talking about the capacity, you know, you're likely to be coming up with different ways of measuring capacity. That's a disadvantage to this school because you're not taking into consideration that part of the consultation.</p> <p>Councillor Wishart – We are running out of time quite rapidly. If anybody has got any other points that haven't been said tonight that they'd like to say, can they just catch my eye?</p>
34	Ms. McDowell	<p>I'm a parent of two children at Olnafirth and my preference is for my children to continue their education at Olnafirth. Having looked through the proposal I have serious concerns about the travel arrangements for the children. They seem to be disadvantaged according to their postcode. I don't think its right that they should be leaving the school with secondary children, 20-25 minutes after the primary school children leave when they're on the buses and arrive at a later stage and have not the same opportunities to play in their own community, complete homework and to partake in privately organised after school activities.</p>
35		<p>Councillor Wishart - Was there anybody else that hasn't spoken who would like to? Could I just thank you all very much for coming tonight and telling us what you think. It will all be taken into consideration. I think Helen is just going to remind you how</p>

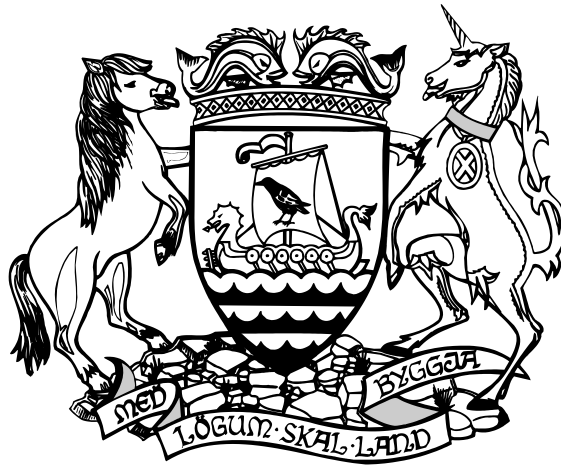


**Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Public Meeting**

**The Proposed Closure of Olnafirth
Primary School**



		you can respond to this and the form that you need to fill in. Thank you for coming.
36		Helen Budge – Thank you Chair. As I said at the beginning, we have some copies of the written response at the corner of the table which you can pick up, complete and return to us. We also have given out the proposal document, and within the second handout that you should still have it gives you the email address as well as the postal address should you wish to respond in that way. As the Chair has said all of the comments have been recorded and they will be typed up and published on the website as well as the responses we've given tonight. Any further responses will be included within the consultation report that will be produced. Just to confirm that the invite would be to the parent council to have some representatives come in a meet with the people in finance so that they can go through all the detail. Thank you very much for your time this evening.



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

**Appendix D – Transcript of the public meeting held
at Brae High School on 30 May 2013**



**Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Public Meeting
Impact of Olnafirth Primary School
pupils attending Brae High School
Primary Department**



Thursday 30 May 2013 in Brae High School Primary Department

- Chairperson – Councillor Vaila Wishart
- Lead Officer – Helen Budge, Director of Children's Services
- Other Members of the Panel - Councillor George Smith, Robert Sim, Quality Improvement Officer
- Public attendees – 3
- Note Takers – Heather Summers and Marianne Gordon

Good evening everyone and welcome to this public meeting.

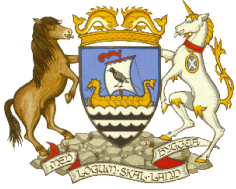
This public meeting is being held under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Its purpose is to give interested parties the opportunity to ask questions and air their views on the Proposal to close Olnafirth Primary School and transfer pupils to Brae High School Primary Department.

My name is Councillor Vaila Wishart and I will Chair tonight's meeting. The others on the Panel are: Helen Budge, Director of Children's Services; Councillor George Smith, Vice-chair, Education and Families Committee and Robert Sim, Quality Improvement Officer for Olnafirth Primary School and Brae High School.

Tonight's meeting will last for two hours and will open with a short presentation on the process we are engaged in, and an outline of the Proposal for discussion. Thereafter the meeting will be opened to the floor for questions and views.

As referred to in the Notice for this meeting, the proceedings at this public consultation meeting are being recorded by note takers. The transcript of this meeting will be published in due course on the Council's website, and will form part of the Consultation Report. It would therefore be useful if, when you speak, you first give your name, if you feel comfortable doing that, and state what your relationship is with the Anderson High School, for example, parent, pupil, grandparent, member of public, etc. Any questions on that?

Councillor George Smith: This meeting is about encouraging people to give their opinions and not feeling like they have to hold back. We want to hear what people are thinking so that we can make the best possible decision. I don't have any fixed views at the moment. I think it is a shame in some ways that the Council is having to save the amount of money it is having to save. Whether that should all come from the Education budget that is a political issue and it will be decided. We are faced with a fairly major task of trying to get the books to balance and as part of that this department was asked to find a substantial amount of savings over three years or more. They have already made considerable savings in this last couple of years that will have an effect. That's the background to where we are and it is about how best we can take it forward.



**Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Public Meeting
Impact of Olnafirth Primary School
pupils attending Brae High School
Primary Department**



Helen Budge: I am going to highlight the inaccuracies that have been identified. In the Proposal Paper it states that the building was built in 1902, in fact it was the early 1960s. The information that is there is about the old school, not the current school. We will highlight this in the Consultation Report.

The other thing is, young people don't come to Brae for 9 months as stated in the report. It is actually a six week block each year.

Third thing is that the disabled access problems to the hut have been rectified. Also the school has a library. These are the inaccuracies that we will highlight in the Consultation Report.

Last night it was highlighted to us at the meeting that there was some people feel that Lunnasting was a preferred option as a receiving school for some parents. If that is the case then we need to hear it. We had between 30/40 people at the meeting last night so what we have agreed with Olnafirth Parent Council is that we will look at some of the information around that and will meet with them about that possibility.

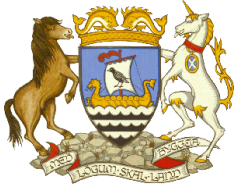
If you would like to tell us your views on this it would be helpful. They queried why we had suggested Brae rather than Lunnasting as a receiving school. That was mainly about the majority of young people choosing Brae for their pre-school. We know that some go to Lunnasting and some go to Mossbank but when we have had previous consultations then Brae has always been the preferred option. We totally appreciate that they do not want to see that school to close, that was made very clear to us last night, but this is a new thing for us at this stage. We would be really keen to hear your views on that.



**Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Public Meeting
Impact of Olnafirth Primary School
pupils attending Brae High School
Primary Department**



Question Number	Name of Speaker	Note of Question Asked / Note of Reply
1	Karen Hetherington, Chair, Brae High School Parent Council	<p>If you look at Lunnasting as a receiving school would you have to start a whole new consultation process?</p> <p>Helen Budge: The whole purpose of this Statutory Consultation process is for us to come forward with a proposal paper. In the Proposal Paper we do mention Lunnasting but we say we do not think it is appropriate due to what I said earlier.</p> <p>Two people said it last night so we would have to take into account what other people's thoughts were. At this early stage of the process I would like to me making sure as many people knew about it as possible particularly the parent who have children affected by this. We have done some initial wok today. What was raised last night was that we would save in Grant Aided Expenditure as we would lose some of that as we would be asking pupils to go to a school of more than 70 pupils. The other side of that is the travel distance. It would be good to hear from parents what they feel about that. It's about taking all of that information together and seeing what people feel about it. It has to be discussed.</p> <p>Karen Hetherington: It's maybe not something that Brae parents would feel able to comment on. It's very much for Voe parents to comment.</p> <p>Helen Budge: I appreciate that but we need to give everybody the opportunity to comment if they wish but that is a very fair point.</p>
2	Pauline Moncrieff, Parent Brae High School	<p>I'm the parent of a child at Brae Primary but we live in the Olnafirth catchment area. I've heard comments that some of the Olnafirth parents don't want their children to come here as they feel the standard of education is not what they would prefer and I just wanted to know what their reasons for not wanting their children to come here were?</p> <p>Helen Budge: The kinds of things we were hearing last night was that Lunnasting was more of a like for like school. It's a smaller school more like Olnafirth. At the moment there are 22 at Lunnasting and it goes up to 23 after the summer and that sort of numbers would be more what they are used to.</p> <p>Councillor Smith: There weren't any specific criticisms of the</p>



**Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Public Meeting
Impact of Olnafirth Primary School
pupils attending Brae High School
Primary Department**



		<p>education at Brae. There was nothing said last night that it was a poorer or inferior education. Lunnasting was a more comparable size. People might express views in writing as Helen is encouraging people to do. There was nothing detrimental said about the quality of education at Brae.</p> <p>Helen Budge: You have to appreciate that we can only take what people tell us so that's why we are trying to encourage as many people as possible to give us oral responses at meetings like this and also to write in. It is only by amassing that information that we can say that this looks like an option. For me, it is a longer travel distance on a road that isn't as good. Some people last night were saying pupils would possibly be picked up at different times. We don't have the figures worked up for Lunnasting at all.</p> <p>Councillor Wishart: Some concerns that pupil who walk to school currently wouldn't be able to do that anymore.</p>
3	<p>Karen Hetherington, Chair, Brae High School Parent Council</p>	<p>The Parent Council met and we will be putting in written comments. We feel it would be a positive thing and would be beneficial educationally and generally for both sets of pupils. There would still be composite classes but there would hopefully be more chance that those classes wouldn't be 're-jigged' year on year like they have been.</p> <p>The concern that we have is the health and safety issue with the car and bus parking. We've been trying to get something done about that since 2009.</p> <p>Councillor Wishart: I am on the Road Safety Panel and this was raised by Councillor Cooper at the last meeting and a safety audit has been asked for, I don't know if it has been carried out?</p> <p>Colin Kirkness (Head Teacher): There were plans for traffic calming measures that went as far as the Capital Projects gateway a couple of years ago but they stalled.</p> <p>Councillor Wishart: There is a meeting next week so we could raise it again.</p> <p>Helen Budge: I can take it back to contact Colin Gair, at the Roads department, tomorrow and get a copy of the previous Road Safety Audit for the meeting next week. If a new one has been commissioned then we will feed that back.</p> <p>Colin Kirkness: If there was another minibus coming from Voe then that would be another vehicle into that congested area.</p>



**Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Public Meeting
Impact of Olnafirth Primary School
pupils attending Brae High School
Primary Department**



		<p>Pauline Moncrieff: There is so many Olnafirth/ Voe parents cares that wouldn't be there. I am just one of 5 or 6 cars that are there. There are some that are nursery parents too.</p> <p>Helen Budge: That's a good point. We will certainly take that on board.</p> <p>Karen Hetherington: It is a problem at the moment, taking one or two cars out isn't going to make a big difference when there are buses reversing in and out. There have been a couple of difficult situations.</p> <p>Councillor Smith: Just as you were speaking Karen about the composite classes that refreshed my memory from last night. If there was a comment about Brae it was that the year groups hadn't remained constant over any period of time. Pupils were finding themselves in different make-ups of classes.</p> <p>Pauline Moncrieff: In my experience it has been good for them.</p> <p>Helen Budge: Thank you for saying that, it's the kind of information that helps us get a full picture of everybody's views.</p> <p>Pauline Moncrieff: What's bad for one can be positive for another.</p>
4	Parent, Brae High School	<p>What about the pupils who struggle in composite classes? As the composite classes get larger, art and music times are getting cut. Ten is a class is a whole lot different to twenty-odd.</p> <p>Helen Budge: I would have to say, the numbers of placing requests we have had for next session would mean there would only be 8 children that would come into Brae so we're not talking about a large number.</p> <p>That's all very well but Voe is a changing area. Dale too, it's a big area.</p> <p>Helen Budge: That is not the trend we have seen. The highest the roll has been is about 30, it has been pretty constant over the last 10 years. Any increase in numbers has never materialised. We were hearing last night that a number of houses in Voe have oil workers in them. There doesn't seem to be the opportunity for a large increase in pupil numbers. That's how we're seeing things just now but I take your point.</p> <p>Adding two children to each class will that change be reflected in</p>



**Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Public Meeting
Impact of Olnafirth Primary School
pupils attending Brae High School
Primary Department**



		<p>numbers of classroom assistants/additional support needs auxiliaries?</p> <p>Helen Budge: The ASN auxiliaries will be reflected on the need of the school. There is an audit done every year and we look at what the needs are for the school.</p> <p>In respect of the classroom assistants we are looking at that as part of the other savings that we have to consider. We have to make quite a lot of savings and we have to look at all of that. Our staffing ratios for teachers will never go above the national guidelines.</p> <p>Councillor Smith: It's difficult times. Clearly the range o savings that are required are impacting on the very things you are speaking about. If there is a continual requirement from the Council to find £3million savings there is only a limited amount of places it can come from. It can either come from reducing the number of schools we have or reducing resources in our schools. Either way it is going to impact all our existing schools. The only way that would change is if the Council listened to views that savings should come from a different area or not be found at all. Not finding them at all would have a consequence in terms of the balance between the amount the Council spends and the income it receives. We all know we cannot keep depleting the Reserves in the way we have been doing. It's about trying to make sensible decisions that minimise impact but at the same time realise that things are going to be different to what they have been.</p> <p>The reality in other parts of Scotland is that they are there and have been for some time. We can all relate to situations in other Local Authorities. The situation that they are working in, in terms of numbers of pupils in their class, specialist teachers that they might not get. Quite often schools will choose not to have a specialist art teacher, There is a lot of different scenarios that we aren't even at yet that are the norm in other authorities, I understand that if you have had something and you see the benefit of it, not to have it anymore is seen as a loss of something.</p>
5	<p>Karen Hetherington, Chair, Brae High School</p>	<p>It's deviating from the point of the meeting but we should be striving for the best within the means available. We shouldn't need to compare with other areas; we should be striving for the best, end of.</p>



**Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Public Meeting
Impact of Olnafirth Primary School
pupils attending Brae High School
Primary Department**



	Parent Council	<p>Councillor Smith: That's a fair comment. The best we can do with the resources we have available.</p> <p>Helen Budge: That's some of why we have to look at some of these options. How else are we going to save this volume of money? We feel it would be detrimental to all the young people across Shetland if we had to make the savings in different ways. This way we are maintaining the quality of education. Instead of spending it on buildings we are spending it on the resources.</p>
6	Helen Budge	<p>If we are working up some kind of thoughts about Lunnasting do you want us to come and share it with the Parent Council here at Brae?</p> <p>Karen Hetherington: It would keep us informed in terms of planning.</p> <p>Pauline Moncrieff: What's Lunnasting's opinion?</p> <p>Helen Budge: So far I have only managed to speak to the staff at the school. We've not had any conversations with anybody else and at last night's meeting nobody identified themselves as being from Lunnasting. We would go and have that conversation with them. Olnafirth Parent Council, we'll hear what they say but I think it would be helpful to keep you informed.</p>
7	Councillor George Smith	<p>Are we restricted to only having one school in terms of a catchment area?</p> <p>Pauline Moncrieff: I wanted to ask that also. It seems silly when there is already a number here already at Brae and I thought that sustaining communities was a priority.</p> <p>Helen Budge: That's the sort of things we need to take into account. We've been asked to look at this different option and all that sort of things would have to be addressed in a paper and folk can have a look at that and tell us how they feel about it. Pupils in the Voe area are already choosing Brae, Lunnasting and Mossbank so would we just be exacerbating this? How would people feel? What would the savings be like? Would the best educational benefit be to just give the choice and could we do that? It would make it very difficult for school transport and for catchment areas where would you split?</p> <p>With catchment areas as part of our Admissions Policy we use it to set the number of teachers so how would that work. I can understand how people would see the benefit of having that choice but why should one community have that choice. Some</p>



**Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Public Meeting
Impact of Olnafirth Primary School
pupils attending Brae High School
Primary Department**



		<p>people have chosen to put their children on a placing request so they are providing their own transport. There is a lot we are going to have to think about as part of this. If we put the pupils to Lunnasting we would save the money on our GAE which is about £30,000. How much of that would you then spend on transport? We would have to look at all that. We need to hear what people feel about that.</p> <p>Councillor Smith: We need to give that consideration. We need to come to some conclusion whether the proposal stands up to scrutiny or not. What is the most appropriate school or schools for receiving?</p> <p>Helen Budge: We know that both schools have enough space. We wouldn't stop anybody from having the choice of submitting a placing request but they would have to provide their own transport, it is very early days because we haven't worked it up fully.</p>
8	<p>Billy Forsyth, Depute Head Teacher, Brae High School</p>	<p>I would welcome any scrutinisation of educational standards at Brae Primary Department. They would stand up to any school in Shetland.</p> <p>Helen Budge: As Councillor Smith said earlier we didn't hear any criticism last night. All our school in Shetland provide a good education.</p>

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

**Appendix E – Transcript of the additional meeting
held at Voe Hall on 6 June 2013**

Meeting Held on 6 June 2013 at 6pm

Voe Public Hall

- Chairperson – Helen Budge
- Councillors in attendance – Councillor Vaila Wishart, Councillor Drew Ratter, Councillor Alistair Cooper
- Public attendees – 13
- Note Taker – Susan Manson

The meeting opened, Helen Budge had been asked to Chair it, and she then introduced the Councillors.

Parent	All the people here tonight have bairns at Brae or Olnafirth School, or bairns that have not yet started school. All are parents in the Voe community.
Helen Budge	Appreciate being invited, this is all part of a process and through the six week process we will be gathering as much information as we can. We issued a Proposal Paper and I have copies here, if anyone wants. And over the six week period we will be gathering views on the Proposal Paper and I found it significant that at the public meeting in Voe, it was made clear to us that the Parent Council queried why we had Brae as the receiving school and that, although they did not want to see the Olnafirth School close, they would have preferred Lunnasting as the receiving school. And we have to take that on board as that is something that the community has said a part of the meeting.
Parent	As part of this, is it just the parents of the bairns at the Voe school, who can comment? Whose views are considered in the consultation?
Helen Budge	It is important that we hear from everyone, and that is why it is good to meet with you tonight. Anyone in Shetland can have a view on this.
Parent	That was a concern, that we were not represented at all at the previous meetings. My bairns have always been at Brae, they have not been at Voe. So I don't know about the membership of the Parent Council. I heard after the meeting that there had been no representation, so that is why I have come along tonight. So is future pupils of any school going to have a say.
Helen Budge	That is why we have written response forms. I would ask anyone to put in a written response, and there are forms here tonight that folk can take away to complete and return. That is a way to make your views known. When I heard of this group who had not been represented at the Voe meeting, and there were very few folk at the Brae meeting and we felt that it was appropriate to have all your views recorded.
Parent	It is difficult in a peerie community. I wouldn't want to stand up in front of folk fighting for their school, and say we don't agree; that is difficult.

Helen Budge	<p>We understand that and recognise that it is very difficult to stand up and say something different from what the vocal people are saying at a meeting. Which is why we have public meetings in the second week, to give opportunity beyond that for folk to come forward. And there are the written response forms too, and that is not easy either, as Children's Services will publish what is said in the written responses, unless the box on the form is ticked to ask that it is not to be published. A note is being taken of tonight's meeting, and it is up to you if you want to say who you are, or if not, the comment or question will be recorded, and any response to these. At this stage of the process, this is the context we are working in. We are conscious that that a growing number of parents are choosing to put their bairns, not to Voe, but to Brae or Lunnasting, and there is the Mossbank option too. And we really want to hear your views.</p>
Cllr Ratter	<p>I would like to say in regard to the big picture, in this case. All of us, who live in the north end of Shetland, need to think about this and I now feel that the effects of the severe long term reduction in Council expenditure is totally inevitable, and we are not going to be able to do anything much. Folk are saying that the Council is going to have to start making decisions, but I say, no, the Councillors are not going to be making decisions, things are just going to happen, because at a certain point towards the end of this council, because on current expenditure and although we have been setting budgets, nothing has really happened yet and towards the end of the Council term the funds we have been paying for all the extra stuff will simply be gone. And the Council has one overwhelming duty, and that is that every year it must set a balanced budget. So at that time everything just crashes into the buffers. And what we need to make sure of is that there are strong educational possibilities outwith Lerwick. In the apocalyptic situation is we end up without anything except what it used to be like, when if you passed the control you went to Lerwick, otherwise you went to the Junior Secondary School. And we've moved away from that, and we have every chance, with the strength of the community and strength of population, of keeping a good quality educational hub at Brae. And I feel that we must support that. I could not make an argument for anything else than strengthening that, and I have felt for a long time, from my previous time in the Council, that Olnafirth School is doomed, and that has been my thought about Skerries Secondary too. Although folk I know in Skerries would ask me to stick up for them, I would say that I couldn't do that. I think at this point it would be a big benefit to education in Brae if the Olnafirth bairns, as I almost inevitably think they will, go there. I think it is a big benefit, and I also think that it is a big benefit to communities in the north end of Shetland, and that's my whole thinking on it.</p>
Parent	<p>Can I ask, do you think that if the bairns went to Vidlin, that it would weaken the Brae High School?</p>
Cllr Ratter	<p>I think, the way things are at the moment Brae could do with more bairns going there, I think it would strengthen Brae. I think basically at this stage, it would strengthen the primary school.</p>

Parent	Do you think that Brae has the capacity to take many more bairns. Thinking about the bairns that are coming up, and thinking about Brae in terms of it is a developing community, and it is only going to have more folk with more bairns. I would want to be sure that they were able to have the quality of education that class size wasn't going to be too huge, that Brae could actually absorb that in a manner that would benefit everybody.
Helen Budge	Yes, it has capacity. There is space in secondary which could release classroom space into primary if necessary. There is capacity to make slight alterations if needed to make room for more primary pupils. And we are looking after summer, that there will only be 8 pupils in Olnafirth, and that would easily fit into the current class set up at Brae. But looking to the future, we think that some of the Brae pupil numbers are going down a bit and this would mean that we would still keep the classes as they are, but farther on than that, there is plenty re-configuration space there.
Parent	Is there space at Lunnasting? Lunnasting has a very peerie nursery, don't they?
Helen Budge	Lunnasting Nursery is registered for 12 pupils. There is no catchment area for pre-school, and you can choose to put your bairns to where you want, and if there was no spaces at the one you want then the authority would suggest a different pre-school place. This does happen in Lerwick sometimes. The authority only has to guarantee that there are enough places in the authority for all pre-school bairns. It does not have to guarantee a particular place in a particular pre-school. But for primary, Lunnasting is looking to have 25 pupils after summer, and with 8 from Olnafirth that would take it to 33. With 25 pupils, it was thought to split it 10 in one class, 15 in the other, but with 33 the split would be slightly different. But Lunnasting has two classrooms and also another big area, which is used as another room. So there is plenty of space from the primary side of things.
Parent	That would be coming into composite classes almost as big as single stage classes in Brae. And having 3 or 4 years in one classroom.
Helen Budge	Yes, and that's about quality of education, what can we offer, what is best educationally for 8 bairns, where a child, for example, is the only boy in a group of lasses, what is that experience for him, over a length of time. If you consider reading groups, if a bairn is the only P1 in the school, it is hard going reading a whole reading book, but if there is two or three of you, then you all read a part of the book. So there is a lot on the education side of things that we recognise where bigger classes are good for the bairns.
Parent	My worry, with that kind of strategy, is that if folk vote with their feet, and go to the bigger school, that is already robust and its future is pretty assured, that Vidlin follows Voe, and it then becomes not viable.
Helen Budge	The Vidlin community, certainly at the moment, is maintaining a two teacher school for some years in the future. But if you take the three Northmavine schools, they are all one teacher, and they have all been two

	<p>teacher in the past. So there are areas where the population is decreasing and we recognise that. There are also areas where the population is increasing. Nesting is an area, where it was a two teacher school and is now a one teacher school, but will go back up to a two teacher school after summer. So there is flexibility, and we can only predict to some extent, and not terribly long term.</p>
Parent	<p>Do you know why there has been such a tail-off in the numbers in Voe? I heard Drew say that he had felt for some time that Olnafirth had been doomed. Has that fed into people wanting to take their bairns from the school.</p>
Cllr Ratter	<p>I was speaking really long term, a long time ago I was aware of folk taking their bairns from Voe and putting them to Brae. That would be the best part of 30 years ago. I think it has always happened.</p>
Parent	<p>I moved my bairn to Brae, the decision had nothing to do with the school being under threat of closure. It was for better opportunity, the school was going down to one teacher, he is not good at concentrating and I felt he would struggle, and he wanted to go to Brae. I moved him and it was the best thing, and we have not looked back since.</p>
Parent	<p>All parents have different reasons – work, childcare, and one of the things that frustrated me about the public meetings, and the piece in the Shetland Times, was that, and it was maybe a throwaway comment, closure was the reason for moving the bairns, and that wasn't why I moved my bairns. Everybody is different, and what works for one, maybe won't work for another.</p>
Parent	<p>In my case, my bairn should be going to P1 at the Voe school after summer, but we felt that out of the 8 bairns which could have been coming to the Voe school, that none of the bairns were going to the Voe school, so we felt that he has done his pre-school in Lunnasting for the past year and a half, and we have had about a year to try and decide which school he should go to. And because of the threat of the closure, we wondered if he should go for one year to Voe, should we keep him at Lunnasting, what should we do? So having spoken to a lot of folk and spent time thinking about what to do. And the threat of closure has had a slight effect on our decision, because of the thought of him doing one year at Voe and then having to move school again. So basically what it came down to was the fact that he was going to be the only primary 1 pupil and the next pupil to his age would be a lass in P4, then a boy in P5, and all the rest are in the upper primary, and so there would be no one to play with and have a friendship with. So it was a very hard decision to make, but we decided because he had had a great start at Lunnasting, and also because living in Voe, you are not really linked to Vidlin except for the school, whereas with Brae, there is some links because of the Leisure Centre and other after school things at Brae. So we thought for our family the best thing was to move him to Brae Nursery for the last term so that he could settle with the bairns he would be going to school with, and because the majority of bairns from Voe go to Brae. So if he could not go</p>

	<p>to his community school, it was best for him to go where the majority went, and so he would be keeping in with the bairns from the same place. And also, last winter with reduced gritting service, and although the road into Vidlin is not a bad road, it is a bit tricky when not really been gritted and so we felt that, it would probably be safer to go to Brae on a main road.</p>
Parent	Is Brae still an option as part of this Consultation?
Helen Budge	<p>Yes, this Proposal Paper is for Brae to be the receiving school, but when writing the Consultation Report we will have to recognise that Lunnasting was put forward by the Parent Council as a possibility. I have said that we were willing to come to speak to the Parent Council if they wish. We have worked up some figures to the kinds of questions we thought we would be asked, eg would there be space, what about the GAE – because the Council loses some GAE through putting the bairns to Brae, as it is a bigger school, and this would not be lost if they were to go to Lunnasting. So at the moment there would be a slightly bigger saving to be made by putting them to Lunnasting, but we don't know the transport costs yet, so we think, that with transport costs included, the saving would be similar.</p> <p>The views from you here tonight, will make a difference to what goes into the Consultation Report, because, we will be saying that two thirds of the parents, possibly, after summer, placing their bairns in Brae. So the strength of what we hear from you, and your actions, is that Brae is still the preferred option. But we would have to recognise that the Parent Council had asked us to consider Lunnasting as the receiving school.</p>
Parent	At the Consultation the last time, and the community was asked, and the preferred school was Brae.
Parent	The last time I think many parents wanted Lunnasting, as they wanted their bairns to go to a peerie school.
Parent	At the meeting when the Parent Council asked for Lunnasting to be the receiving school. In my phone calls to organise this meeting, some of the members of the Olnafirth Parent Council said the first they realised about this was reading it in the Shetland Times. On the night at the meeting when it was said, the representatives of the Olnafirth Parent Council was made up of two families whose bairns are not going to be at school after summer. Therefore, do they come off the Parent Council then? Also the shop keeper, and the Head Teacher's husband were asking. This is who were saying this is what we want, and I went away from the meeting thinking, that's possibly not what all the parents want. Personally, for my family is that the receiving school should be Brae, and it's a shame that not everyone is here tonight, but just when you take it to Consultation, just mind who the Olnafirth Parent Council is, and who is the majority of the parents. It is a difficult place to live, if you don't put your bairns to the local school.
Parent	My oldest boy is in the High School now, and has been since nursery, as

	we decided that we did not want any transitions, just wanted him to stay at one school. And I have had to justify all the time why I made my decision. I was at meetings before he went to school, so it's been rumbling on since then.
Parent	You do feel outcast, and feel terrible, and it took us ages to make the decision to move our bairn to Brae, it was difficult.
Helen Budge	You have to think about your bairns, I am thinking about education, and I want to put money we have into resources, not into buildings.
Parent	But the Olnafirth School building will still need to be maintained.
Helen Budge	That will depend on what happens to it. We have said in the Proposal Paper, if possibly another Council department took it over, then we would not have that maintenance cost, or it could be sold. We would not want to have the responsibility of the maintenance costs.
Parent	I think it is quite short sighted to try and keep it open, because that that is what the parents of the present pupils want. Or to go to Lunnasting, because that is what the present Parent Council wants, they need to take others into consideration. But it won't affect me, anyway.
Parent	You have experience which is valuable for informing the rest of us. I quite like the idea of no transition, by putting the bairns to Brae. I like the nursery, primary and going all the way through to secondary. That would be the reason I would opt for Brae.
Parent	I feel 50-50 about the schools, the peerie school is really attractive when they are really small, and getting one-on-one attention with small class sizes, but the travel, and someone else is driving your bairns to school you want the safest option, and maybe that is what would sway it.
Parent	Certainly there has been a big difference in running to Lunnasting this year, than the previous year, because of the roads and less gritting. And some days I just decided not to go, as I was not sure what would happen.
Parent	Is it an all or nothing situation and does it have to be one receiving school? I understand you are trying to have an element of parental choice, and so are you are gathering the views from everyone and then say 'this' or 'this'?
Helen Budge	That is what we have to do. If we said two schools, then we would have to provide transport to both schools, and we would have to nearly, but not quite, double count, on staff, etc. It is statutory that we have to have a catchment area, and that is part of the Proposal Paper, to change to catchment area. Although parents will always have the choice, as the schools have plenty of capacity, but the parents would have to find their own transport to the school which is not the catchment school.
Parent	That was a worry for me, that if Lunnasting was to be the receiving school,

	then I would be running to Brae for the next 10 years. Just because a couple of families wanted to go to Lunnasting. However, if that was the decision, we would still do it.
Parent	One of the points that was made at the public meeting, was why would we want to put our bairns to Brae what there is chronic parking mayhem, but it is us that's causing it, as we are all running to Brae. But there isn't enough parking at Lunnasting either, you have to park on the verge. And if you hit it on a morning when the Laxo ferry has just come in, then you have to sit for about 10 minutes.
Parent	It is said that bairns will not get such a good education at Brae, as at a peerie school, but I was at Brae for all my education and there was nothing wrong with it at all. But also I work in a peerie school, so I can see the benefits. On one hand you do get more one-to-one in a peerie school, but in Brae if you need extra help then you got it.
Parent	Also at Brae it is not composite, the bairns are all one age, which makes it easier, and socially it is good.
Cllr Ratter	Many members of my family went to Brae, they have done very well educationally, and went on to get degrees. There isn't a thing wrong with Brae.
Parent	I must say that since moving my son, he has come on so much.
Parent	And it's not just about education, but about confidence too and that is why I moved him, and the difference in him since he moved to Brae is amazing.
Parent	That is one of the challenges of a peerie school, it is hard to get away from folk.
Parent	In Brae there is no tolerance for bullying, there is no playground trouble. You never hear anything about any trouble. They are such good friends.
Parent	When you walk into Brae, and they are out in the area, they are all working away.
Parent	Everything has to be more structured in a bigger school, as there is much more of them, and there is less leeway for things..
Parent	In a peerie school when there is one or two in a class, and there is no way to know if they are doing really well, where in a big school there is more children to compare them with.
Parent	Also the young ones tend to pick things up really early. You sometimes wonder how did they know that – but it is with mixing with the older bairns. You can't stop that in a peerie school.
Parent	When there is only one or two teachers, not every bairn gets on with their teacher or responds to a particular teaching style, whereas in a bigger school you move on to a different teacher, you are not stuck with a

	teacher for 7 years, you move on every year.
Parent	My bairns quite relish that. And also by being with older bairns and then with younger bairns and with probationary teachers who are enthusiastic.
Cllr Cooper	I got the impression that the desire to go to Lunnasting was from a financial imperative rather than educational imperative. Maybe I was wrong, but that was the impression I got.
Helen Budge	They did make the point about the £30,000 which would be saved by going to Lunnasting.
Parent	At the meeting, I thought they wanted it to be Lunnasting, as it was the same kind of school as Olnafirth. But the bairns at Olnafirth are almost all upper primary, so they won't have many years before they have to make the big change to the secondary school anyway.
Parent	I don't know why parents would move them to Vidlin and then have to move them on again to Brae, there are no infants at Olnafirth. While the majority of us here are what is going to be the pupils coming up in the area.
Parent	And already from speaking to folk who couldn't come tonight, and the projected roll, not for this year, but for next year, parents know that there are 4 folk planning to put in placing requests for Brae, regardless of whether the school shut or not; the others I don't know about.
Cllr Cooper	I received an email from a parent of one of the 8 bairns, who said that if Olnafirth was kept open, they would be moving their bairn to Brae. There is a lot of angst coming out of this, and it needs to be sorted out once and for all.
Parent	It is not that we are saying close the school, but if the Council has to close the school, and we have to go with whatever is decided, and what we want is the best for the majority of our bairns, whether we are on the Olnafirth Parent Council or not.
Parent	This is not an attack against the school. For many of us it is personal reasons, that we want our bairns to go to Brae.
Parent	I think we have to be realistic, the school can't be kept open for sentimental reasons, we can't keep school limping along as it crumbles, just because it has always been there. I think we have to be realistic. If this school stays open and money has to be cut from somewhere else.
Cllr Wishart	I have thought that the moratorium has actually been a bad thing, it's just been another year of uncertainty. And a decision needs to be made one way or another.
Parent	And from the teachers point of view, if they are constantly under the threat of losing their jobs then they are not going to be able to give the kids 100%.

Cllr Ratter	It is very gratifying to see so many parents here tonight. When Alistair and I were here last it was election time to discuss the Olnafirth School, it was mainly attended by all grandparents, there were hardly any parents who came at all.
Cllr Cooper	When I came on the Council in 2007, and was here about repairs and getting the roof fixed, I think there were about 20 bairns in the school then. About 5 years ago the school roll was up to about 31 pupils.
Parent	About 5 years ago the school roll was up to 35 pupils. So the decline has been fast.
Parent	And some of the decrease is just about the folk in the area. It's not that people are leaving, but there isn't any new housing popping up either.
Cllr Cooper	If you look at Brae and the Brae primary school roll has remained around 100 for several years – and this means having 5 composite classes, which is not the best. Voe pupils would help provide stability. And another fact is that Hjaltland is building houses in the area, and the Council is to build a few houses too. So Brae not getting off lightly with the pupil numbers hovering around 100.
Cllr Ratter	And those Council houses are likely to be the only ones the Council builds in the life of this Council. Although Hjaltland will be able to build more, although maybe not in the north area.
Helen Budge	These are really important things to think about and be aware of, as rolls do fluctuate; and we are very aware of that. And we need to take that into account of, and we have a financial situation where we are reducing budgets across all schools, in lots of different ways. And this is on top of that. For me it is about educational reasons, but I cannot shy away from the fact that there are also financial reasons.
	Cllr Ratter left at 6.50pm
Parent	Regarding the buses, in the proposal paper it says that there are 16 bairns in the catchment area, 4 can go on high school buses, and then you are going to use two 8 seater vehicles. But 16 bairns can fit into two 8 seaters.
Parent	It's may so that they don't have to put them with the secondary bairns. I certainly don't want to put my peerie one on a bus with secondary bairns.
Helen Budge	The information is there for you to come back to us about, we need to be sure that that is the case, and that folk aren't going to put them somewhere else, or there might be more bairns somewhere else, that we are not aware of.
Parent	If there were more bairns would you arrange for the mini-buses to hold that number of bairns, to whatever school? You wouldn't put primary one bairns on a high school bus?

Helen Budge	As far as we can, with the prediction that we have got, and you have to remember that the authority only provides transport to the designated receiving school, we wouldn't provide to other schools. We don't know out of this what you would choose, so with what we think, with the numbers already going to Brae, this looks like what we can do. Again, bus contracts have all been up for consideration for tender, we do have some circumstances in other areas, where primary bairns go on the same bus as the secondary. But we would want this to work, so, for example, if you are saying that it will just be 16 bairns and two 8 seaters will do, then that's fine. This is what we want to hear about. We do want to hear your views about the Proposal Paper. And we won't get it all right, as I said at the meeting, we had got the year of the school wrong. It is a case of working through with you and how that can best work.
Parent	So, if we were at a situation in 5 years time, where we had the situation of 35 bairns going to Brae primary, the transport wouldn't be an issue.
Helen Budge	No, the authority has a statutory duty, from beyond a certain distance, to provide school transport. And that's why the catchment area is really important for us, as we need to know the bairns for which area and where we are putting them.
Cllr Cooper	Are the bairns going to be picked up along the road, or are there going to be pick up points? How does it work in a practical way?
Parent	So it doesn't work the way the primary bus works where it picks them up from their house, and slips them off for the secondary bus.
Helen Budge	There would be flexibility built in over many years of transporters, so there may be local arrangements, which may be slightly different from what the authority would expect. However, there will be pick up points.
Parent	We can see, that if Brae was the receiving school, then from Lower Voe then in the eight seater bus there would be four more bairns in the next few years, and that is four extra seats.
Helen Budge	That's all things you know that we can't. We can't go into that level of detail either, as we could then be seen to be making an assumption that it was going to close. And then the Scottish Minister would have a reason to call in the decision. We have to be careful that it is all a proposal, and that this is what we are suggesting might be the case.
Parent	This doesn't make any change to timescale for the Consultation, having to look at both?
Helen Budge	No, we have prioritised this over some other things, and we have gathered as much information on Lunnasting as we can. We think you have waited long enough, and we think you need a decision of some kind, whatever that might be. So although we had been planning to go to Committee in November, we have brought this forward. And will now go to Committee on 10 October and Shetland Islands Council on 11 October, so there will be a decision before the October holidays.

Parent	It will be good to have a decision, whichever way it goes.
Helen Budge	There will be a decision, and the Minister then has the opportunity to call it in, should a particular decision be made, and he would look to see that we have followed the process correctly.
Cllr Cooper	If the Council does decide to close the school, at the summer of 2014, and the Minister doesn't disagree, then there is time to market the building as a potential business unit or whatever it is going to be. Then that would perhaps have the chance to employ more folk here than are at the Voe school just now – there are high speed links for IT work, a canteen, good car park. And that is one good thing about the new legislation which allows this that the old legislation did not. I have no pre-conceived ideas, but I do not want to see the building empty. I think folk feel demoralised when buildings are sitting empty.
Parent	It will be good community wise if it could be used for something, to get some benefit for the community.
Cllr Wishart	This is important, as Scalloway is still empty.
Helen Budge	That is where this kind of meetings are really important, so that we do hear what folk are thinking and make sure that better action is taken in better timescale. And as Alistair says, if a decision is made at a particular time then there will be time to organise transition and ensure there are opportunities for the building.
Cllr Cooper	In Voe, you are in the commuter distance for Lerwick and Sullom Voe, but in other communities, like Sandness, for example, or North Roe, there is an issue with bairns and education, but there is also an issue about alternative employment opportunities in the village, as the school is actually a focal point for employment as well as for the bairns. So I think the new legislation is opening the door to help with this.
Parent	Will there be any further meetings between the Council and Olnafirth Parent Council.
Helen Budge	I have offered to go to a Parent Council meeting if they wanted me to and I could look at what they had spoken about. They said they thought they might, but so far I have not heard from them.
Parent	Maybe they should go and visit Brae.
Parent	I just don't think that the Olnafirth Parent Council is representative of all the parents at the school.
Parent	I am on the Parent Forum, and have not been at recent Parent Council meetings, and so I read about the Parent Council's view in the paper. I don't think it is the view of all the parents at the Voe School.
Parent	That's an important point, they have a duty as elected representatives, and perhaps you should go back to them for verification as they have no

	right to respond differently to the rest of the council members. It is part of their roll to represent the view of all the parents at the school.
Parent	The Parent Council should have taken a vote, to give parents the option. That is just the view of a few parents.
Helen Budge	From our point of view, we are hearing the balance of that tonight, and that is why this meeting is important. So that we can hear that.
Parent	The Parent Council maybe think that, as our bairns are at Brae, that we don't have so much of a right to a say. But the transport issue still affects us.
Parent	But we have made that decision for the sake of our bairns, and it was hard, it is hard to go against the community, but we don't want to be left out of the whole decision. So that 4 bairns are run to Lunnasting every day and 20 bairns are going to Brae.
Cllr Cooper	If Brae is agreed as the receiving school, if I was a parent who had been travelling to, for example Lunnasting, I would maybe decide to change and put the bairns to Brae. So you could end up with everyone deciding to put the bairns to Brae, so there needs to be budget for all bairns going to Brae.
Helen Budge	That is what we would do in the Consultation Report. We would then answer that question, saying that we have in the Proposal Paper done that, we have looked at the figures again and yes, we confirm that is the case, or that we hadn't figured that in, and that we have to make a change. We think we have factored in all the bairns.
Cllr Cooper	So we think that there currently are 20 P1 – P7 bairns in the Voe catchment area.
Helen Budge	We are looking at 2014, and we would assume that they would all go.
Parent	So the information you have is just from the nursery figures. Do you have census information or anything like that?
Helen Budge	Some schools have the information locally, then NHS is not keen to give out the information. We ask schools to tell us what they project, it is not really very scientific.
Parent	Of the 7 for 2014 for Olnafirth, then 4 are going to be placing requests to Brae, and this year it was 8.
Parent	One of my concerns was that if the bairns were to be going to three different schools, what effect would this have on the youth club, especially now with the changes being made to junior youth clubs. A large part of our membership is made up of bairns who live in Brae but come here for youth club, and they all get on, all going to go to high school together, and it is great, and if the junior youth club funding is gone, I'm wondering how are we going to manage, to recruit volunteers to run that.

Helen Budge	The Youth Strategy has been revised, it became clear that folk wanted to see some form of Junior Youth Clubs, as well as Senior Youth Clubs. So they may continue, but maybe not on so many evenings, might have volunteers help paid workers. So you will find that there has been a change to what was suggested at the start.
Parent	I was thinking that if the school did close, and if there are no youth clubs, and if the bairns were going to 3 different schools, then the bairns won't know each other. I won't be running to Lunnasting Youth Club, I would rather run to Brae.
Cllr Wishart	I think the message is quite clear from everyone.
Helen Budge	Please take the time to complete a response form, and take the opportunity to say what you think. Say your main points on why you think this is an option or not an option; if you would rather not see the school close, and if it has to close where you would rather have the bairns go, take the opportunity to have your say, even if you already put your bairns to Brae and say your reasons. Every response helps Councillors make the decisions.
Cllr Cooper	My job is to put forward the views of the community, they are not necessarily my views, but the views of the majority.
Parent	It is very difficult when your opinion is different from others and your voice is not the strong one.
Helen Budge	When we heard at the public meeting the views of the Parent Council, then we took that as it is. But there are more folk here saying that Brae is the better option. So it is good that Councillors were also here to hear what has been said.
Helen Budge	There will be no further public meetings, Education Scotland (formerly HMIe) decided not to come to the public meetings this time. They will get all the information and then they take a 3 week period to come back to us with their views. Due to the summer holidays, the three week period will be after the holidays. Education Scotland will also have read the Shetland Times.
Helen Budge	What happens next, is that following the public meetings, we then have written responses back and that takes us to the end of June. Then there is the three weeks in which Education Scotland prepares their report, and then we will produce the Consultation Report on 19 September, and that is when everyone will see what we are saying. It is not sent out to parents, but will be published on the web-site and there will be a public announcement when it is published. It will be available three weeks before the Council meeting for folk to look at it and let their Councillor know what they think about it. It is then discussed at Education and Families Committee and then at a full Council meeting. And in this case,

	because of the Lunnasting option which has come up, the authority has also gathered information on the Lunnasting option, and have looked at the figures. I said I would come back to Olnafirth Parent Council, and I am waiting to hear if they want to meet with me, and I can let you know. And any parent of bairns at the Olnafirth School can go to that meeting.
Parent	A comment was made to me after Thursday night's meeting, was that things were all sorted, and the bairns would be going to Lunnasting.
Helen Budge	We will be able to include in the Consultation report, the number of bairns for next year that would be going to each school.
Cllr Cooper	I feel that this is different to other proposed school closures. At other schools, there are not the number of parents who have elected to put their bairns to another school.
Parent	This is not such a fragile community as some of the others and it is not at the end of a road, right in the middle. We are going to work in different directions, can't compare us to the other proposals.
Helen Budge	<p>We are in a different position with this Paper that with other proposals. We were under no obligation statutorily to have this meeting, but I think it has been important.</p> <p>Is there anything else you want to say? Thank you for coming, it is not easy being at odds in the community and know that you need to put your own bairns first.</p>

Meeting closed at 7.25pm



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

**Appendix F – Transcript of the additional meeting
held at Olnafirth Primary School on 19 June 2013**

Meeting Held on 19 June 2013 at 8.15pm

Olnafirth Primary School

- Chairperson – Peter Leask
- Councillors in attendance – Councillor Vaila Wishart, Councillor George Smith,
- Others – Helen Budge, Director of Children's Services; Audrey Edwards, Executive Manager, Quality Improvement; Robert Sim, Quality Improvement Officer; Elsbeth Clark, Health Improvement, NHS
- Public attendees – 14
- Apologies from – Councillor Drew Ratter, Councillor Alistair Cooper, Laureen Johnson
- Note Taker – Susan Manson

Peter Leask, Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He said that Elsbeth Clark was attending the meeting tonight as she had been tasked to do a Health Impact Survey, and due to the short timescale, it seemed that tonight with the number of folk here, would be a good time to do that and she will explain about that later. He asked who would like to start.

Parent	Realistically it feels that this would be a good meeting to clarify a few things about figures and if the figures have been redrafted, a few bits and pieces we query and generally from where we are all sitting, there seems to have been a bit of disagreement, and to see what we are all looking at and what all trying to achieve here. Because I think we need to be really clear on that and what decisions that could come out of whatever happens here, and what they are actually trying to do. So I don't know what you want to tackle first.
Parent	I think there are some folk here that are new to Voe, and I wonder if they know every one here.
	Everyone at the meeting said who they were.
Parent	I guess the reason there's a lot of folk here is that there was a bit that came out of the back of the Voe meeting where some of us suggested that Lunnasting maybe an option as a potential move. There has been a lot of discussion round about that, I think if we are really clear this school is closing for a financial reason. This school performs very well. It educates to a high standard, nobody has ever disputed that, so it is closing to save Shetland Islands Council money, and as a result, I think if we are doing that, and doing that honestly, we have to look at what the best alternatives for Shetland Islands Council as a whole are. That was one of the reasons Lunnasting was suggested that they might have to consider it as an option. There are certain things that they keep if they go to Lunnasting - the GAE which is £3,100 for every child that attends a school which is under 70 pupils strong. That was one of the main reasons that it was suggested that Lunnasting really should be considered. We have concerns about figures that are being used to try and close this school. We have to be really clear, if the figures are not

	<p>right and they close this school, we will lose this school and they will just find that they need to save more money further down the line, more damage will be done, and it will then become harder and harder to actually make that money. We really need to make sure that the figures are right and I think that is in everyone's interest. And it looks like a lot of things have become a bit passionate about, yes, if we could all have the right choice, all have a free choice, we might not pick certain things. But they are trying to save money and the more they can save the better. But if we already have concerns about the figures we need to make sure that they are right, and I think that is where it originally came from. It was not necessarily not any deep desire not to go to Brae, that was never a point. It was purely the finances potentially stack up much better for going to Lunnasting, and if they don't save the money, then they are just going to cut later. And we need to understand that. I guess that's just where I wanted to be. I would also like to make the point that we have never actually excluded anyone from meetings. People could come along. We weren't trying to push any one particular agenda. We were just trying to make sure things are done right, because it has to be done right. This will have a lasting effect on this community and we need to make the right decisions for the right reasons. That's all I was looking for. So I think that's a good point to start. I guess if there's people who feel desperately that Lunnasting should not be an option, the only problem I would suggest to that is, ruling that out as an option may guarantee that further down the line they have to do further cuts and they might not be nice cuts. We have already seen them losing pieces of the curriculum.</p>
Parent	<p>I would like to say that I contacted Hayfield House, because when I left the meeting I kind of felt that when Olnafirth Parent Council were saying that Lunnasting should be the receiving school, I, as a pre-school mum in the community, kind of thought, well wow, where was that come from, because as much as you were saying that your Parent Council meetings and things were advertised, I didn't see that and I asked other ones I had invited to that meeting, if anyone else had seen that and nobody, that replied, had seen that. And also I had come to the Parent Council meeting in February, and had left my email address, as secretary of the Pre-school Group' and the Chair of the Pre-school Group's email address, asking for us to be contacted if there was anything relevant for us to come along to, and email that to us, but haven't heard anything. So you can kind of see what my surprise was that night; it was a big thing that had been decided in the Parent Council and us pre-school parents hadn't been a part of. So I think you need to look at how you tell us about Parent Council meetings, or how you get us to come along.</p>
Parent Council Clerk	<p>Can I interject here, Parent Council meetings are advertised in the shop a week before they happen. I have all email addresses that had been passed down to me when I took over as clerk. I have never had yours, so if you want to pass yours on to me to make sure everything in the future is sent to you.</p>

Parent	Is it advertised anywhere else?
Parent Council Clerk	No, it is just advertised in the shop, because I am the clerk, and as I have access to the shop, obviously; and I send out the agendas a week before into the school office, and I was given to understand that the school office would forward it to everyone that I hadn't. Those who expressed an interest in receiving the minutes, so I think there has been a breakdown in communications.
Parent	I think perhaps, if I had seen it, I wouldn't have necessarily assumed that I was in anyway included, because if it says Parent Council, I don't have a child at the school, so I wouldn't assume that I had been invited. So I think if you were seeking to represent the views of pre-school parents, there should have been a deliberate attempt to seek out those views.
Parent	I would just like to say that, in my time among all this, then I felt that we needed a link with pre-school bairns and I wanted a contact, and with a lot of phone calls and stuff, Vivienne came to meetings and we passed around email addresses one night so that everybody would be in the loop, and somewhere along the lines that didn't happen. There was a change of clerk, and whatever. It doesn't matter, but I think it is very unfortunate and I think it is probably because people will think, well we've not been told anything, and for myself, I can say I have been away for much of this year, out of the island, and there has been a breakdown in communications and that has certainly not helped at all. I feel vexed, that after, I thought we had it all set up and running and that didn't happen, and I do feel vexed about that.
Parent	If you look on your website at your minutes for March and April, it says that it has been distributed to me, and I have sent my apologies. I've not been sent the minutes.
Parent Council Clerk	As I said I thought it was being forwarded to you by the school.
Parent	So you could understand(trailed off)
Parent	But the thing to remember, we weren't deciding anything and we weren't saying that we were representing views. We were saying, if we are being honest about why you are closing a school, and if you are closing the school for financial reasons then it has to be considered. Because the finances might work out better. That's not about deciding. That's not about saying what's right or what we would want, because realistically what I would want is the school to stay open. But I would really hate to see decisions being made and the finances not being found, as I suspect will happen, so what will happen as we'll have the school close, and it will go and we will have a bit of the community which is gone forever, because it won't come back. They will not give us it back. And then they will just have to cut something else along the line, and while this might be an easy target, some of the other ones

	<p>won't be. And that was all it was. It wasn't saying that we were representing, and we think everyone will want to go to Lunnasting. That really wasn't what it was about, it was about. You need to look at the finances. We have concerns about the figures that are being bandied around. Already we have seen the figures. If you have watched it's gone from 249 to 160 down to 91, and even the 91 depending on how you cut it, looks ambitious and not realistic. That was the point. The feeling is that you need to look more fully.</p>
Parent	<p>You spoke that night that the Parent Council was going to go and see James Gray.</p>
Parent	<p>I emailed James Gray, on about the 10th or 12th of this month, I have not had any response back. I have been a little busy to actually arrange that, and I was trying to arrange something for the next week or so. I have not heard back so I will get back on to him, but we will be going to look at the finances because there are figures that we know aren't right. And we just would like to see what the rest of them are, and what's behind them.</p>
Parent	<p>I think what we took away from the Thursday night's meeting was that by all means look at Lunnasting but look at Brae as well. I think what we were saying wasn't don't listen to them, go to Brae. It was more, by all means look at Lunnasting but consider Brae as well.</p>
Parent	<p>Yes, and that's what we were saying. We weren't saying it has to be one or the other. We were saying you have to consider the options. If you are going to do it, you need to make the right decision. There was no intention to say that Brae shouldn't happen. If a compelling case could be made for them fine, but at least get it looked at. I hope that has cleared the air a bit. There was no push to say it has to be Lunnasting, that was not what it was about.</p>
Parent	<p>And with regard to me contacting Hayfield House, there was no cloak and dagger; it was just meeting for what I felt was pre-school parents to have a chance to bat around ideas and for folk to have a say who don't come under any umbrella parent council. It was just a meeting of folk to say what we felt.</p>
Parent	<p>I certainly very much appreciated that, and appreciated the education folk and Councillors coming along to that, having not had the opportunity to go to the public meeting, and so it was a second chance for me. So for both my husband and I to be able to come along, it was really helpful for us to hear what other parents were saying, as it is not a subject we know an awful lot about yet. Certainly there seems to have been a bit of negativity about it afterwards which I was really disappointed with, because for me it was a very positive experience, getting a chance to hear folks' views.</p>
Parent	<p>I think, the negativity, I would say, was that one, that some parents weren't invited and it would have been nice to have been invited to see what other folk were saying, because we are not trying to ride rough</p>

	shod over anyone. We are genuinely interested in what people think. And the other thing was, if you read the minutes of the meeting, I think some bits look bordering on quite slightly personal, and I think, yes, you might have found it positive, but read the minutes, and read the minutes from our point of view, and you might think you would not have come out feeling that it was all entirely positive.
Parent	I'll certainly look at those minutes then, yes, because that was very much how I felt, that it was a very positive meeting.
Parent	I think that some of the bits from the minutes was folk choosing to share their experiences. I think that you have to sort of honour how they felt, if they wanted to share that, and some was positive, some was negative, but it wasn't on the whole a negative meeting.
Parent	The only issue I have with the meeting is, anonymous parents. All the minuted meetings on-line, you can look back and find the person's name is next to their comments. Everybody making comments at that meeting has remained anonymous. That doesn't tie in with the other meetings. Was that decided, or was that just how it was minuted? That was something I would like cleared up, because obviously some of the comments are directed towards me, and there was no name on it.
Helen Budge	When we do the public meetings then we set them out the same as the one you attended, and that was the same as the one at Brae. The one on 6 June wasn't a public meeting. It was never meant to be a public meeting. It wasn't part of the statutory process, although our second public meeting is not officially part of the statutory process either, we are only obliged to have one public meeting, so we didn't treat it like a public meeting because wasn't what it was. It was a meeting that we were requested to attend, to discuss with parents and to listen to parents views. So that was how it was minuted.
Parent	You can't say that you are not treating it as part of the statutory process and treating it like public meeting, but you are taking that comments as part of the consultation. So how are you going to treat it?
Helen Budge	It is the same as the written responses, as well. Everything is all sent to Education Scotland (was HMle), so that they see everything. It is also provided in the Members Room, as part of a folder, so all members can view it. It is published on the web-site, so that everyone can see all the written responses, as well as the minutes from the meetings, and then we take on board everything that has been said. Any point that has been made we have to answer in a Consultation Report, which we have to produce three weeks before the meeting in October. So all of it is taken and in the same way. It is all shared with everybody.
Parent	That is missing my point. One meeting folk can stay anonymous and say what they want, and every other meeting then folk is named.
Parent	I wasn't aware that it wasn't being(trailed off).

Parent	If you go on-line, then all the minutes of all the meetings are there.
Parent	I wasn't aware that we weren't being named.
Helen Budge	Tonight's meeting is being recorded, the same way that that meeting was. There will be no names attached to tonight's meeting. It will be the same way as that other one. It is not set up in the same way that the public meetings are set up. Tonight's meeting is the same. We will put the minute up, that Susan takes from this, but it will just say the same as the other additional meeting.
Parent Council Clerk	The only concern I have with the minutes of that meeting being presented as part of the consultation, is I think that because the term Voe parents has kind of got two meanings – it's Voe parents as in parents of children who live in Voe, which is what the meeting consisted of, and there's Voe Parents as in parents of children at the Voe School. Now someone looking at that from the outside, for example Education Scotland, might not appreciate the difference, and I think that difference needs to be very clearly stated in that; at that meeting there were X parents of children who actually attend Olnafirth Primary and there were parents of children who live in Voe, but do not attend. And at least the split needs to be made clear. So that they can understand that the majority of the comments came from people whose children who do not actually go to Voe School. Either yet, or because they have chosen to go somewhere else. Otherwise, I think it is a misrepresentation of the opinions of the parents of the school, because if you refer to them as Voe parents it sounds like they are going to this school, and they don't.
Helen Budge	That will have been minuted tonight as well, but you have to be clear that everybody across Shetland has the ability to contribute towards this consultation.
Parent Council Clerk	Absolutely, but I think it is giving a false impression, based on some of the comments made in those minutes. If those comments were coming from the parents of children who were already at the school, it casts the school in a very different light, to have those comments coming from parents who simply live in Voe, but their children go to Brae for example. So their agendas will be different, or if they haven't started yet, their agendas will be different again.
Helen Budge	We can look at that.
Parent	I don't think it would be a problem, speaking from my point of view, to put names to our comments.
Parent	I would be happy with that. I just think a level playing field. I can take a poke on the nose, but I think everyone should be named. If it is worth saying, then you shouldn't be worried about saying it.
	There was agreement to this from several folk in the room.

Parent	It has caused bad feeling.
Head Teacher	One comment which caused an awful lot of bad feeling within the school, on the bottom of page 8 'and from the teacher's point of view, if they are constantly under the threat of losing their jobs, then they are not going to be able to give the kids 100%'. A teacher in this school was absolutely devastated, because she gives 110% all the time. She motivates children in a fantastic way, or we wouldn't be young Saltire Engineers for the second year in a row. She was really really hurt by that comment, because it wouldn't matter if she was under threat of losing her job, which she is not, she is giving 100%, and I felt that that was a very unfair comment, which she couldn't respond to because we weren't at the meeting as teachers.
Parent	I see what you mean, because if that comes from somebody who is not a parent at the school, but somebody else reading it thinks it maybe has come from someone who is a parent at the school, then it is as if there is something wrong with the teacher, which there is not, because she is a brilliant teacher.
Parent	It is a can of worms opening, the way that has unfolded.
Parent	I think there should be names.
Parent	I think my issue with it is about; I have two children of the eight that remain next year. One is going to be directly affected by any transition that takes place should the school close. And the only chance I have had until now to express my views verbally has been in a public meeting, and I find it very hard to speak in public. I would have preferred to have spoken in a smaller enclosed environment and I felt excluded from that, certainly at that meeting time. And all the parents of Olnafirth, are part of the Parent Council, that's in the school handbook, so no parent should feel excluded. I can understand there might be a gap between nursery aged children and school aged children, because there is no nursery attached to the school, but certainly all the parents at Voe have access to the Parent Council, they all get letters home and can't understand why they would feel excluded from the Parent Council.
Parent	That is one of the other things that adding names will help. Some people have children who will be directly affected, as in they will be attending this school when it potentially closes. To my mind that is an important point to bear in mind because, you have got to accept that they are going to be trying to do best for their child, and whether you agree with it or not, is by the by, but they will be trying to make the best case for their children. And I think there are bits and pieces in that, and names do help because it gives you an idea of what they are bringing and why they might be saying what they are saying. And especially the suggestion about the teachers; they have to come from outside school, because I don't know of a single parent who would have any suggestion that our teachers are not 100%.
Parent	The teachers are definitely 100%, completely. Had to come from

	outwith the school. Nobody could say anything about the teacher, she's a brilliant teacher.
Parent	It's unfortunate, every meeting, it is a very difficult thing which is going on just now. And it's a job to deal with all that. It's affecting everybody and there are comments that don't need to be made.
Parent	Some things don't need to be minuted, I don't know if that adds anything, so perhaps.... <i>(trailed off)</i> .
Parent	That's not helping anything.
Helen Budge	Can I just say that we are treating this meeting the same as the last one, so everybody that has spoken already, because you have not said who you are, as we ask you to do at the public meeting, Susan is not minuting names, so if you want us to take note of your names, you have to be give your names when you speak, and be clear that you want what you said minuted, because at the public meetings we make that clear at the beginning. But we were treating this the same as the previous one, where we have been invited along, and here to take our own minute which we would then publish in the same way. And if you want to do that differently we need to go back to each person who spoke and you need to say who you are before you speak.
Parent	What would be the easiest way to do this?
Parent	Do you want to do it from now on?
Parent	Is there any specific things in the hand book [<i>the minute of 6 June meeting</i>] that you would like to know who said what?
Helen Budge	We can pick that up.
Head Teacher	I don't want that can of worms opened any further.
Parent	As far as this meeting has gone on, do you want to continue from this point forward saying names if we want to? I don't think there is anything that has been said already that has to be directly attributed to anyone. Just about trying to clear the air and just why we are here, and what we are trying to get.
Helen Budge	So from this moment on, each person who wishes their names to recorded, will say their name, otherwise she will continue to minute it as a 'parent'. You have to appreciate that this is difficult for us too, we are trying to accommodate you. We are trying to do what you are asking of us. This is all beyond what we are statutorily obliged to do. But we want to try and work with you through this. Which is why we agreed to come to the last meeting and why we have agreed to come tonight.
Parent	Fair enough.

Parent	Could I just go back. Elizabeth made a really good point, just for moving forward as a group. You are absolutely right a lot of people find it quite difficult to speak even in a group this size, and maybe for this types of activities and consultations in the future, we have to work in smaller groups to capture more from more people, because, I know what you mean if there are stronger views that yours, and moderate views or different views, it can be quite difficult to put yourself forward.
Vivienne Anderson	That's why I didn't stand up at the public meeting and say, well actually I don't agree with what you are saying.
Helen Budge	And this would be a good time to remind everybody, we do have written responses forms that you can fill in and send back, or you can send us a letter, or an email to the Blueprint for Education. All of that will be recorded, all of that will be published on the web-site, and as I said sent to Education Scotland and shared with Councillors, so I appreciate public meetings are really difficult places, but we are statutorily obliged to hold one, as part of the process that we have to undertake. We have the opportunity for folk to send back written responses, so your views can be taken into account, because we do appreciate that sometimes it is difficult, particularly when there are a lot of folk at the public meeting. So please, I have brought a few extra forms here tonight. I must say we have not received a great numbers, yet, of written responses, so if you could take the opportunity to send one in, we really would appreciate it.
David McDowell	Actually, in a technical detail there, my wife and I both tend to use same email account, we might have quite different views at times, so if you get two responses from the one email account, they will still be considered?
Helen Budge	As long as your one says David McDowell and your wife's name is on the other one then that will be fine. It doesn't matter about the email account, but who puts their name to it.
David McDowell	Can I just check, I have known sometimes for only one response to be accepted from an email account.
Helen Budge	No, it won't be like that for this.
Peter Leask	Anything else, or it might be a good time for Elsbeth to speak about the Health Impact Assessment.
Elsbeth Clark	I work for the Health Improvement Team at NHS Shetland, and I have been tasked to undertake a Health Impact Assessment to do with the proposed closure of Olnafirth Primary School, and also with Skerries School Secondary Department, at the moment, so that you know they are also getting the same assessment, obviously based on their situation. What a health impact assessment is basically, very simply, is trying to get as wide a view of all the health components to do with the proposal we have in front of us. To do with the proposed closure of Olnafirth and to think about, if that happens then what happens to the

	bairns, where do they go, so we need to think about the health of the bairns. We also need to be thinking wider as that, because we need to be thinking about the community and the impacts that the proposal might have on the community as a whole and their health. So it can be quite broad.
Helen Budge	I suggest that, as Elsbeth has been asked to do this as an independent body, that all the Councillors and Council officers leave the meeting.
Elsbeth Clark	Yes, I would be happier with that.
Helen Budge	So would I. But before we do, rather than go out and then come back, are there conversations you would like to have with us before we go?
David McDowell	Just a couple of things, at the meeting we pointed out that the GAE figures used for the figures were wrong, they were down at 23 and should be 31. I would just like to confirm that you are actually going to correct those figures, as that takes the amount saved down.
Helen Budge	First of all, I am disappointed that you have not heard from James Gray from the email you sent to him, and will check up on that tomorrow and make sure that will be responded to.
David McDowell	It was just one email, to be fair.
Helen Budge	<p>All the same, I would like that meeting to be held before the end of the statutory consultation process which is the 28th June, so you don't have long to actually have that conversation. So it would be important to have that. Any questions you raised at the public meeting will be answered in the Consultation Report. So that all the queries, all the questions, all the areas that have been highlighted through the public meeting, through the written responses, through the staff meetings, through the pupil responses, we have to answer each of those queries. So all of the points that were raised will be answered as part of that process.</p> <p>And the other point you made earlier about the fact that this is completely about financial reasons, I would just like to highlight for you to please go back to the Proposal Paper, because in the Proposal Paper it does set out educational benefits as well. And while we recognise there are financial reasons, as you correctly point out, there are also; we have to take into account educational benefits as part of a Proposal Paper.</p>
David McDowell	The educational benefit is really as much as saying if we don't cut this school you will cut generally across Shetland. It is about money.
Helen Budge	I'm not disputing that, but it's not solely about money. It is also about the educational benefits.

David McDowell	I would suggest the other ones you add in all amount to vague statements about you think it will be beneficial without actually asking children who'll be put through the closure. So I think that's weak, but lets not get into that, because that's basically the crux of what one of the argument's going to be about.
David McDowell	There is one other thing, I can't remember, did we ask at the public meeting about transport contracts? They were up for renewal, have they been decided? Because they were a big chunk of the actual costs you will add in to the system.
Helen Budge	At the moment, a report will be going to Committee around that. At the moment the tenders that came back are being considered.
David McDowell	So the figures, when they finally go before the Council, will they be based on the new contract prices?
Helen Budge	They will be based on the contract prices as of at that time, yes.
Peter Leask	Before, when we were progressing with this, then it was estimated transport costs, then it was always a big grey area.
Helen Budge	I think that a date for a Special Council meeting is being finalised. So by the time we progress to a Consultation Report that will have been confirmed.
David McDowell	So it will be confirmed by the October meeting and they will be the figures that are put in front of the Councillors.
Helen Budge	Yes, that's right.
Elizabeth McDowell	I gather from the minutes of 6 June, that you have gone away and looked at Lunnasting as a potential option as far as Brae, and you have some information to pass back to us.
Helen Budge	Again it would be information we have gathered, but without the transport, because as of yet, we don't have any firm figures. It is still a tender process, shall we say, so we don't have what would be final figures, like you are speaking about. We have used the same type of figures that was in here, the previous contract being used at the moment, for what's in here. We have not spoken to transport companies around figures for Lunnasting. So the information we have for Lunnasting excludes any kind of transport information. And it does look at the moment, without that transport figures, that it would be more of a saving than the £91,000 that is in here. But again it depends what that transport figures were, as to whether that remains to be the case or whether that's not the case. So I'm being vague because I don't have figures and as soon as I say a figure somebody criticises and says you have changed it by £2.40.

Elizabeth McDowell	So you won't be willing to say discuss, like for like, excluding transport for Brae at the moment you'd want to take longer.
Helen Budge	To get that full picture, because, again, looking at the Lunnasting option, we haven't asked the transport operator what would that be, because we already have ones going from here to Brae obviously so we can work with those transport operators. We don't have transport operators, that at the moment operate the other way.
Elizabeth McDowell	Will that information be available before the Consultation ends?
Helen Budge	Not before the 28 th June, but we will have to answer that in the Consultation Report. We have gathered information, and yes Lunnasting School can hold the number of pupils that we are speaking about, yes they would have capacity for that young folk coming in, yes we would save the GAE that we would lose if they were going to Brae. We have got figures for how much the Lunnasting School costs just now. We know about the staffing levels. We know that the staffing levels are there. We know about additional support needs, extra curricular activities, all that types of things we have gathered. But the area that would make a difference obviously is transport, and that is an area, that because of on-going conversations we have not been able to get yet.
Elizabeth McDowell	What is the general reception at Lunnasting from the staff?
Helen Budge	I haven't spoken to the staff, I spoke to the head teacher and the school clerical assistant and, I explained the situation about why I was looking for this additional information, and they were aware that their school has capacity and at the moment their pupil numbers are going to be in the mid 20's for the next few years. Now, that does mean two teachers, so it is very small classes. And if we add in a number of extra, which would be eight pupils, that would still be looking at about 33 pupils, so number-wise it is not really making that big classes. So they were quite receptive to it, although they appreciate again that a number of parents choose to put their bairns to Brae currently.
Elizabeth McDowell	I would just like to clarify that I would always prefer for my children to stay at Olnafirth as now, with no great desire to change school, but if it does have to close, I would make a very informed decision about which receiving school they went to.
Helen Budge	And again, I think that was a point made earlier, whatever school we chose to put forward as a recommendation to Council, there will always be the opportunity for parents to choose another school, because none of our schools are sitting at capacity. So should a receiving school be Lunnasting there will be capacity in Brae for parents to put in a placing request. It is the transport issue. If Brae was the receiving school there would then still be the opportunity for parents to put bairns to

	Lunnasting because there is capacity. It would just be that they would have to pay their own transport. So the receiving school that you choose, you can choose either of those two, but one would be recommended, whether that's agreed or not by Council, and the other one would be that you could put them there by placing request.
Phoebe Preston	On the subject of placing requests, currently in Section 10 of your Admissions Policy, I just wanted a bit of clarification ' <i>Parents who choose to send their child, through a placing request, to a school other than their designated school will be responsible for their child's transport.</i> ' So at present the parents in Voe, who send their children to Brae, have to pay for their own transport, and have to ship their children here and there. If Olnafirth did shut and the designated school became Brae, would those parents then be entitled to free transport?
Helen Budge	Yes, because what we are proposing within this Proposal Paper is the third point which is that the catchment area for Brae be altered.
Phoebe Preston	I wasn't clear, whether, because the placing requests had been made prior to Brae becoming the designated school whether, you would end up splitting Voe up into those can take it and those who can't.
Helen Budge	No, point three of the detail of the Proposal is that ' <i>The catchment area for Brae High School Primary Department be altered to include the current catchment area for Olnafirth Primary School.</i> ' Which then means that that admissions does change to be the map within the document.
Phoebe Preston	That wasn't why I was asking, it was because the placing request had been made prior to the changing of the boundaries, I wasn't sure if there was going to be some kind of dividing line.
David McDowell	I have heard Councils before doing that where, you know effectively, when you make a placing request you effectively give up the right to your catchment area school. And I don't know how that works retrospectively.
Councillor Smith	What Councils were those?
David McDowell	South Lanarkshire Council. In South Lanarkshire Council the minute you make a placing request, you actually give your right to the catchment area school. So what can actually happen, because we put a placing request in for our child, you actually gave up the right to attend your local school and you weren't guaranteed you could go to that one.
Helen Budge	That is not in our Admissions Policy. That is not a policy of this Council.
David McDowell	There was a strange piece mentioned in that meeting where one of the Councillors seemed to suggest there was some grand plan for one

	large primary school, or certainly seemed to allude to it. Drew Ratter seemed to imply that the way forward for the North Mainland was something along the lines of one strong primary school. Is that a policy?
Helen Budge	No. I can't remember exactly what he said, we think perhaps he was meaning a kind of hub for education.
Audrey Edwards	The only proposals we have are in the report from September 2012.
David McDowell	I know, but they only go so far into the future, I was just intrigued to see a Councillor to come out in a minuted document with a statement like that. And it certainly did to me, sound like a definite push to towards all of them were going to go, and it was going to be Brae.
Parent	Was that the discussion about making sure that Brae High School remained viable in the long term and I asked at that meeting because I didn't see that that made any sense what so ever, because whether the bairns went to Vidlin or Brae, they would still go to Brae High School anyway. So I sought to clarify that.
Helen Budge	I thought that it was about Brae Secondary.
Parent	I remember that, and that point confused me as I thought they would both go to Brae, I remember that.
Helen Budge	I thought it was about two secondary high schools, the Anderson High School and one in Brae, and it was about keeping the Brae High School sustainable. I thought it was the High School.
Parent	I remember that, because it confused me, because I didn't see what difference it would make, whether the bairns went to Vidlin or Brae, what High School they would go to.
David McDowell	If that's what it is then I've obviously got the wrong end of the stick because it seemed an odd thing to discuss in a primary school meeting.
Peter Leask	The best thing would be to ask Drew to clarify it.
Helen Budge	That would be a good idea, you could try that. I didn't pick up that he wanted us to look at one for the North Mainland.
Peter Leask	I know Drew has a thing about centralising stuff in Brae in general, from before he was elected.
David McDowell	It seems to tack onto him kind of suggesting that Lunnasting doesn't feel like a viable option, which made me read it in a very defined way. If you are discussing why Lunnasting is not a potentially good option, and then go on about discussing a strong central hub, it tends to lead me to one sort of conclusion about what he thinks the grand plan for North

	Mainland is. And I was just interested if that was a general held view.
Helen Budge	It is certainly not policy.
Councillor Smith	Not part of my plan.
Councillor Wishart	This has not been discussed at any meeting that I know of. The best thing would be to ask Drew, because I don't know.
David McDowell	It just reads very odd.
Elizabeth McDowell	The part of the minute is ' <i>I think at this point it would be a big benefit to education in Brae if Olnafirth bairns</i> ' and this is the point ' <i>as I almost inevitably think, will go there</i> '.
Helen Budge	I would suggest picking it up with Drew.
David McDowell	I think that is, if he says ultimately go there, to me the reading of it is, that even if they go to Lunnasting, eventually Lunnasting will go.
Helen Budge	I would read it as ultimately they would go to the secondary department there.
Councillor Smith	<p>We have a Council Policy at the moment, which takes us to the end of this Council, which is to get the Council into a financially sustainable position. Within that there are savings targets for the Schools Service and the wider Children's Services. Those savings, if all achieved, along with all the other savings from other departments, if all achieved, will then put the Council in a financially sustainable position. What happens after that, I think will be determined by a new Council because it would be at the end of the mandate for this Council</p> <p>My own personal view, is that the Council should not be going any further financially in terms of making savings and cuts to its public services than it absolutely has to do. Because the Council is surely about us delivering the best quality service it can with the money that is available to it. So if it reaches financial sustainability to my mind that is as far as it should go, because you will then hopefully maintain that high level of service provision, that you have at the end of that period of time. I don't see any advantage in, for example, closing more schools than you might otherwise want to do. So I would not be supporting a view of; if you take for my own area, south Shetland, Sandwick secondary department will be consulted on. There are three primary schools in the south of Shetland, one could argue that the capacity or the space could be created in the building Sandwick to make one big primary school for south Shetland. I don't think that's, when there is no financial necessity to do that, it's not in the plan at the moment that there would be any educational advantage to doing that. So I wouldn't be thinking to be</p>

	supporting that.
David McDowell	That's the thing, it feels like the Council misses things sometimes, and if the school is under 70 pupils then GAE is huge.
Councillor Smith	<p>I know about that, and that's the point your trying to make about, or what you were saying, was behind the suggestion for Lunnasting. But to my mind that, and I think it is magnanimous to be saying, lets look at the Council's wider financial position, which is true and there would be impact in terms of a limited budget having to be spread more thinly, but at the end of the day, my driver is always going to be about the educational value.</p> <p>I have a particular view on the value of making savings as opposed to the quality of service that is being delivered, and I'm struggling all the time because I am being pulled to make the savings, when I would rather not be making savings. That's just my own personal political view I suppose, so I'm not as caught up in whether a GAE is going to be gained or lost per se, but I understand the argument you are making about an extra £30, 000 / £40,000 pounds, or £30, 000 / £40,000 less has to be found from somewhere, in the way that this Council is going. I absolutely accept what you are saying, but for me it is not my personal driver. So for me it would be coming down to, if this school has to close then which of the receiving schools would be the best alternative in terms of quality of education. That would be the prime concern for me.</p>
Martin Leask	You are saying that your drive is for the quality of education. Well would you not say that this school has a really good track record.
Councillor Smith	Yes, I would.
Martin Leask	Then I would hope that the drive would be to keep this school open.
Councillor Smith	In an ideal world that would perhaps be the best thing to do, but as I've tried to explain, trying to find a balance in terms of the ability of the Council to sustain its finances into the future. So you have to then look to see, well if this isn't possible, then what are the alternatives and do they measure up in the same way. Is the education experience not going to be detrimental at the end of the day.
Martin Leask	Okay, so then we could say that money would actually come into the equation.
Councillor Smith	Yes, the money is obviously coming into the equation at some stage, but to my mind; I find it really disappointing from my own political perspective that is a driver in that way. I'm not trying to hide anything from you. I'm not trying to pretend it's anything that it's not. I just find that it's disappointing that that is the situation; that is reality of what we are working with. This Committee, or this service is being charged with finding another £3.249million over this next year, and I know the

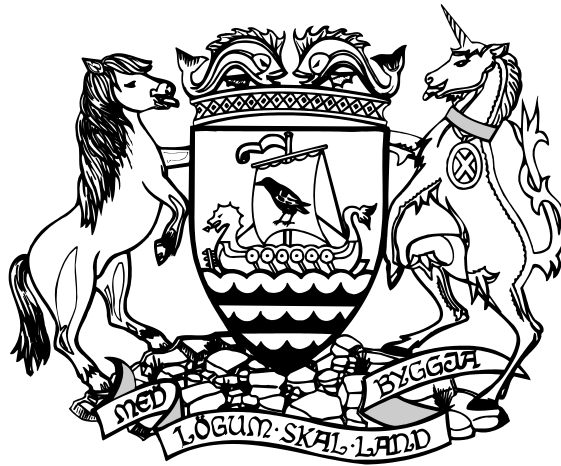
	<p>difficulty of taking that out of classroom resources. We are seeing £5million worth of cuts over these last two years coming out of there, and that does have a huge impact, and I can't for the life of me see how you can take another three and a quarter million out very easily either. So, it's a horrible position to be in, for everyone in this room. I'm not relishing making any of these decisions I can assure you.</p>
Peter Leask	<p>Can I go back to something you said before, you are closing schools, you've all been set budgets, it's not easy, it's not fair. You are closing schools and then you get to this sustainable level and you hope to close no more. Well it's unlucky if you are at the top of the list, and it's lucky if you are at the bottom. You know where I'm coming from.</p>
Councillor Smith	<p>You have to start somewhere. It is not a lucky dip. We're not just drawing names out of a hat. It is thinking about the issues around the educational experience, and where that educational experience might be got. You start with where there are smaller schools.</p>
Helen Budge	<p>And for us, if you look at the ones in this three year phase that we are looking at, they are all ones that at one time or another, whether it is currently or into the future, are one teachers schools, with rolls generally less than 10 pupils. We are having to have a conversation with another school outwith the Blueprint because that roll is falling to such an extent that we're concerned about whether that young folk are getting the best educational experience as well. So that is one of the reasons that we are particularly looking, and it is not top of a list or bottom of a list. The ones we are looking at just now are ones with very very small primary rolls. In the primary sector, not in the secondary sector generally, but in the primary sector with very small school rolls.</p>
Phoebe Preston	<p>Part of the reason that this school has a very small school roll is because of the repeated threats of closure. If you look back to 1996 and then forward to now. When the first one was suggested it bobbed around 27, 25, 31, that kind of thing. Then there was the suggestion and it fell down to 21 over the next three years from 30, and then it came back up again after that, until 2009 when all of this arose again and it's been falling ever since. The correlation between the suggestion of closure and start of fall off on roll is marked, if you look at the graph. So isn't this position we find ourselves in, actually manufactured by the constant suggestion of closure. Because what parent is going to want to send their child to a school which may close half way through their child's school career.</p>
Helen Budge	<p>I accept, for this school, that appears to be the case, that placing requests are made, but for many other schools that we have in a similar situation that have been under blanket or threat of closure for a number of years, we have not seen the same number of placing requests for example for Sandness, for North Roe, for Burravoe, those other schools that have been in the same position for the same length of time. There's not the number of placing requests from those schools for bairns to go to other schools.</p>

Phoebe Preston	But there is for this one, so why is that not being taken into account.
Helen Budge	It is being taken into account.
Audrey Edwards	My own personal view about that is that you need to think about geography in that regard, because somewhere like Sandness or Burravoe, then I think geography does start to come into it, and the distance for parents to put their children to a different school is much further for them, then for maybe folk around this area.
Helen Budge	And we do have to listen to those other people who have chosen that have to say about that as well, as to what their reasons are, not perceived reason.
Phoebe Preston	I'm not saying that every child that doesn't go to Voe, would go to Voe were Voe considered viable. Obviously every parent is going to make decisions where they send their child. But equally well you could say that people outside the catchment area of Voe, you may have people wanting to send their children to the Voe School from outside the catchment area, who equally well aren't doing it because they don't want their children to go to their local school, in the same way that we have people who don't want their children to go to other local schools.
David McDowell	Because in the meeting there was an interesting point made; that's not why I moved my child because it was going down to a one teacher school, which ties it back in to why was it going to go down to a one teacher school, because the numbers had been hit by the repeated threats. So although they didn't think they would necessarily be sending their child, you could argue the very fact that it was going to go down to a one teacher school could be because of the repeated threats, because that's one of the reasons we are where we are.
Alison Johnson	I have a P1 child at Brae, and a P6 here at Olnafirth. So I had to make the decision last year what to do with my P1 who was due to come here. I decided to put her to Brae because there were really no other bairns in her immediate age group. She was already at nursery. But also a chose to leave my P6 bairn here, because I don't have a problem with the educational benefits, whatever, I don't think she needs to go to Brae to get anything she doesn't get here. Know what I mean? So I can speak for both sides. I made that decision. If the school hadn't been under threat for years, and there were more bairns here, then my peerie lass would have come here, but the numbers were talking to me in the end. She was just going to be basically herself, and I know there were much bigger ones, which I didn't think would benefit her, and oh well it's probably going to shut next year anyway, and then she'll have to move. As we've all been saying, so I think I can speak for both sides. But I think that it says something that I left my P6 bairn here. And the teachers here are very good.
Helen	Thank you for that, as it is helpful for us to hear everybody's views.

Budge	
Pat Brown	I had long conversations with Alison last year, and I had long conversations with the parents of the prospective P1s this year. They were not easy conversations. And I appreciate you saying that Alison, that you left your P6 bairn here, and that you felt that your P1 bairn was not going to thrive here as an only P1. It's very encouraging to see bumps and know of the other children that are going to be part of this community. This is a thriving community and there are under three's - we see them when the toddlers are at the school on a Tuesday. It is lovely to see so many young children in this village. And thank you for coming along tonight.
Elizabeth McDowell	In the last meeting, I think, someone was going to have a look at where they were with Capital Projects and the car park at Brae. Has anything been done about that? Does anyone know where we are?
Helen Budge	Again, that is something we will respond to as part of the Consultation Report. But, yes, that is certainly something that is being investigated at the moment, and Vaila, I believe you did bring it to the Road Safety Panel.
Elizabeth McDowell	There is no further information at this point in time?
Helen Budge	No, we would put that in the Consultation Report as well.
Peter Leask	Anything else?
Phoebe Preston	One final slight concern. Just the first public meeting in the Voe Hall, I have a print out of the minutes here, where on the first page, it looks like the preamble, which you presumably you give at every single consultation meeting, refers to Anderson High School rather than Olnafirth Primary and therefore, has clearly been cut and pasted from someone else's preamble. The reason I am concerned about this is that during that preamble Vaila also stated that any Council employee who happened to be present was free to make their opinions known as any other member of the public was. After comments been made about the letter that had been sent out to all Council employees and I certainly as the owner of the shop know of at least three people who did not attend that public meeting because they felt that that letter had gagged them. And they didn't see any point in coming, so I am presuming that was why that statement was made and I am very concerned that that statement was not contained in the minutes of that meeting.
Helen Budge	Ok, well we will make sure that it is, because certainly, Vaila did say that at the beginning of the meeting. We apologise for that and we shall rectify it not to say Anderson High School, and the second point is yes, Vaila did talk about the fact that that circular had gone out to all staff and there was a feeling that staff felt they couldn't come to a meeting

	<p>and have their comments known. We do have staff meetings. We do minute those meetings, and they are included as part of the process, so staff do have an opportunity to make their voices known in that context and they can also at that staff meeting say 'and as a parent I think'. As well as that we do have written response forms which we would encourage parents, staff, anybody to complete and there are boxes you can chose which you can actually tick your are a parent, rather than a school staff member, if you want to.</p> <p>Also I brought up that point at a Head Teachers' Meeting and made it clear to head teachers that they were to go back to their staff and have a conversation with them around the fact that while we highlight what the Code of Conduct are, staff are free to say what they want and they can say that, not to give away confidential information obviously that they know as a staff member, but that they can talk and say 'as a parent, I want to say'. And this form helps with that as well.</p>
Phoebe Preston	<p>That was a conversation that I actually had with some people in the shop, because I said to them that there is no way that the intent of that letter would be to stop you going and saying your piece. It comes across like that, but that's just simply not allowed. That would be illegal. That's gagging people. You as a parent or employee of the school have a right to speak your piece about the school, but they were absolutely adamant they were not allowed to talk about anything, so maybe next time a letter like that goes out, you might want to tone it down a bit or something.</p>
Helen Budge	<p>Well, we can certainly ensure that head teachers reiterate that to their staff again, particularly in this area, but we did that at the Head Teacher's Meeting to all head teachers.</p>
Phoebe Preston	<p>It wasn't just teachers.</p>
Helen Budge	<p>Well all staff.</p>
Peter Leask	<p>Anything else. I think you are free to go.</p>
Helen Budge	<p>We'll leave these response forms.</p>

Councillors and Council Officers left the meeting.



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

Appendix G – Health Impact Assessment

Health Impact Assessment

Proposed closure Olnafirth Primary School

Health Improvement Department

NHS Shetland

28th June 2013

What is a Health Impact Assessment?

Health Improvement, NHS Shetland has been tasked with producing a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) on the proposed closure of the Olnafirth Primary School. A HIA involves identifying and considering actual or potential health and equality impacts that a proposal may have on a population. It helps to inform the decision making process and is conducted using a variety of methods with the aim of producing evidence-based recommendations. Where evidence is not readily available reasoned judgement is used. It will present ways to minimise or negate negative impacts on health, well-being and health inequalities that exist or may arise. It will also enhance the positive impacts of a proposal.

When conducting a HIA the wider determinants of health have to be considered. The diagram below illustrates the interrelationships between these determinants. It demonstrates that the NHS, although playing an important role in health, is only part of a range of factors that impact on health. HIAs provide a practical way of taking each of these factors into consideration and to identify key people to engage in the process.

Figure 1: The wider determinants of health. Source adapted from Dahlgren (1995) [1]



How this HIA has been conducted

The HIA has been conducted using the following methods:

- Review of Blueprint for Education documentation
- Review of Community Development data
- Survey with local community
- General internet based literature research in line with concerns raised
- Completion of Health Impact Assessment Tool and presentation of recommendations

Health Impact Assessment

Table 1. Stage 1 Screening; the table below highlights the concerns/comments raised by parents and community members in Olnafirth.

Screening Question	No If there will be no health impact, provide a brief explanation for your response	Yes If there will be a health impact (s) provide a brief explanation.
Will the proposal have a direct impact on health, mental health and wellbeing? For example would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation? You should consider whether any socioeconomic or equalities groups* will be particularly affected		There is a concern in the community that moving from a small school to a larger school may increase chances of being bullied. Both potential receiving schools have robust anti-bullying policies and processes in place and parents and children need to be aware of this and how to act on it.
		Child becoming ill at school and no way to collect the child. There are systems in place for this but parents need to be made aware of these.

		<p>Concern that children will be subjected to talk of risk-taking behaviour on bus and subject to risk-taking behaviour at larger school. This is a particular concern for the proposal of young children being on the bus with much older children from the High School.</p>
		<p>Safety on buses – seat belts, drop off and pick up points (car parks), poor roads in winter. All safety requirements need to be addressed through the local authority, children should wear seat belts before bus departs, there also needs to be safe routes to and from school and safe drop off and pick up points, parents need to be informed of and confident in the systems as there is potential to cause parents and children stress.</p>
		<p>Olnafirth school pupils being split up from each other when at receiving school. There needs to be discussion with the school to ensure child needs are met in line with what is best for the child – Both Lunnasting School and Brae High School have positive processes in place for integrating new pupils.</p>

<p>Will the policy have an impact on social, economic and environmental living conditions that would indirectly affect health?</p> <p>For example would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, good employment opportunities, green space or climate change?</p> <p>You should consider whether any socioeconomic or equalities groups* will be particularly affected</p>		<p>Loss of income to local shop – due to potentially more commuters living in area (meaning there is the potential for them to shop elsewhere), the potential that less families would move in and fact that shopping is often done at present as part of the school run- loss of income to shop could lead to loss of jobs at shop. Reduction in household incomes may result in families living in poverty and therefore increasing chances of poor health and higher health costs. All of this needs to be taken into account and set against projected savings.</p> <p>Loss of local jobs in school – if staff relocated consideration to be given to the travelling distance, and ease of travel to that area, feasibility of continuing work especially as most staff work on part-time basis. Loss of job and/or increase in expenditure in order to get to work in another area can impact on household income and therefore increase the chances of poor health which is another cost that should be set against projected savings.</p>
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		<p>Potential that due to the school closing there will be less chance of people with families moving into the area. Also concern about house prices falling and concern about housing being used for transient workers or commuters who could potentially contribute less to the local economy. It needs to be identified if this would be the case and if so the projected costs of this needs to be set against the projected savings.</p>
		<p>Loss of social contact through the school. Older people in the community will miss seeing local children passing by and playing in school grounds throughout the day. Local families will not have the opportunity to meet through the school. Also there is the potential loss of many social events held in local school and involving the whole community - Up Helly Aa visit, harvest celebration and distribution of produce to older residents of Olnafirth area, school fete. Voe show uses the school and entrance to the car parking is via the school grounds – all these social events are important for preventing social isolation as many attend or are involved in the organising and running, or contribute to the events in some other way. In particular these events bring together people from all ages of the community.</p>
		<p>Use of building if not school – School is located in the middle of the community and if it were to close the community must</p>

		be fully consulted on what it is to be used for as it could have potentially damaging effects on health depending on the use.
		Access to playground, playpark and football pitch. All these play a major part in supporting physical activity in the area as well as acting as a gathering point for young people. The play ground is used for cycling, roller skating/blading, skateboarding, and provides a safe area to do so. Preservation of this area for its current use is key to maintaining and /or increasing physical activity levels of the community.
<p>Will the proposal affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?</p> <p>You should consider whether any socioeconomic or equalities groups* will be particularly affected</p>		Reduction in activity levels due to not being able to cycle or walk to school. Also time lost to travel that could have been active especially on shorter day-light days and effect on health of sitting on transport for longer periods.
		Out of school clubs/ activities – concern that will not be able to attend – consideration needs to be given how to include Olafirth children in this to ensure they have chance to be part of after school activities. Also due to longer journey times it is more difficult to attend clubs in other areas. This all needs careful planning or parents could be paying a lot in fuel to collect their children from activities. Or children could be missing out an activities entirely.

		Bikeability – there needs to be consideration on how bikes are transported to the receiving school so that the pupils can partake in Bikeability lessons. Bikeability is essential for getting children cycling safely and must be preserved.
<p>Will there be a change in demand for or access to health and social care services?</p> <p>For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community services, Mental Health and Social Services?</p> <p>You should consider whether any socioeconomic or equalities groups* will be particularly affected</p>		No impact identified
<p>Will the proposal have an impact on global health?</p>		There needs to be complete clarity and transparency in the savings figures that are presented. These figures are presently giving rise for concern and therefore increasing stress levels of certain community members.
<p>Any other issues?</p>		Clarification required on transport, length of journey routes. Again these require clarification as causing parents concern as they do not know the detail of the journey times.

		Saltire awards– this is a positive project promoting mental wellbeing. Every effort should be made to introduce this project at the receiving schools or at least attention must be given to ensuring that skills that the children have gained through this are shared with other pupils.
*Equalities groups such as race, gender, health, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.		

Table 2. Stages 2 and 3; Identify and Prioritise health impacts

Stage 2: Identify Health Impacts	Stage 3: Prioritise Health Impacts					
Describe the Health Impacts	Will the health impacts affect the whole population or will there be differential impacts within the population? You should consider whether any socioeconomic	Will the health impacts be difficult to remedy or have an irreversible impact?	Will the health impacts be medium to long term?	Are the health impacts likely to generate public concern?	Are the health impacts likely to generate cumulative and/or synergistic impacts?	Combining the answers, on balance will the health impacts have an important positive or negative impact on health? Provide a brief overview of the reason for your decision on prioritization.

	or equalities groups* will be particularly affected.					
1. Concern about susceptibility to bullying in larger school	Children and the parents	Due to measures in place to tackle bullying then this is unlikely.	Have potential to be long-term if children/ parents do not know about anti-bullying measures and how to act on them	No	No	<p>In larger schools there is more choice of friends and therefore can be less socially isolating. The receiving schools have robust anti-bullying policies and processes in place Handbooks are available which give details of these services, as well as web-pages. Parents and children's anxiety around bullying could be addressed by making them fully aware of the systems in place and ensuring parents and children familiarise themselves and know how to act on these systems.</p> <p>Negative impact – potential impact on self esteem, confidence, mental health. Positive impact – may enhance coping mechanisms</p>
2. Child becomes ill	children and parents	Potentially	Yes if child needs parent and they cannot get there	No	No	<p>Consideration needs to be given to the anxieties of the parent who need to be informed of the systems in place to address this.</p> <p>Negative impact – stress</p>

						Positive impact- unknown
3. Concern of risk taking behaviour influences	Children and parents	No	No	No	No	There is no evidence to suggest that young people subjected to conversations or behaviour with drugs, alcohol, sex, smoking will influence their behaviour. Negative impact – stress for parents Positive impact – opportunity to learn and raise issues with peers and parents
4. Safety: on the bus(seat belts), at the bus pick up and drop off points	Children and parents	Yes potentially if accident occurs	Potentially	Potentially	No	All safety requirements need to be addressed through local authority, children should wear seat belts before bus departs, there also needs to be safe routes to and from school and safe drop off and pick up points, parents need to be informed of and confident in the systems as there is potential to cause parents and children stress. Responsibilities of individual bus companies also need to be made clear. Negative impact – stress for parents and children Positive impact – reduced stress if aware of system and confident in them.
5. Concern that pupils from Olnafirth will be	Children	No	No	No	No	Both Lunnasting School and Brae High School have

segregated.						<p>positive processes in place for integrating new pupils. Although there may also be benefits in mixing with a larger group of children. There will always be the opportunity for children from the same locality to mix at break times if they wish to. Negative impact – due to change which could be stressful</p> <p>Positive impact- processes in place to aid transition to new school and opportunity to mix with wider group of children</p>
6. Loss of household income	Certain members of the Olnafirth community	Potentially	Potentially	No	Potentially	<p>The wider costs due to the potential for reduced household income needs to be taken into account and set against projected savings. Negative impact – potential for reduced household income and therefore increased potential for poor health</p> <p>Positive impact - unknown</p>
7. Falling house prices and knock on effect on community						It needs to be identified if this would be the case and if so the projected

						costs of this needs to be set against the savings of closing the school both social and monetary costs need be counted. Positive impact – Unknown Negative impact – Potential for increased stress
8. Loss of social events held in school and reduced social contact	Olnafirth Community	Potentially if events cease	Potentially if events cease	No	No	Consideration needs to be given to how and where these events would be held if the school were to close. These events encourage social interaction across all age ranges. Negative - Social isolation, reduced sense of community. Positive- Unknown
9. Clarity and transparency in savings figures	Shetland population as a whole	Yes	Yes	Potentially in Shetland	No	All costs must be taken into consideration in the school closure projected savings as set against the wider costs of educating the children elsewhere, transport costs and the potential wider social and economic costs.
10. Opportunity to partake in or learn from Saltire Award	Children	No	No	No	No	The Saltire Award has been a great learning experience for the Olnafirth School it has been positive to the

						<p>children's mental health. Consideration of how to best make use of the skills learned through participating in this award needs to be made.</p> <p>Negative – loss of positive experience and skills if Saltire award not taken into consideration</p> <p>Positive – Self-esteem of those involved maintained and promoted, skills preserved.</p>
11. Maintenance of access to play ground, play park and football pitch	Olnafirth community	Potentially if access is lost	Potentially if access is lost	No	No	<p>All these play a major part in supporting physical activity in the Olnafirth area as well as acting as a gathering point for young people. The play ground is used for cycling, roller skating/blading, skateboarding, and provides a safe area to do so. Preservation of this area for its current use is key to maintaining and or increasing physical activity levels of the community.</p> <p>Positive impact if maintained: maintain or</p>

						potentially increase physical activity levels and social interaction Negative if not maintained: potential to reduce physical activity levels and also impact on social isolation
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12. Reduction in physical activity levels	Children and adult supervisors	Potentially	Potentially	No	No	<p>There is potential for reduction in activity levels due to not being able to cycle or walk to school. It is more likely that individuals will be active if they build it into their daily routine. Therefore it is essential that consideration is given alternatives ways of building this into daily routine.</p> <p>Out of school clubs – consideration needs to be given how to include Olnafirth children in this to ensure they have a chance to be part of after school activities. Also due to longer journey times it is more difficult to attend clubs in other areas. This all needs careful planning or parents could be paying a lot in fuel to collect their children from activities. Thereby increasing household expenditure. Or children</p>
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						<p>may miss out on these opportunities entirely. In addition in terms of bikeability consideration needs to be given to the transportation of bikes to Brae or Lunna to allow children to partake in this.</p> <p>Negative impact – reduced physical activity due to reduced time to be active due to being on transport, also reduced opportunity to cycle or walk to and from school</p> <p>Positive impact – potential to maintain physical and possibly increase choice of after school activities but only if above considerations are taken into account</p>
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13. Use of School building if no longer serving as a school	Olnafirth community	Potentially depending on use	Potentially depending on use	Potentially depending on use	No	Serious consideration to be given to this as the School is located in the middle of the community and if it were to close the community must be fully consulted on what it is used for as could have potentially damaging effect on health depending on the use.
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Table 3. Stage 4 Analysis: quantify or describe important health impacts

The above analysis has shown the following major considerations

1. Safety concerns regarding seat belts on buses, safety of drop off and pick up points, and the need to clarify journey times.
2. Potential reductions in local household income and the need to identify such costs and set against proposal projected saving figures
3. Reduction in physical activity levels and social interaction due to areas highlighted above ie reduced active travel, loss of social events, access to play areas surrounding school
4. Consideration of use of school if it were to close.

Table 4. Stage 5: Recommendations to improve policy

The local authority can mitigate the concerns highlighted above through discussing the policies and procedures they have in place for other children who have to attend a school outwith their immediate area. In particular focus must be given to: how to maintain current physical activity levels, safety in transporting children to and from school, detailing the journey time, addressing how to maintain access to the play areas immediately surrounding the Olnafirth school and to planning access to out of school activities.

The local authority must also consider the projected savings from the proposal as set against all relevant potential costs as a result of the closure.

The local authority must also consider and consult fully with the community on the use of the school building should it stop operating as a school.



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

Appendix H – Integrated Impact Assessment

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT	<p>How to answer the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) questions:</p> <p>It is divided into 2 sections: PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES (which has 7 sub sections) and RESOURCES (which has 4 sub sections). Each sub section has a number of questions that you must answer to complete your IIA. For each question you must consider whether the intended outcome has a positive / neutral / or negative impact. You must then add a note that explains why/how you have made your judgement.</p>	<p>Each question must be answered as either Positive, Neutral or Negative. If there are both Positive and Negative outcomes then answer Neutral and give an explanation.</p>	<p>You must write a note for each question explaining why you have answered Positive, Neutral or Negative</p>	Reducing Negative Impacts
INTENDED OUTCOME:	The closure of Olnafirth Primary School			
SECTION:	PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES			
SECTION:	Culture	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.C01 Does the intended outcome impact on participation, among locals and visitors, in Shetland's culture and heritage?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.C02 Does the intended outcome impact on access to local cultural activities?	Negative	Some respondents feel that public access to the Voe Show will be affected.	Any potential sale of the school and surrounding land can have the caveat of public right of access to the playpark and the Voe Show field.
Question	IIA.PC.C03 Does the intended outcome impact on diversity in local cultural activities?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.C04 Does the intended outcome impact on preservation and/or conservation of local cultural heritage?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.C05 Does the intended outcome impact on interpretation and promotion of Shetland's culture?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.C06 Does the intended outcome impact on promotion of Shetland's cultural heritage outside the isles?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.C07 Does the intended outcome impact on development of good practice among businesses and organisations engaged in cultural heritage activity?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.C08 Does the intended outcome impact on development of promotional and commercial opportunities for cultural heritage practitioners?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.C09 Does the intended outcome impact on professional and artistic development of local practitioners?	Neutral	n/a	

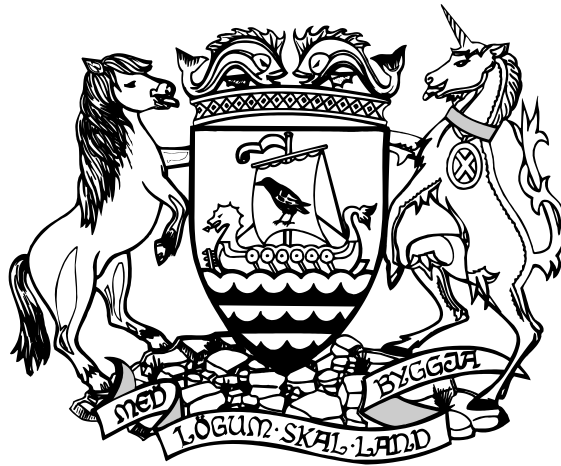
SECTION:	Economic	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.EC01 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on achievement of sustainable economic growth throughout Shetland?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC02 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on access to a stable and sustainable employment market?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC03 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on development and retention of a skilled workforce of relevance to Shetland's needs?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC04 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on opportunities for and access to education, training and lifelong learning to retain educational achievement?	Positive	The intended outcome has educational benefits of access to larger numbers of children who they can develop active learning opportunities with, work and play in teams and can socialise with.	
Question	IIA.PC.EC05 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on development of Shetland's reputation as a high-quality visitor destination?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC06 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on development of Shetland's reputation as a producer of high-quality products?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC07 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on access to air and sea transportation links?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC08 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on adding value in all areas of local manufacturing and food production?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC09 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on production of hydrocarbons and diversification of activity at Sullom Voe Oil Terminal?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC10 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on establishment of robust broadband services to homes, businesses and organisations in Shetland?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC11 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on research and development of renewable energy infrastructure for commercial, domestic, public and community use?	Positive	One suggested future possible use of the school building is as rural office base for Viking Energy, which offers much economic potential to the area (including its shop/bakery/restaurant etc)	
Question	IIA.PC.EC12 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on encouragement and support of community groups engaged in economic activities?	Neutral	n/a	

Question	IIA.PC.EC13 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on improvement of access and economic opportunities in remote and fragile areas?	Negative	Respondents feel that if Olnafirth Primary School closes, families will leave and this will affect trade the local pub/restaurant, the shop and the bakery.	The receiving school is very close to the Olnafirth community, and Children's Services feel that close monitoring by relevant community planning partners will determine whether or not this concern comes to fruition.
Question	IIA.PC.EC14 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on access to appropriate advice and business development opportunities for local employers and sole traders?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC15 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on development of the local creative and heritage sector?	Neutral	n/a	
SECTION:	Environment	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.EN01 Does the intended outcome promote / integrate environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development?	Neutral	Both. Positive in that there will be less energy consumption, however it is negative as there will be more transport. An extra minibus is likely to be needed to transport children to Brae High School Primary Department.	Every opportunity will be taken to merge with existing school transport, and public transport where this becomes feasible.
Question	IIA.PC.EN02 Will the intended outcome result in the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. waste management or water protection)?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EN03 Are there any environmental problems in the area which the intended outcome could effect?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EN04 Will the intended outcome lead to any permanent effects (consider the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects)?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EN05 Will the intended outcome lead to cumulative effects?	Neutral	Both. Positive in that there will be less energy consumption, however it is negative as there will be more transport. An extra minibus is likely to be needed to transport children to Brae High School Primary Department.	Every opportunity will be taken to merge with existing school transport, and public transport where this becomes feasible.
Question	IIA.PC.EN06 Will the intended outcome result in health risks, such as smells, pollution, noise and accidents?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EN07 Will there be an impact on the natural / historic environment (consider the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected)?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EN08 Will there be an impact on intensive land-use (consider the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected)?	Neutral	n/a	

Question	IIA.PC.EN09 Will there be an impact on environmental quality standards (consider the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected)?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EN10 Will there be an impact on nationally or international protected landscapes?	Neutral	n/a	
SECTION:	Equality: Will any of the following protected characteristics experience change as a result of the intended outcome?	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.EQ01 Ethnic minority communities – consider different ethnic groups, nationalities, language barriers.	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ02 Gender	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ03 Gender reassignment – consider transgender and transsexual people. This can include issues such as privacy of data and harassment.	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ04 Religion or belief – consider people with different religions, beliefs or no belief.	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ05 Disability – consider attitudinal, physical and social barriers.	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ06 Age – consider across age ranges. This can include safeguarding, consent and child welfare.	Positive	Olnafirth Primary School children will have access to a wider peer group and a larger number of children to socialise with and make friendships with.	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ07 Sexual orientation	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ08 Pregnancy and maternity – consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities	Neutral	n/a	
SECTION:	Health	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.H01 Will the intended outcome have an impact on diet and nutrition?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.H02 Will the intended outcome have an impact on exercise and physical activity?	Negative	Children will no longer be able to walk or cycle to school	Curriculum for Excellence requires all schools to provide primary children with two hours of physical activity each week.
Question	IIA.PC.H03 Will the intended outcome have an impact on substance use: tobacco, alcohol or drugs?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.H04 Will the intended outcome have an impact on sexual health?	Neutral	n/a	

Question	IIA.PC.H05 Will the intended outcome have an impact on learning and skills?	Positive	The intended outcome has educational benefits of access to larger numbers of children who they can develop active learning opportunities with, work and play in teams and can socialise with.	
SECTION:	Poverty: will people with different economic circumstances experience different levels of change as a result of the intended outcome?	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.P01 Young people whose parents are not able to ensure they are able to access opportunities and grow up feeling a part of the community within which they live	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P02 Those who are physically disabled or with a long-term illness and their carers, when they do not receive adequate support and understanding	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P03 Those looking after a young family without access to their own transport, particularly those living in remote areas of Shetland	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P04 Older people unable to access opportunities that would enable them to feel a part of the community	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P05 Those who are of no fixed address, homeless or residing in temporary accommodation	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P06 Ethnic minority individuals in Shetland, whether cultural or as a result of employer barriers, and of degrees of social exclusion for white incomers to Shetland	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P07 Adults of any age who have low self-esteem and/or poor mental health, often due to situations which have developed as a result of negative experiences in the past and can result in homelessness and substance misuse.	Neutral	n/a	
SECTION:	Stakeholders	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.S01 What will the impacts be for wider social support, social networks and neighbourliness?	Negative	Currently there are events held in the school which community members attend. There are 15 children who could attend Olnefirth Primary School currently who are placing request to other schools. Ten of these attend Brae High School Primary, the proposed receiving school.	There will be similar opportunities at the receiving school and as so many of the local children already attend Brae High School Primary Department, this change could potentially bring community members together.
Question	IIA.PC.S02 What will the impacts be for citizen power and influence?	Negative	If Olnefirth Primary School closes, Olnefirth people who have fought to keep it open will feel their views have been ignored.	In line with the new Community Plan, partners will work with community groups to ensure they are involved in local matters where they can make a difference.

Question	IIA.PC.S03 What will the impacts be for community identity and sense of belonging?	Negative	Olnafirth children will not be in their communities for as long as they are now.	Olnafirth children will have a short journey time home, and can still access community facilities like the playpark and shop every day.
SECTION:	RESOURCES			
SECTION:	Assets and Property	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.R.A01 Will there be an impact on Shetland's assets? such as land, buildings or equipment, including ICT	Neutral	This may change depending on what future use is agreed for the Olnafirth Primary School building.	
SECTION:	Finance	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.R.F01 Will there be an impact on Capital Spend?	Positive	Capital spend would be required in future years to maintain the school.	
Question	IIA.R.F02 Will there be an impact on Operational Budgets / year?	Positive	None of the operating costs required to run a school will be required if the school closes.	
Question	IIA.R.F03 Will there be an impact on Shetland's Finances?	Positive	Closure will make an ongoing saving in the Council's revenue budgets.	
SECTION:	Legal	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.R.L01 Does the intended outcome have any legal implications?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.R.L02 Does the intended outcome have any reputational impacts on the organisation?	Neutral	Both. Failure of the Council to reduce budgets will cause reputational damage, however closing schools is not popular in affected communities.	
SECTION:	Staff	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.R.S01 Decide whether there is an impact on staff, in particular in relation to those with protected characteristics	Negative	The closure of the Olnafirth will result in the loss of some part-time public sector jobs in the area.	The council's relevant policies for redundancy, redeployment, transfer and retirement will be used to support affected staff into positive futures.



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

Appendix I – Socio-Economic Study

OLNAFIRTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Socio-Economic Study

A Report

for

SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL

by

Steve Westbrook, Economist

in partnership with

Sandy Anderson

August 2013

**Steve Westbrook, Economist, Bellevue, Seafield Street, Nairn IV12 4HL
Tel / Fax: 01667 455308 E-mail: srwestbrook@aol.com**

Olnafirth Primary School - Socio-Economic Study
A Report for Shetland Islands Council

Contents:	Page No:
Section 1. : Introduction	1
Section 2. : Background	3
Section 3. : The Economy	9
Section 4. : The Impacts of Closing Olnafirth Primary School	13
Section 5. : Potential Mitigating Actions	16
Section 6. : Conclusions	17
Appendix 1 : Olnafirth Primary School Catchment Area	

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report was commissioned by Shetland Islands Council to inform its consideration of the future of Olnafirth Primary School in Voe, in the north mainland of Shetland. This review is taking place as part of a wider Blueprint for Education which aims to set the shape of the Education Service across Shetland. The need for a Blueprint was agreed in 2007, leading to approval of a set of guiding principles in 2009. A proposal to consider the closure of Olnafirth School was agreed in June 2010, with Statutory Consultation set to take place in 2011, but this was deferred following the implementation of a national moratorium on rural school closures. The current proposal follows a refresh of the Blueprint in 2012 and is informed by the report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education.
- 1.2 The Scottish Government has issued its response to the recommendations of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, and is currently consulting on those recommendations made by the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education which may require legislative change.
- 1.3 The context also includes a need for Shetland Islands Council to achieve cost savings. The review undertaken as part of the Blueprint for Education will contribute to reducing the Council's annual operational expenditure. Its Medium Term Financial Plan includes a saving of £3.249 million from the implementation of the Blueprint for Education. This is in addition to cost savings that the Council has identified across all its schools.
- 1.4 Olnafirth Primary School has been listed by the Scottish Government as a very remote rural school, and it is therefore subject to special provisions under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Local authorities are required to consider three factors which acknowledge and reflect the particular importance of a school to the more fragile and vulnerable rural and remote communities of Scotland:
- any viable alternative to closure;
 - the likely effect on the local community if the school were to close (with particular reference to the sustainability of the community);
 - the likely effect of different travelling arrangements occasioned by the closure.
- 1.5 The terms of reference for this study were to:
- provide information on the economy of Olnafirth Primary School's catchment area (i.e. employment, business output, etc);
 - identify the workforce requirements of businesses based in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area;
 - identify the direct and other impacts of closing the Olnafirth Primary School;

- identify the potential impacts relating to families leaving Voe as a result of the school's closure;
 - investigate possible mitigating factors should the school close, such as the prospect for additional private and public sector employment in Voe.
- 1.6 In compiling the report we have drawn upon previous research by Shetland Islands Council and other organisations. We have also used national and local information sources and have received helpful input from a wide range of consultees. In particular, we are grateful to Shetland Islands Council and to local people. We visited Voe as part of our review, met with a number of interested parties and followed this up with extensive telephone contacts.
- 1.7 Since much of the available information relating to the school's catchment area is based on wider geographic areas derived from the 2001 Census which is out of date, we sought to draw up our own database to identify the local population, their gender and age group, employment status, etc. This was developed from a variety of sources, including the Council Tax register, the electoral roll and information provided to us by the community through a series of discussions with local contacts and others with knowledge of the area's population and businesses.

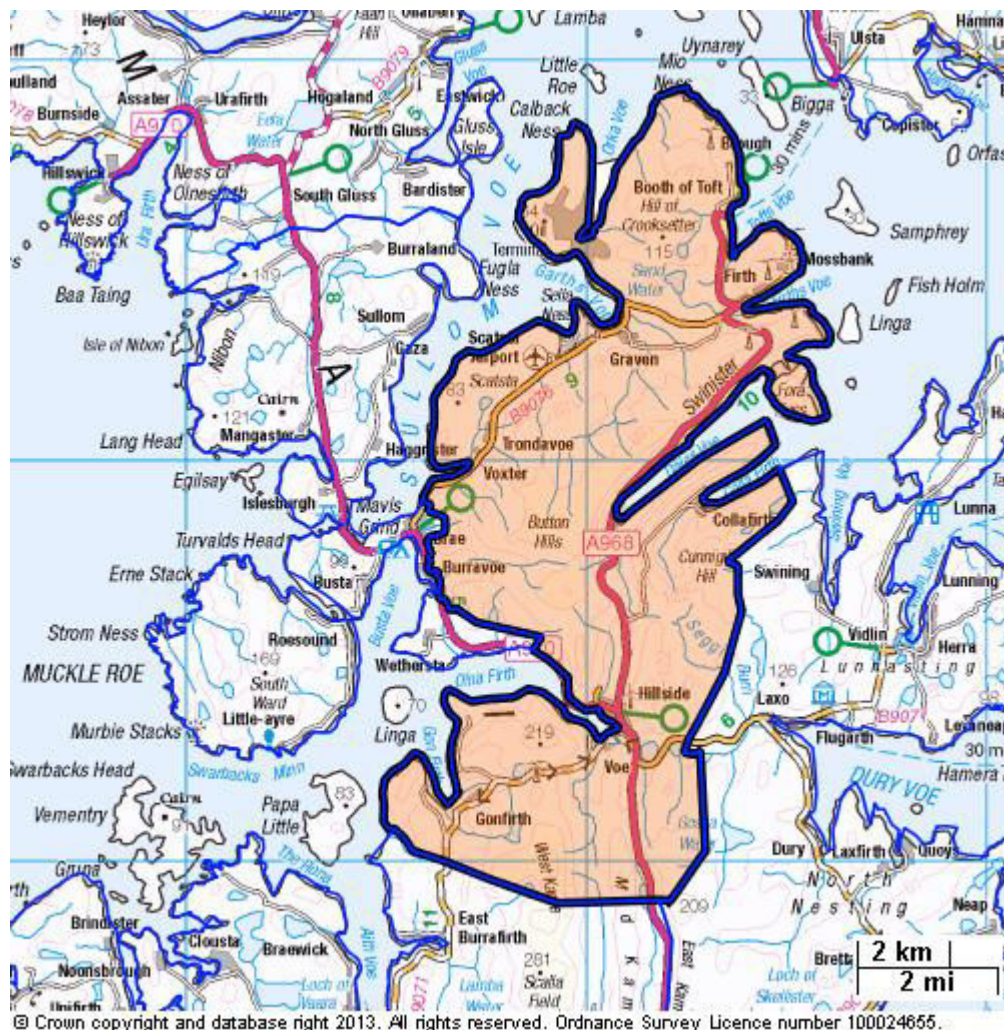
The Council's Anticipated Cost Savings

- 1.8 According to the Council's Proposal Paper (May 2013), the net annual cost saving to the Education budget through closing Olnafirth Primary School would be £91,309.
- 1.9 This saving takes into account additional costs that will be incurred at Brae, the cost of school transport and a loss of Grant Aided Expenditure to the Council. It also allows for the transfer of budgets related to central support services and for residual property costs.
- 1.10 The direct staffing reductions and savings in other expenditures by the school in the local economy would generate the negative economic impacts that are assessed in Section 4 of this report.

2. BACKGROUND

Location

- 2.1 Voe is a small crofting community in the north mainland of Shetland. It is located at the junction of the A970 and A968, the two roads which form the main north-south spine of the Shetland mainland leading on into Brae and Northmavine and the North Isles respectively. The Olnafirth Primary School catchment area, shown in Appendix 1, takes in Voe itself and a rural area mostly to the north. Voe is approximately 18 miles north of Lerwick, and 4 miles from Brae (although some parts of the catchment area will be more distant).
- 2.2 Data zones are the smallest geographical unit normally used by the Scottish Government in compiling and publishing statistical information. The data zone which covers the catchment area for Olnafirth Primary School is roughly equivalent to the Delting area, taking in the Mossbank Primary catchment area and part of that for Brae Primary. Mossbank shares a headteacher with Olnafirth.



Source: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics

- 2.3 This data zone area is used as the basis for much of the available official information, such as that shown in Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, and is

the area used in compiling the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Some of the available information dates from the 2001 Census and so is out of date. However, data from the 2011 Census is gradually being published and the latest release (on 15th August 2013) includes population and household figures for small areas, including postcodes. The best fit of postcodes to the school catchment area gives the following population and household figures:

Postcode	Households with usual residents	Usually resident population
ZE 2 9PT	70	170
ZE 2 9PU	8	16
ZE 2 9PX	31	74
ZE 2 9PZ	4	13
ZE 2 9QZ	18	38
ZE 2 9XF	9	11
ZE 2 9XQ	18	49
Total	158	371

- 2.4 This compares with a population of 912 (in 2011) and 361 households (in 2001) for the whole datazone¹, which means that the Olnafirth catchment makes up less than half the total population. The Delting area population rose from 580 in 1971 to 2,110 in 1981 (including Brae), but by 2001 it had fallen to 970, plus a further 660 people in Brae.
- 2.5 The Scottish Assessors database² lists a total of 172 residential properties within the postcodes listed. The difference would arise because of empty properties (6 are currently listed as empty by Shetland Islands Council) and properties with no usually resident population (ie rented properties where the residents do not regard the property as their main residence for Census purposes).
- 2.6 Figures for the data zone are given in Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics and these allow a comparison between the area, Shetland as a whole and Scotland overall for a wide variety of indicators. Selected indicators are given below, although it must be borne in mind that these relate to the population of the wider data zone.

	Data zone S01005517	Shetland	Scotland
% children	21.7	18.9	17.4
% working age	66.5	61.2	62.8
% pensionable age	11.8	20.0	19.8
% income deprived	11	7	13
% 25 to 49 claiming key benefits	12.1	8.7	15.4
% 50 to pension age claiming key benefits	15.5	10.3	19.0

¹ Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics available at www.sns.gov.uk

² available at www.saa.gov.uk

% over 60 claiming pension credits	20.5	10.6	15.4
Claimant count % ³	1.3%	1.1%	3.8%
% owner occupied ⁴	50.7	63.4	62.6
% social rented ⁵	38.5	26.6	29.4
% private rented ⁶	10.8	10.0	8.0

Source: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics

- 2.7 The data zone has a higher proportion of children and of people of working age than Shetland or Scotland, and correspondingly a much lower percentage of people of pensionable age. Those of working age are more likely to be claiming benefits than in Shetland, and pension credits are claimed by a higher proportion of people in the data zone than in Shetland or Scotland as a whole. The current unemployment claimant count of 1.3% is higher than the Shetland average, but well below the Scottish average. It equates to 8 people. A smaller proportion of people in the data zone own their own house, with correspondingly higher figures for rented housing, mostly social rented (although these figures are from 2001).
- 2.8 The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is designed to identify small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across the whole of Scotland in a consistent way. It does this by measuring indicators for income, employment, health, education, etc.
- 2.9 The 2012 SIMD shows that the data zone which includes the Olnafirth catchment area was the 3rd most deprived of the 30 in Shetland, and was ranked 2,872 of the 6,505 data zones in Scotland – although the ability of the SIMD to reflect rurality and identify the individual deprivation that can be found in remote communities has been queried. A study on deprivation in Shetland⁷ suggests that the approach used in compiling the index is not sensitive to the characteristics of deprivation and social exclusion found in Shetland, and that it does not encapsulate the complex issues that have to be overcome when tackling deprivation and social exclusion in remote rural areas and the nature of deprivation in remote areas.

Voe

- 2.10 Other than the recently published 2011 Census data referred to above, there is no published data on geographical areas smaller than data zones, such as Voe itself, and there is no past data to track how the area's economy and demography might have changed over time. To provide a socio-economic profile, we used the Census, the electoral roll and other published information, complemented by our discussions with local people, agencies and businesses to prepare estimates of the community make up. As it was collected less formally than through a Census, this information may be less precise, but it

³ July 2013

⁴ 2001 Census

⁵ 2001 Census

⁶ 2001 Census

⁷ Perring, E. Deprivation and social exclusion in Shetland, 2006.

does allow a more accurate representation of the up to date local position than is otherwise available.

	Voe	Data zone
Total residents	371 ⁸	912
% retired	19.4%	11.8
% children	17.2% ⁹	21.7
Number of primary age children	21	
Total residential properties	174 ¹⁰	454 ¹¹
Total vacant and holiday properties	6	93 ¹²
Total resident households	158 ¹³	361 ¹⁴
% social rented	7.5	38.5
% single adult discount	34	34
House sales 2011	9	12
Average house price 2011	£121,666	£104,792

- 2.11 The 2011 Census records 371 people living in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area. This is likely to be an underestimate of actual residents, however, as it will not include those who are renting properties privately and regard their main residence being elsewhere. A number of properties in Voe are rented and this is discussed below.

Housing

- 2.12 Our study has identified 174 residential properties in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area. 6 of these are currently classed as empty and none as second homes. 59 receive single adult discount for Council Tax purposes.
- 2.13 There are 13 houses in the social rented sector in Voe. These represent 7.5% of all residential property, a much smaller percentage than the 38.5% in the wider data zone.
- 2.14 69 people on the waiting list had given Voe as their area of choice for social housing in July 2013. Turnover of the stock is low, with only 3 properties having been re-let over the last 5 years.
- 2.15 A number of houses are rented privately. The pressure on accommodation for staff and contractors working at the various developments at Sullom Voe has put a premium on suitable properties which can be rented by workers coming to Shetland on a 3-4 week cycle who are maintaining a home (and possibly a family) elsewhere. The rents that can be obtained from such properties are beyond those that the average local family could afford (reports suggest that a family house can be let for up to £1,000 a week). The tenants are not listed on the electoral roll or included in the Census and, regarding their home as elsewhere, do not attempt to become part of the community.

⁸ from 2011 Census

⁹ includes those at college and university

¹⁰ from Scottish Assessors website and our study

¹¹ as at 2001

¹² as at 2001

¹³ from 2011 Census

¹⁴ as at 2001

- 2.16 Zoopla¹⁵ lists 16 property sales in Voe in the last 3 years, with an average price of £124,060, of which 6 were on Mulla (where a number of the properties are rented). A search of Shetland solicitors and estate agents suggests that no properties are currently for sale.
- 2.17 New build housing in the area has been relatively rare. Between 2007 and 2011, there were 5 housing completions. One reason for this is the lack of available building land. Much of Voe is held on crofting tenure and there is a reluctance to release land from crofts for new build houses (except for relatives). As tends to be the case in Shetland, new houses are usually self-build rather than developer led.
- 2.18 The 2012 Local Plan identifies Brae as the “Area of Best Fit” for the North Mainland – where any major housing development (50 units or more) should take place. The Area of Best Fit is regarded as providing a focus for sustainable growth with easy access to a range of services and facilities. This does not rule out smaller scale development at other locations, although housing in the countryside is not supported. In Voe, an area of common grazing is identified as a possible housing site.

Transport

- 2.19 Due to its position on the road network, Voe is relatively well served by public transport, both to the north and the south. There are 6 bus services a day to and from Lerwick (7 in the summer), and the journey takes around 30 minutes. An evening service operates from Lerwick on Tuesdays and Thursdays, arriving in Voe at 10.20pm. The buses carry on to Mossbank in the north, with one bus in the morning also going to Sullom Voe, returning through Voe after 5pm.
- 2.20 By car there is easy access to most parts of Shetland, whether for employment or leisure purposes.

Olnafirth Primary School

- 2.21 The school roll at Olnafirth Primary was 31 in 2009/10, before the current Blueprint proposals were put forward. In the 2013/14 school year, the roll has fallen to 8 pupils in one composite class. There is no nursery provision at Olnafirth, with children attending nurseries attached to the primary schools at Brae, Mossbank or Lunnasting (in Vidlin). After primary education the children transfer to Brae High School for Secondary 1 to Secondary 6.
- 2.22 No Primary 1 pupils are attending Olnafirth Primary School in 2013/14, although there are 8 in the community. The parents of those pupils have instead opted for their children to attend either Brae, Mossbank or Lunnasting primaries. Overall there are 13 primary age pupils living in Voe who are attending schools elsewhere, which means that the potential roll is 21.

¹⁵ www.zoopla.co.uk

- 2.23 The roll at Olnafirth is projected by the Council to rise to 12 pupils in 2014/15, but this clearly depends on the placement choices made by parents.

The School and the Community

- 2.24 Olnafirth Primary School is located in the centre of Voe, next to the Village Hall and close to the village shop. Adjacent to the school, and accessed through the playground, is the local playpark which is used by the school and by children in the community. The playpark is in very good condition and is well used outside school hours.
- 2.25 Behind the school and only accessible through the school playground is the field which is used for parking for the Voe Show. Loss of this facility would be a severe loss to the show organisers.

Voluntary Activity

- 2.26 2 charities in Voe are registered with OSCR¹⁶. These are:
- Voe Public Hall
 - Voe Pier Trust.
- 2.27 The Voe Show takes place every August, organised by the Voe & District Agricultural Society Ltd. This is one of the main agricultural show in the Shetland calendar and attracts people from all over the islands. The show is open to exhibitors residing in Tingwall, Whiteness, Weisdale, Stromfirth, Girlsta, Nesting, Lunnasting, Whalsay, Skerries, Delting and Northmavine; and the Society's committee has representatives from this wide area.
- 2.28 Voe Parent and Toddler Group meets weekly in Voe Public Hall. Currently, as there is no reception class at the school, it is also able to use those facilities. Around 12 parents and their children attend, including some from Brae and Vidlin.
- 2.29 The Youth Club also has weekly Junior and Senior sessions in the Hall. Arrangements for the new school year are being made, but it is uncertain whether the Council will continue to fund youth workers, which could affect the future of the club.

¹⁶ www.oscr.org.uk

3. THE ECONOMY

- 3.1 As part of our research for this study, we compiled a database from official sources and through detailed discussions with members of the community. From this we have been able to build a picture of economic activity based on a large sample of the population (more than 50%). This is not completely accurate, but it does give the best available quantification of the current situation.

Voe	%	No
<i>Population</i>		371
Male	48.6%	
Female	51.4%	
<i>Economic Activity</i>		
Retired	19.4%	72
Otherwise not working	12.0%	44
In Education ¹⁷ or preschool	17.2%	64
In work	51.4%	191
<i>Distribution of jobs</i>		
Full time work - local	20.4%	52
Part time work - local	6.8%	
Full time work - North Mainland	30.1%	72
Part time work - North Mainland	7.8%	
Full time work - Lerwick	21.4%	48
Part time work - Lerwick	3.9%	
Work - elsewhere	9.7%	18

- 3.2 This suggests that there are more retired people in Voe than in the data zone as a whole, bringing the proportion closer to the Shetland average. Some 12% of the population is not in work although of working age. This includes parents at home with children, people not working because of illness and those looking for work (although very few people fell into the latter category). Those in education include a number of normal residents who are away from home studying at college or university, as well as pupils in primary or secondary education, at college locally or of pre-school age.
- 3.3 The population total, and the number in work, excludes those living in rented accommodation who were not counted as part of the Census. We are aware of at least 6 properties which might fall into this category. The residents of these are likely to add to the total of people living in Voe who are part of the workforce – mostly (if not all) working in the North Mainland at Sullom Voe.
- 3.4 Even excluding these workers, the largest proportion of the local workforce travels to another location in the North Mainland for work. The majority are employed at Sullom Voe or Scatsca Airport, although a number of those people travel to jobs in Brae. Some of these jobs might involve travel across the North Mainland (or even Shetland) from a base in Brae.
- 3.5 For full time work the next largest employment centre is the Lerwick area, with a number of Voe residents employed by Shetland Islands Council and other employers in the town.

¹⁷ includes college and university students

- 3.6 Local employment or self employment provides 27.2% of the jobs our study has identified. There are relatively few employers in Voe, with only the school, the Voe Bakery, the Tagon Stores and the Pierhead Restaurant and Bar offering multiple jobs. The bakery is the major local employer, with 15 full time and 5 part time staff. The Stores and the Restaurant provide full time jobs, but also offer part time work (including to schoolchildren). The jobs available are filled both by local people and residents of the surrounding area in the North and Central Mainland.
- 3.7 Voe is a crofting community with much of the land held under crofting tenure. Crofting is not included in our local employment data as it is normally a part time activity which supplements income from other sources. Many of the local people living on crofts do not work their own land and it is difficult to put a value on crofting activity – although there will be an overall economic benefit through the output of the crofts, the sale of surplus stock and produce, and land subsidies.
- 3.8 Smaller businesses in Voe normally provide work for only one person, in activities such as aquaculture, fishing and welding. Self employment from a home base, often part time, provides work for some local people.
- 3.9 Voe residents working elsewhere are most often employed offshore, although some travel to work in other parts of Shetland.

Olnafirth Primary School

- 3.10 The Council's Proposal paper lists the following jobs at the primary school:
- Full time non-teaching Headteacher (shared with Mossbank)
 - Two part time Principal Teachers
 - A part time Management Relief Teacher
 - A part time Classroom Assistant
 - A part time Clerical Assistant
 - A part time Supervisory Assistant
 - A part time Cleaner
 - A part time Cook
- 3.11 The current total staffing budget is £107,133, but because of the implications of the shared cost arrangement with Mossbank the total staff cost saving would be £108,060. The majority of this saving will not impact economically on Voe, however, as only 3 part time staff working a total of 46 hours per week live in the village. The Headteacher also lives in Voe but will become full time in Mossbank, with implications for teaching posts there.

Tourism

- 3.12 There is little tourist accommodation in Voe. Two properties are listed in the Assessors database as self catering accommodation and there is a camping bod beside the pier. Voe pier and marina provide access for visiting yachts, with a range of facilities which include toilets, showers, fresh water, electricity and fuel. The berthing is adjacent to the Pierhead Restaurant and Bar.

- 3.13 The 2006 Shetland Visitor Survey estimated that 59,924 people (excluding cruise ship passengers) visited Shetland in a year, spending a total of £15.3 million. A further 1,292 yacht travellers were estimated to spend £163,000.
- 3.14 61% of the visitors surveyed said they had visited the North Mainland – around 36,500 people. Many of these visits would have been day trips, and the Visitor Survey suggests that the number of bednights in the area was around 26,000. With an average spend per night (excluding travel to Shetland) of around £44 this suggests that tourism might have generated over £1.1 million annually for the North Mainland (£1.32 million in 2013 prices). This total would increase with an allowance for the expenditure of day trippers.
- 3.15 Voe is part of the North Mainland and due to its location most of these North Mainland visitors will pass through. However, given the lack of tourism related facilities in Voe, the economic benefit from tourism is likely to be confined to expenditure by passing visitors at the local shop and restaurant combined with income generated by yacht visitors.

Workforce Requirements

- 3.16 As there are few employers in Voe, the local workforce requirements are limited. There is little or no local unemployment, and given the good transport connections local employers can access staff from a wide area.

Household Incomes

- 3.17 Shetland Islands Council subscribes to CACI Paycheck data which gives mean household income levels for each of Shetland's postcodes. For the Olnafirth postcodes the mean income in 2011 was calculated at £40,956, which compared with the Shetland average of £35,108. This would suggest a total household income of around £6.5 million (based on 158 resident households).

Summary of Employment and Earnings

- 3.18 We estimate that there are around 40 FTE jobs based in Voe, including self employment. Private sector employment includes local employers and self employment, while the public sector largely relates to the school. Estimated earnings from this employment might total some £1 million (excluding income from crofting).
- 3.19 The annual output of employment units in Voe is estimated at £2.5 million, and this contributes to the economy of Shetland as a whole. Both the Tagon Stores and the Pierhead Restaurant buy extensively from local suppliers. For public sector work, output broadly equates to earnings plus employment costs.
- 3.20 It is not necessary to apply a "multiplier" to assess Voe's supply chain and "induced" employment through the local spending of employees as these impacts are captured by our comprehensive assessment, but the relative lack of local services mean that there is little such added value.

- 3.21 Based on approximate assumptions on the levels of earnings, the estimated 191 jobs held by people living in Voe might equate to total earnings of around £4.8 million. Adding to this the incomes of the estimated 72 retired people in Voe, any benefits received and the incomes of those non-residents living in rented houses might give a total income of around £6.4 million for people living in Voe (plus any income from crofting). This compares to the CACI-derived figure of £6.5 million given in paragraph 3.17.

4. THE IMPACTS OF CLOSING OLNAFIRTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Direct Impacts

- 4.1 The direct impact of closing Olnafirth Primary School would relate to the jobs at the school, with a saving to the Council in staff costs estimated at £108,000, of which some £90,000 might represent gross earnings. The savings would comprise a number of part time posts, including an associated saving at Mossbank.
- 4.2 This would be offset in the Shetland economy by employment associated with any contract to transport the children to the alternative school. Additional transport costs, net of the saving in transport costs currently incurred, are estimated at £33,220.
- 4.3 The jobs lost by Voe residents would comprise 3 part time posts. These part time post reductions would be a real loss to the individuals involved, although redeployment might be possible should there be suitable Council vacancies.
- 4.4 Little of the school's non-staff related costs are spent in the Voe area, although milk is bought from the local shop.
- 4.5 Other impacts on local employers are likely to be limited. It is possible that there will be an impact on the shop from the spending of the children. Potentially if parents are travelling to take their children to schools in other communities they might also transfer some of their shopping spend there.

Other Impacts

- 4.6 No evidence has been found that the closure of Olnafirth Primary School would lead to families leaving the community, although the closure might reduce social cohesion and the appeal of Voe as a desirable place to live.
- 4.7 Some of the social effects of the possible closure of Olnafirth Primary School have already been felt. Uncertainty about the future of the school over the past few years has been a major factor in reducing the school roll from 31 in 2009/10 to its current 8. As mentioned above in 2.22, 13 primary age pupils living in Voe are attending schools elsewhere, which gives a current potential roll of 21. Primary age children from Voe are attending three schools other than Olnafirth – Brae, Lunnasting and Mossbank. One parent of a pre-school child has told us that, if Olnafirth Primary were to close, she sees little option but to take her child to Scalloway where she works. Distributing the children from a relatively small village like Voe to a number of schools has an effect on friendship and community links, and this is already happening.
- 4.8 Parents have decided to send their children to a school out of the village for a variety of reasons. From our discussions, the major reasons seem to relate to the lack of nursery (or wrap round) provision in Olnafirth and the ongoing uncertainty about the future of the school. Some parents who have taken their children to nursery at one of the other 3 schools have decided to keep them there for primary education. Other parents are anxious about the possibility of having to transfer their children during their primary education or

are concerned about the lack of peers for their children to interact with. These reasons are mutually reinforcing, and as the potential school roll reduces the anxiety increases.

- 4.9 The choice to send their children to another school has not been easy for many parents who are committed to Voe and would like to see it thrive in the future. They are worried that their choices affect the decision on whether to maintain primary education in Voe or to close the school, and this has led to some division in the community.
- 4.10 The number of primary aged children in Voe has been affected by the lack of accommodation available to service the growing workforce at Sullom Voe. Although attracting people to live and work in Shetland is a firm objective of the Council, many of the more senior or longer term staff and contractors associated with the expansion at Sullom Voe are renting accommodation. Company paid lets have raised the costs of private rental housing beyond the means of the average family, which has reduced the number of families in Voe.
- 4.11 Voe could also become an attractive location for staff associated with the Viking Wind Farm (if this proceeds). Viking Energy estimates that it will create around 30 direct jobs, with the construction phase creating an average of about 140 local jobs during its 3-year duration. To attract relocation to Shetland for these jobs it will be important to have attractive locations with a range of the facilities a family might expect. The lack of a school might reduce Voe's ability to respond to this opportunity and instead make it more attractive for a transient workforce.
- 4.12 The potential to build new houses in Voe to help encourage staff and contractors to relocate their families to Shetland and to ease the housing pressures on local people is limited. The location and other attractions of Voe make it a desirable place for renting accommodation, and the lack of available building land makes it difficult to compensate for the negative impacts from this. In Shetland much new house building is self-build rather than developer led. The last major development in Voe was at Mulla, as part of an earlier expansion at Sullom Voe, but there are currently no comparable sites.
- 4.13 Closure of the school would make Voe a less attractive place to live for some potential future residents. Limited local employment means that Voe has become, to some extent, a dormitory village. People often choose to live there while working somewhere else. Lack of a primary school and the social cohesion it brings would reduce the appeal of the village to some people – and indeed the closure could accelerate the reduction in families with young children living locally.
- 4.14 If this were to happen, employers in the village could face a reduction in the availability of part time employees – particularly the shop and the restaurant. Both of these depend to some extent on having a pool of part time staff who are available as needed. Full time employees already travel from a wide area to work in Voe, and their recruitment is unlikely to be affected.

- 4.15 Overall, then, closing Olnafirth Primary School would be likely to reduce the demand by current residents and potential in-migrants with families to live in the area. This would continue the trends towards an ageing population and the renting of property in the village by Sullom Voe staff – reducing community involvement. The distribution of pupils to a number of schools would also reduce community interaction and cohesion.
- 4.16 Employers in Voe would have a reduced pool of local staff for part time work, which could constrain their development and ability to respond to demand.

5. POTENTIAL MITIGATING ACTIONS

- 5.1 We were asked to consider action that might be taken to mitigate the closure of the school, eg. to generate additional public and private sector employment.
- 5.2 The school building, if it became vacant, could become a base for a new business or community venture, but conversion costs could be high, and incurring such costs in advance of any specific demand is not recommended in the current climate. It is understood that there is potential to link the building to a fibre optic cable provided by Shetland Telecom, giving a bandwidth of 100MB. This could make the building attractive as an office base for self employed people currently working at home and for IT based social enterprise.
- 5.3 One of the potential alternative uses of the school building suggested in the Council's Proposal Paper is as office space for its staff living in the North Mainland. Certainly this would be attractive if the Council adopted a policy of decentralising staffing to outlying communities which could involve people working 2-3 days per week from remote hubs rather than in Lerwick.
- 5.4 Should the school close, the Council could help support local development initiatives either through donating the building to the community or selling it and investing the proceeds in community projects. This would help compensate for the loss of the facility and its economic impact.
- 5.5 Viking Energy intends to build a wind farm with 103 turbines to the south of Voe. The project is scheduled to start in early 2016 with the proposed interconnector cable between Shetland and the UK mainland coming on stream in 2018. Voe would seem well positioned to provide an office base for the wind farm development outside Lerwick should the project proceed.

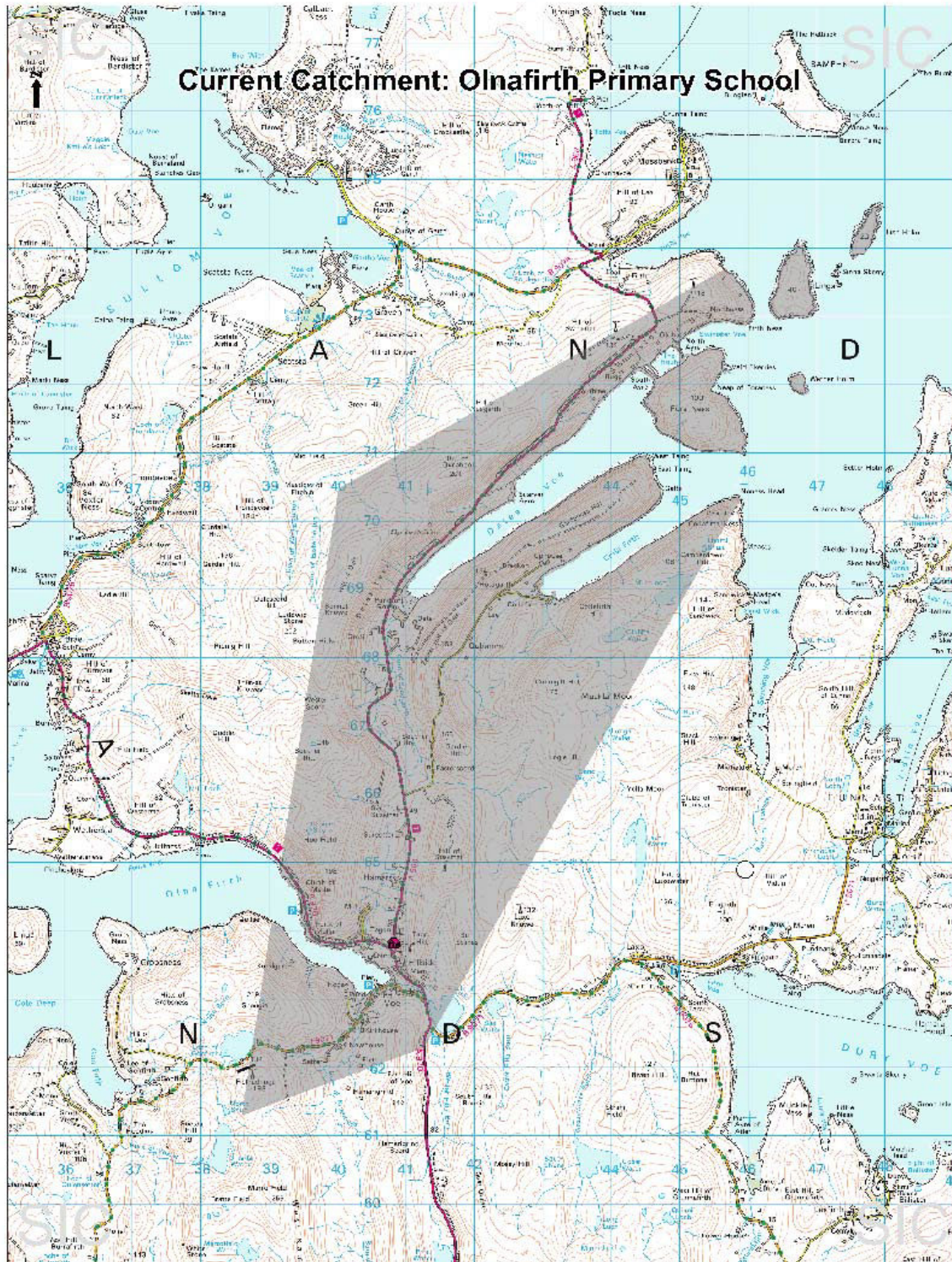
6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The main conclusions from this report are that:

- The net annual savings from closing Olnafirth Primary School are estimated by Shetland Islands Council to be some £91,000;
- There are 158 normally resident households in the school's catchment area, but there are also a number of properties rented by people not permanently resident who are working at Sullom Voe;
- Voe has a small percentage of homes in the social rented sector;
- Voe has an attractive location in Shetland, being a rural community well served by the road and transport network and having easy access to major employment centres;
- The majority of the Voe population who work full time have jobs elsewhere in the North Mainland or Lerwick;
- Important employers in the Olnafirth Primary School catchment area (apart from the school) are the Voe Bakery, the Tagon Stores and the Pierhead Restaurant and Bar;
- Employment in Voe itself is very limited;
- The Olnafirth Primary School catchment area contributes some £2.5 million to the Shetland economy;
- Household income in Voe is estimated at some £6.5 million;
- There are currently 21 primary school age children in Voe, of whom 8 are attending Olnafirth school and 13 other primary schools – Brae, Lunnasting, and Mossbank;
- The direct impact of closing the school would be the loss of 3 part time jobs held by people who live in the school's catchment area, although there would be a greater loss to the North Mainland;
- Some parents are clearly concerned at the possibility of the school closing, and while we found no evidence that any would immediately leave the village, the lack of a primary school would make the village less attractive for families moving to or within Shetland;
- Without a school, it is possible that homes that become available in Voe would increasingly be taken by older people and transient workers wishing to rent while maintaining a family home elsewhere rather than by families;
- Land availability for new housing is limited;

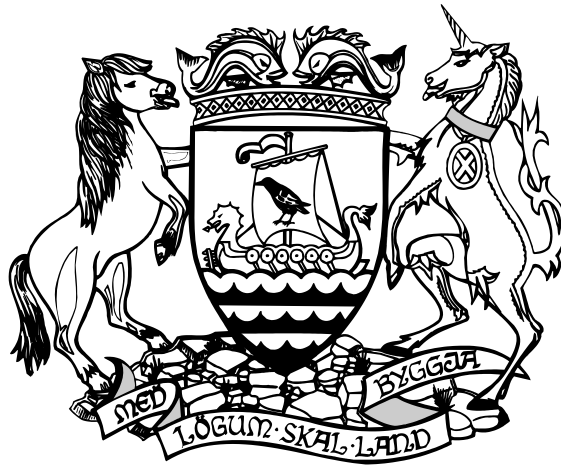
- The school building could be connected to a 100MB fibre optic cable, which would make it an attractive option for use by the Council for remote staff working, a community based social enterprise, and / or local small businesses, or as a rural office base for a development such as the proposed Viking Wind Farm.

Olnafirth Primary School: Catchment Area



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Date: May 2013



**Shetland Islands Council
Children's Services**

Appendix J – Strategic Environmental Assessment



Shetland Islands Council

Head of Service: Helen Budge
Executive Director: Hazel Sutherland

Mr William Carlin
SEA Gateway Manager

Schools Service
Education & Social Care Department
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
Shetland, ZE1 0QD

Telephone: 01595 744000
Fax: 01595 744010

www.shetland.gov.uk

If calling please ask for:
Marianne Gordon
Direct Dial: 01595 74 4745

Our Ref: HB/mg/B40/SC/001
Your Ref:

Date: 11 April 2011

Dear Mr Carlin

Blueprint for Education- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Determination and Supporting Statement of Reasons

Shetland Islands Council as Responsible Authority has carried out under Section 8 of The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening of the Blueprint for Education.

The determination by Shetland Islands Council under Section 8(1) of the Act is that the Blueprint for Education is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required. Therefore no environmental report will be prepared alongside the Blueprint for Education.

Before making this determination, the Council sent a summary of its views as to whether or not the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects to Consultation Authorities via the SEA Gateway on 24 March 2011. The Council's views are summarised in the attached document. Responses were received via the SEA Gateway in emails dated 06 April. Copies of these emails also form part of the attached document.

Shetland Islands Council noted that the Consultation Authorities agreed with the view that the Blueprint for Education was unlikely to have significant environmental effects and made the determination to that effect under Section 8 (1) of the Act. In making that determination the Schools Service applied criteria in Schedule 2 of the Act.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Budge
Head of Schools

Cc: SEA Consultation Authorities (Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and Historic Scotland)

Enc



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Statement of reasons for Screening Determination under Section 8(1) of the Act and Key facts about the plan

Responsible Authority	Shetland Islands Council
Title of plan	Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Purpose of plan	The purpose of the Blueprint for Education is to develop a modern 'blueprint' for the shape of education provision in Shetland for the next two decades.
Period covered by the plan	The Blueprint for Education is a strategic piece of work that was instigated by Elected Members in 2007. Informal Community Consultations took place in 2008 and early 2010. In autumn 2010 the Schools Service began a series of statutory consultations on a number of school closure proposals. Part of the plan is to review staffing and other aspects of the Schools Service. It is proposed that all aspects of the Blueprint for Education will be implemented by 2013.
Proposed update, if any:	n/a
Area covered:	Shetland Islands
Are there any proposed plan objectives?	Yes
Copy of the objectives attached?	No. Full details of the plan to date can be found at http://www.shetland.gov.uk/education/BlueprintforEducation.asp
Summary of the plan and reasons	<p>The Blueprint for Education is a significant strategic piece of work to determine the future of education in Shetland, remitted by Shetland Islands Council Services Committee in June 2007. At that time, the principle drivers were, given the projected decline in the pupil population across Shetland, to create an educationally and financially sustainable model of education for the future.</p> <p>It is a significant change management project, which addresses strategic priorities, allocation of resources based on need, a best value option appraisal and choices over value for money.</p>

The table below considers the likely significance of effects on the environment of the Blueprint for Education.

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment 1(a) to 2(g) below refer to paragraphs in Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005	Likely to have significant environmental effects? YES / NO	Summary of significant environmental effects. (negative and positive)

1(a) the degree to which the PPS sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	No.	Any school closure will result in an increased level of school transport. There would be a reduction in the carbon footprint due to a reduced amount of energy being used to heat and power fewer establishments.
1(b) the degree to which the PPS influences other PPS including those in a hierarchy	No.	-
1(c) the relevance of the PPS for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	No.	-
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the PPS	No.	Increased carbon emissions from additional school transport.
1(e) the relevance of the PPS for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, PPS linked to waste management or water protection)	No.	-
2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	No.	-
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No.	-
2 (c) transboundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States)	No.	-
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	No.	Impact of increased journey time on health and wellbeing of pupils Journeys will sometimes be made on single track roads which may mean increased risk of accidents.

2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	No.	School closures are proposed in areas that are relatively low population centres.
2 (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to- (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use.	No.	School closures may have a potential impact on the value of land and housing in a particular area.
2 (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	No.	There are a number of sites of special scientific interest in the areas affected by potential school closures. These closures however will have no impact on these sites.

Summary of the Environmental Effects

A summary of the consideration of the significant environmental effects of the SIC Education Blueprint is given below.

School Closures will lead to an increase in the use of school transport. This will mean larger vehicles being used increasing fuel consumption and carbon emissions. In some cases however, existing transport routes will be utilised.

There would be a reduction in the Schools Service's carbon footprint due to the decrease in the number of establishments than would be required.

There may be an impact on the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff if they are travelling a longer distance especially if they previously walked to school.

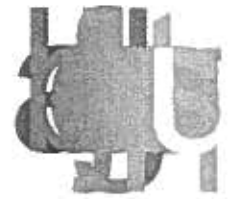
There are a number of sites of special scientific interest in the areas affected by potential school closures. These closures however will have no impact on these sites.

School closures may have a potential impact on the value of land and housing in a particular area.

If school closures are realised then any vacant building would be passed to other areas of the Council. It would then be outside of the control of the Schools Service as to the potential use of the school building.

Directorate for the Built Environment
SEA Unit, 2-H Bridge Car Park Mail point 13, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6
6QQ

T: 0131-244 7650 F: 0131-244 7555
E: Johnathan.whittlestone@scotland.gsi.gov.uk



Date : 6 April 2011

Marianne Gordon
Schools Service
Shetland Islands Council

00584 Screening - Shetland islands council - Blueprint for education in shetland

Dear Marianne,

With reference to the Screening document you submitted on 24 March 2011.

The Consultation Authorities have now considered your screening request as per **Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005**. For convenience I have set out, in the table below, their individual views on whether there is a likelihood of significant environmental effects.

Please note, these are the views and opinions of the Consultation Authorities on the likelihood of significant environmental effects arising from the plan or programme and not a judgement on whether an SEA is required. It is therefore for the Responsible Authority to determine whether an SEA is required in the circumstances. I have attached the individual letters from the Consultation Authorities, outlining their views and opinions. Where possible the Consultation Authorities may have offered supplementary information and/or advice for you to consider, which you should find helpful.

CONSULTATION AUTHORITY	LIKELIHOOD OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS
Historic Scotland	No
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	No
Scottish Natural Heritage	No
OVERALL VIEW ON LIKELIHOOD OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS	No

As the Consultation Authorities have now notified you of their views, you should now refer to the Act to consider your next step. You should of course take into account the advice offered by the Consultation Authorities.

You should note, as per Section 10 of the Act, within 28 days of your determination about whether an SEA is required or not, a copy of the determination and any related statement of reasons must be passed to the Consultation Authorities. This may be done via the SEA Gateway.

If you have any queries or would like me to clarify any points, please call me on 0131 244 7650.

Yours sincerely

Johnathan Whittlestone
SEA Gateway Officer



Marianne Gordon
Communications Officer
Education and Social Care Department
Shetland Islands Council
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
Shetland

Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH

Direct Line: 0131 668 8960
Direct Fax: 0131 668 8899
Switchboard: 0131 668 8600

Our ref: AMN/23/551 AS
Case ref: 201007828

Date: 6 April 2011

Dear Ms Gordon

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
Shetland Islands Council – Blueprint for Education in Shetland
Screening Report**

Thank you for consulting Historic Scotland on the screening report for Shetland Islands Council's Blueprint for Education in Shetland received by the Scottish Government's SEA Gateway on 24 March 2011. I have reviewed the screening report on behalf of Historic Scotland in its role as a Consultation Authority under the above Act, in accordance with the requirements of Section 9(3). In doing so I have used the criteria set out in Schedule 2 for determining the likely significance of the effects on the environment. Please note that our view is based on our main area of interest for the historic environment.

My understanding from the report is that the plan will include proposals setting out education provision in the Shetland Islands over the next two decades. I note that while you identify some environmental effects that will arise from the plan you do not consider that these effects are likely to be strategically significant. In light of the information contained in the report I agree that the plan is unlikely to have significant effects on the historic environment.

As you will be aware, it is the responsibility of Shetland Islands Council as the Responsible Authority to determine whether the plan requires an environmental assessment and to inform the Consultation Authorities accordingly.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this response.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stevenson
Senior Development Assessment Officer (SEA)





Scottish Natural Heritage

All of nature for all of Scotland

Marianne Gordon
Communications Officer
Shetland Islands Council
Schools Service
Education and Social Care Department
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
Shetland
ZE1 0QD

Dear Madam

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF PLANS AND PROGRAMMES (SCOTLAND)
REGULATIONS, 2004
00584 – SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL BLUEPRINT FOR EDUCATION IN SHETLAND**

I refer to your screening consultation submitted on 24 March 2011 via the Scottish Executive SEA Gateway in respect of the above Strategy.

In accordance with Section 14(3) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004, we have considered your screening report using the criteria set out in Schedule 1 for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment.

We agree with the conclusion of the Scoping Report that the Shetland Islands Council Blueprint for Education in Shetland is not likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The closure of schools will result in an increase in CO₂ emissions from school transport, but this will not be significant in the context of Shetland's total output and will be at least partly offset by the reduced number of schools using less energy in total.

Yours faithfully

John Uttley
Area Manager
Northern Isles Area
john.uttley@snh.gov.uk



ENVIRONMENTAL

Scottish Natural Heritage, Northern Isles Area
Ground Floor, Stewart Building, Alexandra Wharf, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0LL
Tel 01595 693345 Fax 01595 692565 www.snh.org.uk

Our ref: PCS113003/scr/SH
SG ref: SEA00584
If telephoning ask for:
Susan Haslam

Marianne Gordon
Schools Service
Education and Social Care Department
Hayfield House
Hayfield Lane
Lerwick
ZE1 0QD

By email only to: sea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

5 April 2011

Dear Ms Gordon

**Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
Blueprint for Education in Shetland - Screening Report**

Thank you for your Screening Report consultation submitted under the above Act in respect of the above. This was received by SEPA via the Scottish Government SEA Gateway on 24 March 2011.

In accordance with Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act, 2005, we have considered your screening report using the criteria set out in Schedule 2 for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment.

Having reviewed the Screening Report, we consider that in respect of our main areas of interest (air, water, soil, human health and climatic factors) the Plan is not likely to have significant strategic environmental effects. Although we are of the view that significant environmental effects are not likely, it is for the Shetland Islands Council as Responsible Authority to make a formal determination taking into account the consultation responses received.

If it is formally determined that SEA is required, you will be aware that the next stage requires the Responsible Authority to consult the Consultation Authorities on the proposed scope and level of detail to be included within the Environmental Report. The Consultation Authorities typically expect to receive a concise Scoping Report at this stage. Further information about this stage and what should be included in a Scoping Report can be found in Chapter 5 of the Scottish SEA Tool Kit available from www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/13104943/45. We would encourage you to use the Scoping Report to focus the assessment on those SEA topics upon which there are likely to be significant environmental effects.

Should you wish to discuss this consultation, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01349 860359 or via SEPA's SEA Gateway at sea.gateway@sepa.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Haslam
Senior Planning Officer (SEA)

Planning Service

