



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

**10 December 2013
11 December 2013**

Blueprint for Education in Shetland Decision on Skerries School Secondary Department	
CS-56-13-F	
Report Presented by Director of Children's Services	Children's Services

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This Report presents the Consultation Report and Addendum on the proposed closure of Skerries School Secondary Department. An Executive Summary of the Consultation Report and Addendum is attached as Appendix A, and the full Consultation Report and Addendum 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. The Consultation Report on the proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department was then published on 19 September 2013, and was due to be presented to Education and Families Committee and Special Shetland Islands Council on 10 October 2013
- 1.3 However, on 7 October 2013, Children's Services was made aware that the responses of a number of Skerries residents were not included within the Consultation Report. Following on from this concern, to ensure all relevant consultees had an opportunity to respond to the proposed closure of Skerries School Secondary Department, a further consultation period was agreed. Submissions were invited to be received by 12 November 2013. Eighteen responses were received during this further consultation period. They have now been incorporated into the Consultation Report as an Addendum and the Consultation Report with the Addendum was republished on 19 November 2013.
- 1.4 Having weighed up the balance of evidence presented, the Consultation Report and Addendum 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-refresh 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 Following the further consultation period which ended on 12 November 2013, Children's Services received a total of 57 responses to the proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department.
- 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. Children's Services contacted Education Scotland with respect to the agreed further consultation period, and whether they required to see any additional written responses. They considered the further consultation period to be a matter for the local authority and have not asked to see the additional responses.
- 3.6 Children's Services originally published their response to the consultation, in the form of a Consultation Report on 19 September 2013 and republished it with an Addendum on 19 November 2013. This has been circulated in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, both electronically and in paper copy. The Consultation Report and Addendum contains:
 - a record and a summary of the number of written responses received during the Statutory Consultation Period and the further 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 and Addendum 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 and Addendum is also published on Shetland Islands Council's website and is Appendix A to this report.
- 3.8 The Consultation Report and Addendum contains a full analysis of all the issues raised through the Consultation Process. The summary of the total written responses received during the original consultation period and the further consultation period indicates that 74% respondents disagree with the Proposal.
- 3.9 The Consultation Report and Addendum 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 and Addendum 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 proposals to rationalise the school estate.

- 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 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

Shetland Islands Council Corporate Plan

- Continue to examine our schools and carry out consultations on primary and secondary schools in line with the Blueprint for Education
- 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.
- 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 2013

- Effective early intervention and prevention to enable all our children and young people to have the best start in life;
- Effective early intervention and prevention to get it right for every child;
- Undertake a Tertiary Education Review with the aim of ensuring that Shetland's learning providers are fit for purpose and meet demand.

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 and Addendum 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. Following on from this, the Scottish Government has published its proposals for amending the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Changes to legislation will not take effect 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.

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Report finalised: 26 November 2013

Appendices

Appendix A: Executive Summary of Consultation Report and Addendum
Appendix B: Consultation Report and Addendum

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 required statutory consultation period in relation to the proposed closure Skerries School secondary department ended on Friday 28 June 2013. A further consultation period took place between 10 October 2013 and 12 November 2013, for resubmission of electronic responses which were not received during the original statutory consultation period.

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 original consultation period was thirty nine.

Number of written consultation responses received	39	%
Number of responses that:-		
• supported the proposal	9	(23%)
• disagreed with the proposal	24	(62%)
• did not indicate an opinion or request further information	6	(15%)

An additional eighteen responses were received during the further consultation period which ended on 12 November 2013, all of which disagreed with the proposal.

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.
- High quality education is provided in Skerries School Secondary Department with excellent attainment for children.

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.
- The Anderson High School also produces excellent exam results.

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 have 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.

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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

Addendum

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-nine.

Shetland Resident	16
Parent / Carer	10
Community Councils	3
School Staff	3
Young Person	4
Parent Councils	2
Former Pupil	1
Total	39

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	39	%
Number of responses that:		
agreed with the Proposal	9	23%
disagreed with the Proposal	24	62%
did not indicate an opinion or request further information	6	15%

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 24 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:

<p>Factor Any viable alternative to closure</p>
<p>Response</p> <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>

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.

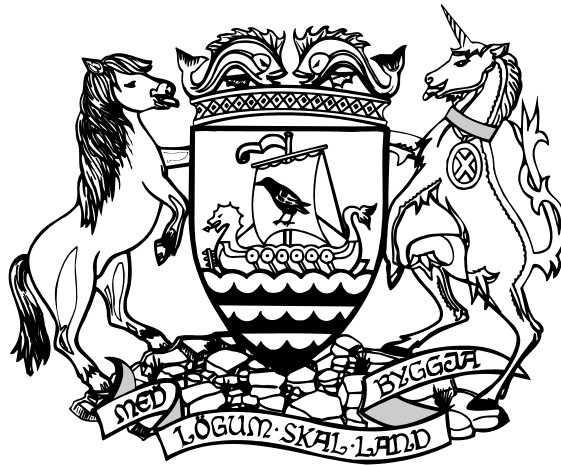
21.15 This proposal, if implemented has the potential to provide recurring savings to Shetland Islands Council of £76, 336. This amount will be reduced to £73,473 by providing an

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.

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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:

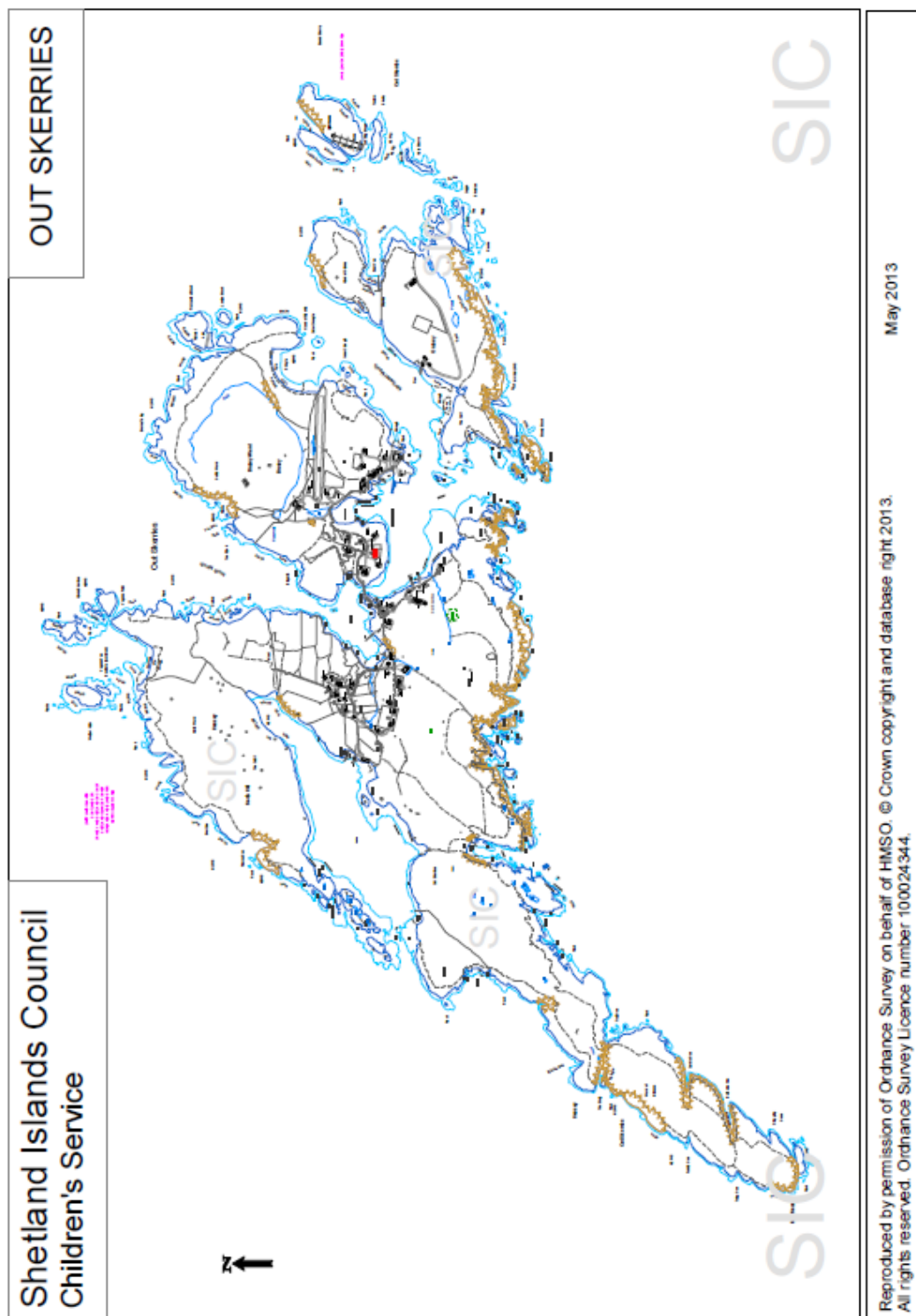
	2013/14
	Budget
	£
Skerries School Secondary Department	109,195
Additional Costs at	
Anderson High School	177
Additional Costs for Skerries Primary Department	5,606
Costs Transferred Across the Estate:	22,924
Additional Halls of Residence Costs	1,644
Additional Transport Costs	2,508
Total Saving	76,336

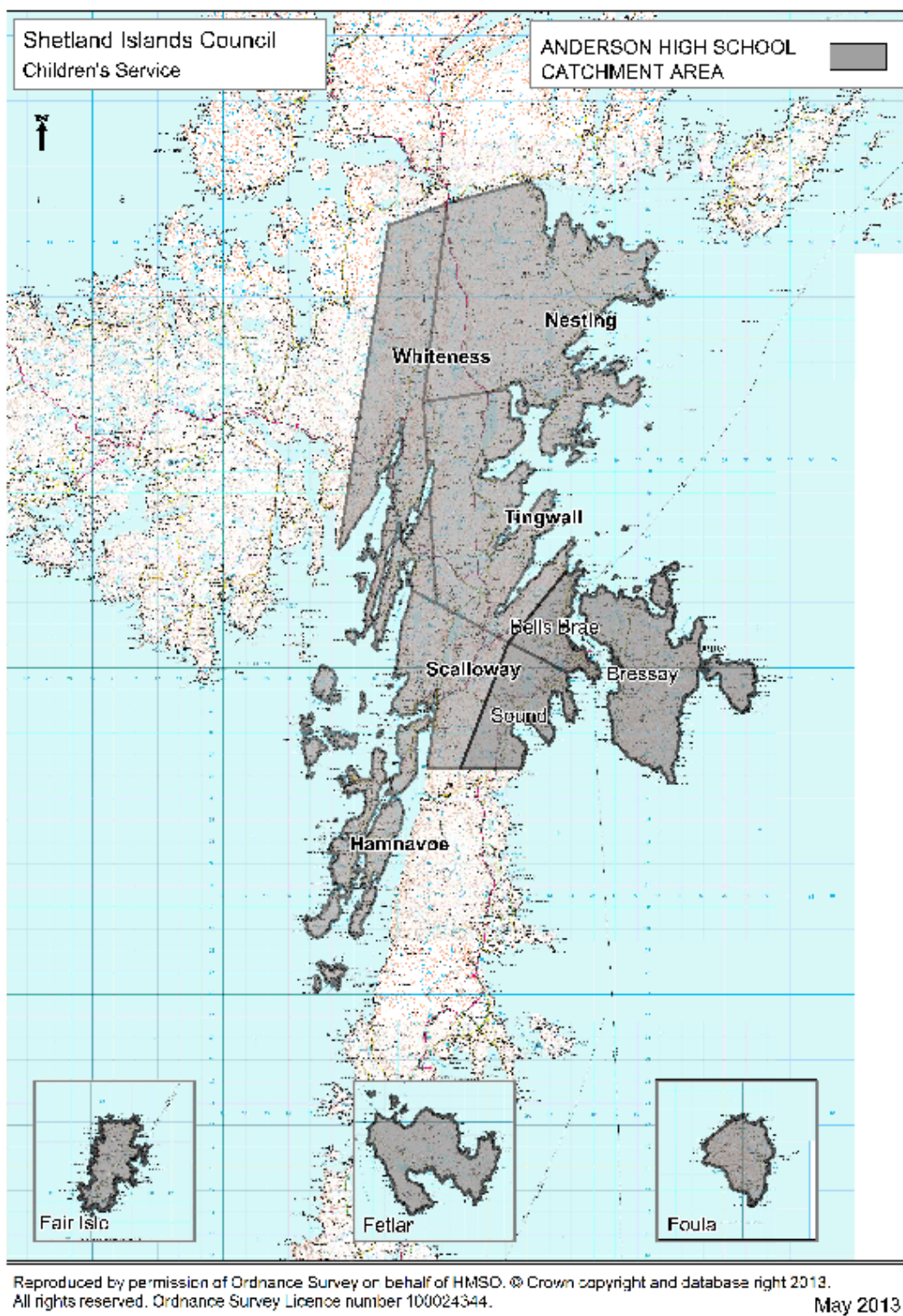
- 7.20 This information is based upon the budgeted School Estates Review for 2013/14. See Appendix 4 for a full financial breakdown.
- 7.21 The total estimated ongoing annual savings made from the closure of Skerries School Secondary Department is £76,336. These savings will go some way towards meeting 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.

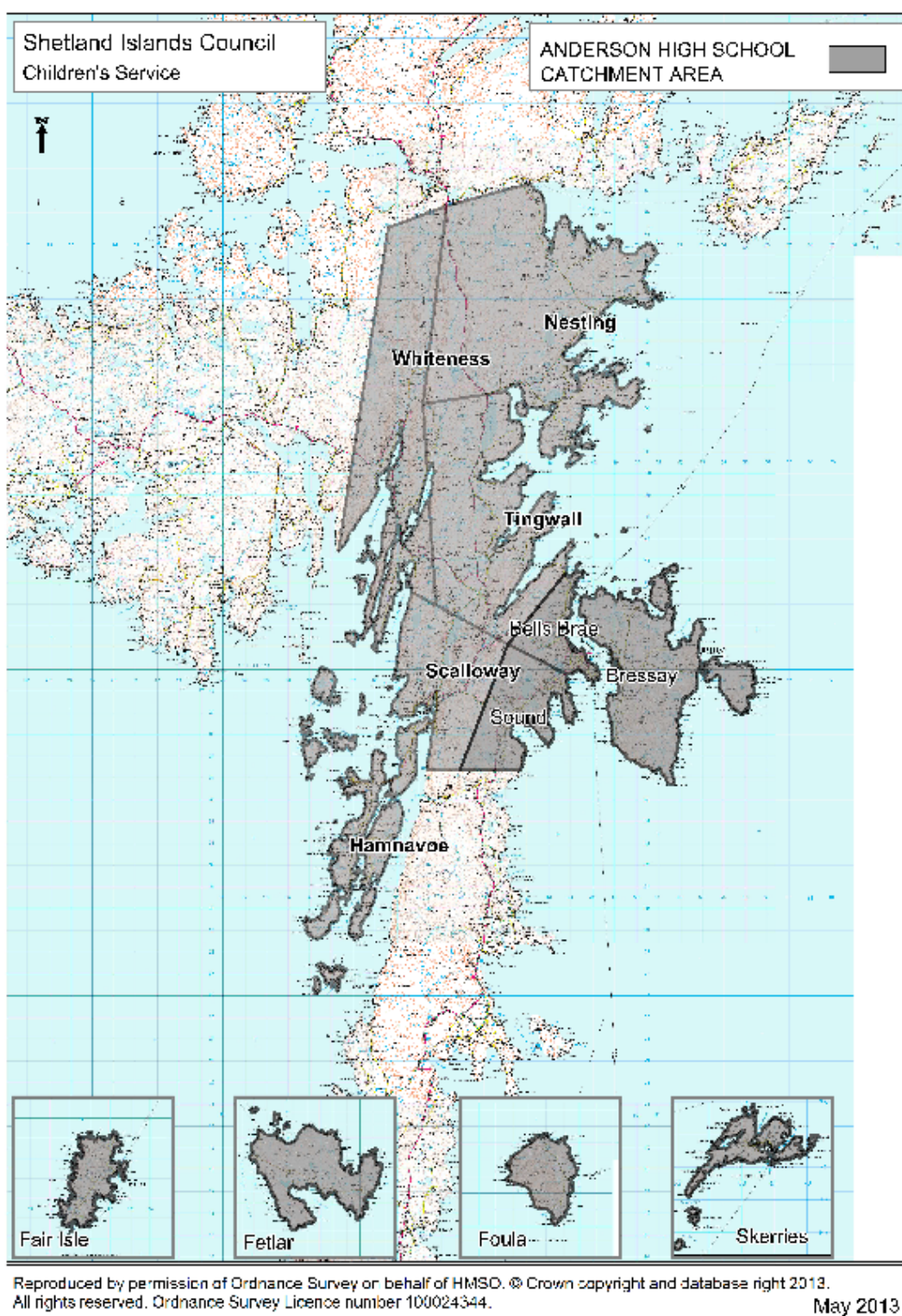
- 7.25 The closure proposal will have no impact on Grant Aided Expenditure. For secondary schools, an adjustment is made based on the difference in average cost per pupil between island (Shetland, Orkney, Eilean Siar) and mainland authorities, and has been fixed since 2001/02.

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.







Skerries School Secondary Department	2013/14 Budget £
Employee Costs (incl Visiting Staff)	70,973
Liability Insurance	226
Water & Sewerage Rates	140
Hire of Property	2,000
Repair & Maintenance	4,489
Electricity	3,634
Cleaning Contractor	2,988
Property Insurance	354
Learning Materials	1,574
Catering Contract	0
Direct School Costs	86,378
Phone & Photocopy Reimbursement	(107)
Sale of Meals - Pupils	0
Sale of Meals - Staff	0
Direct School Income	(107)
Controllable Costs	86,271
Quality Assurance	22,583
DSMO	199
Schools Executive Manager	142
Recharges	22,924
Non Controllable Costs	22,924
TOTAL COST	109,195

Costs Transferred Across Estate £	Impact on Anderson High School £	Impact on Skerries School Primary Dept £	Total Costs Transferred £	Annual Saving £
0	0	(7,892)	(7,892)	78,865
0	0	0	0	226
0	0	140	140	0
0	0	2,000	2,000	0
0	0	4,489	4,489	0
0	0	3,634	3,634	0
0	0	2,988	2,988	0
0	0	354	354	0
0	543	0	543	1,031
0	570	0	570	(570)
0	1,113	5,713	6,826	79,552
0	0	(107)	(107)	0
0	(936)	0	(936)	936
0	0	0	0	0
0	(936)	(107)	(1,043)	936
0	177	5,606	5,783	80,488
22,583	0	0	22,583	0
199	0	0	199	0
142	0	0	142	0
22,924	0	0	22,924	0
22,924	0	0	22,924	0
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>

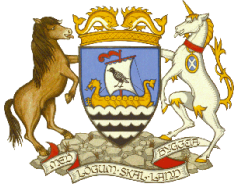


Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

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><i>Applause</i></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>

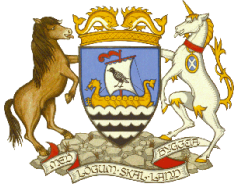


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11	<p>Denise Anderson</p> <p>Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent</p>	<p>I found a document about distances travelled by children, on the Scottish Government website. (Ryan Arthur continued) The document in summary said that difficult and long 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



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	<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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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>



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		<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	<p>Ryan Arthur Parent</p> <p>Denise Anderson</p>	<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>



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	<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>



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	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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		<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 don't understand. If you are making recommendations based on an Act which has not actually been approved yet...</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>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.</p> <p>Applause</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 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.</p> <p>Applause</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>It seems to me the smallest communities, the outer isles are being punished hardest for those mistakes.</p> <p>Applause</p>
22	Marina Anderson	<p>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</p>



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		<p>a shame that they are both being nobbled.</p> <p><i>Applause</i></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><i>Applause</i></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><i>Applause</i></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>

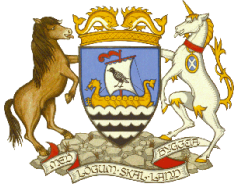


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	Ward	<p>transport arrangements of children to attend Anderson High School, we need to get away from the glib assertion that a ferry is like a bus. In every way possible it is not like a bus. The ferry which serves Skerries is entirely different to 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>



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		<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>



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		<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>Applause</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>



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		<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>



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	<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>



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		<p>keen to look at the potential. Technology has improved and the experience of those delivering education in this way is greater. Yours is a fair point but IT is not the panacea for substituting the way in which we teach at the moment. In certain circumstances it is definitely to be considered.</p>
35	<p>Mellany Gorman</p> <p>Denise Anderson</p> <p>Skerries Parent Council Chair and Parent</p>	<p>There is a lot of mention in the proposal of 'peers', children not interacting with others of their own age and loosing out as a result. I personally went to school in Brae and Lerwick. When I moved here and saw what it is like here, I would far rather live here and have learned here. I wish I had been brought up in this way and gone to school here where the teachers care. When I was in the Anderson I remember there were times when the teacher could not get round to answering questions or helping us individually. Teachers are overstretched and there are too many bairns needing help, they cannot get around everybody. Personally I would have rather had a better education and had one or two children the same age around me, than have a million folk the same age and one pal out of them anyway.</p> <p>Applause</p> <p>Following on from that. The Skerries bairns have always been praised for their ability to communicate and mix with all age groups from elderly to young. Their upbringing has made them comfortable with this and they can mix with any age group including their peers. Regarding transition from primary to secondary Skerries is an ideal situation. It could not be any better because it is a small school. They don't even know it's happening. Transition from primary to secondary in Lerwick will be very different.</p> <p>Jerry Edwards: I can't really argue that point and obviously any of the junior high schools settings would have a similar situation. Transitions are planned a long time in advance.</p> <p>Basically Skerries primary and secondary school is what Curriculum for Excellence is all about and which has been our curriculum for years.</p> <p>Councillor George Smith: Speaking as a non-professional I think you are absolutely right in terms of smooth transitions from pre-school through to higher education. If we are being honest about Curriculum for Excellence in secondary, the ideal is not to have a transition in the middle of secondary whether that's at the end of S3 or S4. The ideal is to have S1 to S6 in one setting.</p> <p>I can't remember the exact words but I think Curriculum for</p>



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>



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		<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>



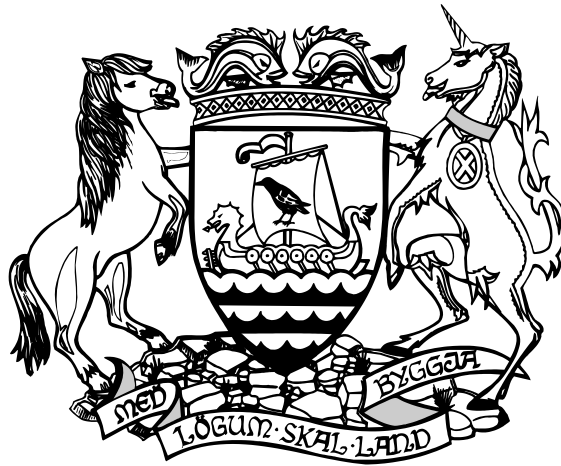
Blueprint for Education in Shetland Public Meeting

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		<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

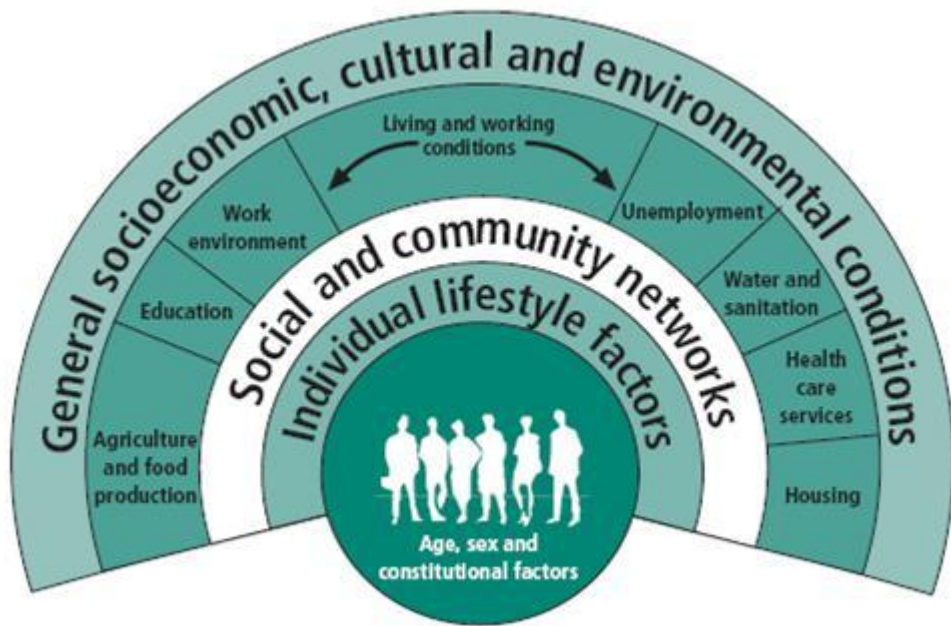
28th June 2013

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>You should consider whether any socioeconomic or equalities groups* will be particularly affected</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>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

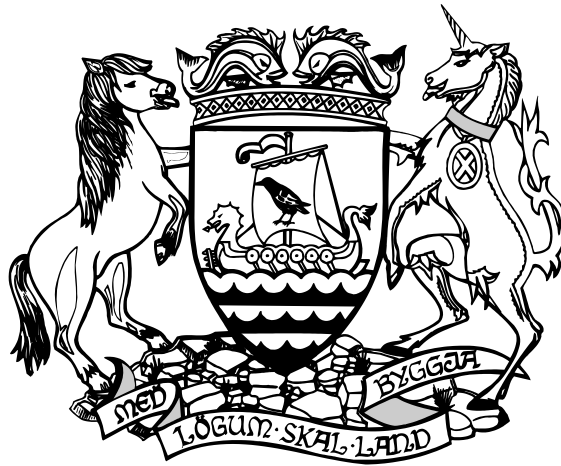
There are 2 main issues that are of concern to the families affected by the proposal: -

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

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>



**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

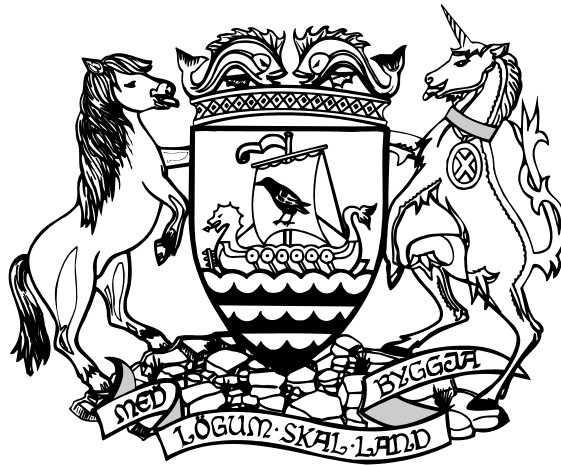
Question	IIA.PC.EC01 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on achievement of sustainable economic growth throughout Shetland?	Negative	There is concern that if Skerries School Secondary Department closes, families will leave and this will affect the fragile local economy of Skerries.	Children's 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 a 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 a 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

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in partnership with

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August 2013

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

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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.

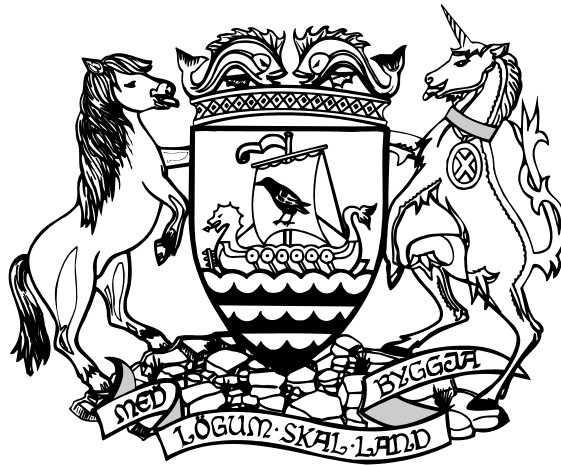
6. CONCLUSIONS

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



Head of Service: Helen Budge
Executive Director: Hazel Sutherland

Mr William Carlin
SEA Gateway Manager

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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)
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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 a 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

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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
SCOTLAND



ALBA
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)





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



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

5 April 2011

By email only to: sea.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

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

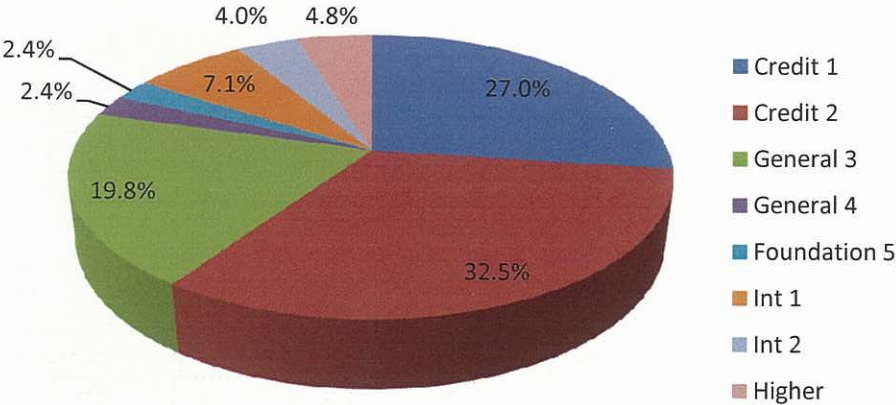
2003	1	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	1	Geography	standard grade	1
	1	Maths	standard grade	1
	2	English	standard grade	2
	2	Physics	standard grade	1
	2	Social & Vocational Skills	standard grade	1
	2	Graphic Communication	standard grade	1
	2	Science	standard grade	1
	3	English	standard grade	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

Skerries Exam Results 1995 - 2012



126 exams were passed in this period at Skerries School



Shetland Islands Council Children's Services

Addendum

Addendum

Shetland Islands Council

Children's Services

Proposed Closure of Skerries School Secondary Department

Consultation Report

November 2013

Background

Under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Children's Services carried out statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Skerries School Secondary Department between 14 May 2013 and 28 June 2013. The Consultation Report on this proposal was published on 19 September 2013. The Report was due to be presented to Shetland Islands Council, Education and Families Committee on 10 October 2013, and thereafter to full Shetland Islands Council on the same day.

On 7 October 2013, a Councillor informed the Director of Children's Services that the responses of a number of Skerries residents were not included within the Consultation Report.

An immediate investigation was undertaken by Children's Services and it was discovered that the electronic response form set up for the consultation period was unreliable. Therefore the Consultation Report was not considered by Committee on 10 October 2013.

Following on from this concern, to ensure all relevant consultees had an opportunity to respond to the proposed closure of Skerries School Secondary Department, a further consultation period was agreed. Submissions were invited to be received by 12 November 2013. This further period was publicised in a number of ways. Individuals identified by the Councillor were sent a letter from the Director of Children's Services enclosing a blank response form and a stamped addressed envelope. A public notice was placed in the local press, and an advert ran on local radio. The further consultation period was approximately five weeks long, to provide time before, and after, the October school holidays for submissions to be received.

Number of Responses Received During Further Consultation Period

As a result of this further consultation period Children's Services has received eighteen submissions. Three of these eighteen submissions were from consultees who did submit a response within the original statutory consultation period.

Involvement of Education Scotland

Education Scotland was informed immediately this matter came to light and advice was sought from them as to whether their report on the educational aspects of the proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department would possibly need to be revisited. Education Scotland has advised Children's Services that they consider the matter of a further consultation period to be a local issue for the local authority to respond to.

Summary of Responses Received During the Further Consultation Period

All of the eighteen submissions received disagreed with the proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department.

The main points raised in the additional responses are as follows:

Quality of Education

Points Made

- Skerries School Secondary Department provides flexible timetabling and a wide choice of courses to study;
- Skerries School Secondary Department successfully includes children with additional support needs.

These points are all covered already in the Consultation Report on Pages 25, 26 and 27. Specific matters relating to children with additional support needs are covered in the Consultation Report on Pages 56 and 57.

An additional point on quality of education was made by respondents in the further consultation period as follows:

- High quality education is provided in Skerries School Secondary Department with excellent attainment for children.

Children's Services sets out in the Proposal Paper on Pages 17 and 18, attainment information for the Anderson High School. This information demonstrates that for the current key measures for Secondary 4 pupil attainment, of 5 or more Standard Grades at Credit Level, General Level and Foundation Level, the Anderson High School consistently performs well about the national average for local authority secondary schools in Scotland. The Anderson High School also produces excellent exam results.

Transport

Points Made

- Safety concerns about the ferry journey children from Skerries would have to undertake to access the Anderson High School; it is across open water and children will get seasick;
- Concerns about the travel time Skerries children would experience to get to and from Lerwick;
- The ferry timetable has now been reduced making travel impossible.

These points are already addressed in the Consultation Report on Pages 23 and 24.

An additional point on transport was made by respondents in the further consultation period as follows:

- What would be the contingency if the ferry to Skerries was diverted to Whalsay?

This point is covered to a large extent in the Consultation Report on Page 24 in the following paragraph:

“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.”

However, to further address this point, Children’s Services would emphasise that should there be a risk identified where the ferry may potentially have to divert to Whalsay, then the Manager of the Halls of Residence would not allow the children to commence this journey. Therefore it is very unlikely that this eventuality would occur. If it ever did, then as noted in the Consultation Report on Page 24, Children’s Services proposes to provide an escort for ferry travel for the Skerries children. Therefore, if the ferry had to divert to Whalsay, the children would be appropriately supervised and supported, and accommodation would be provided for them on Whalsay, along with the escort.

Relationships/Friends and Family Life

Points Made

- Concerns about the potential negative impact on family life of removing children from their parents at age eleven, and that to do this is a breach of human rights;

- Skerries School Secondary Department prepares children well for making friends and talking to others;
- Concerns about who would support children while they are off the isle and not with their family;
- Concerns about bullying in the Halls of Residence;
- Concerns about children becoming ill during the week while they are away from home;
- Lerwick is not a suitable place for children to be without family support.

All of these points are addressed in the Consultation Report on Pages 27 and 28, then further on Pages 34, 35, 36 and 37.

Community Concerns

Points Made

- Concerns about the impact on the community of Skerries of children leaving the isle at a young age; this would lead to de-population;
- Having a secondary department on the isle attracts people to come and live on Skerries;
- Closing the Skerries School Secondary Department would have a negative impact on the fragile economy on the isle as working people would leave.

All of these points are covered in the Consultation Report on Pages 30, 31 and 32.

Financial

Points Made

- Savings presented are not accurate;
- Shetland Islands Council wastes money.

These points are covered in the Consultation Report on Pages 46, 47 and 48, including information on the savings Children's Services has made since 2009/10.

Viable alternatives to Closure

Alternatives Put Forward

- Build a smaller Anderson High School, and bus the children to rural areas;

- Don't build a new Anderson High School; save the money in the bank and use it to pay for services in Shetland, including rural schools.

Viable alternatives to the closure of Skerries School Secondary Department are covered on Pages 66, 67 and 68 of the Consultation Report. In addition, in response to these two specific points, two-thirds of the required funding for the proposed new Anderson High School is a grant from the Scottish Government. Shetland Islands Council could not afford to build a new school without this funding. Grant funding from the Scottish Government is only provided for a like-for-like replacement, so a smaller school cannot be built.

Not building a new Anderson High School would not resolve Shetland Islands Council's financial difficulties. Shetland Island Council is only providing one-third of the money required for the whole Anderson High School Project. This contribution will be in the region of £14 million and is capital funding, not revenue funding. Revenue funding is the ongoing financial resources needed to run services like schools.

Choice

Points Made

- Retaining Skerries School Secondary Department gives parents a choice of education for their children; if it closes choice is removed.

This point is covered in the Consultation Report on Pages 42, 43 and 44. In addition, Children's Services would add, that, as set out on Page 42 of the Consultation Report that:

"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 has no obligation to provide parents with a choice of schools. Depending on where families choose to live, geography may make a choice of schools a realistic proposition, subject to the local authority granting a placing request, but there is no requirement for any local authority to provide a range of schools to give parents choice.

After-School Activities

Points Made

- Skerries School now offers a wide range of after-school clubs.

At the time of the original statutory consultation period on the proposal to close Skerries School Secondary Department there were no after-school activities offered

by Skerries School. Since the publication of the original Consultation Report on 19 September 2013, this position has changed. However as respondents this time have highlighted this new provision, Children's Services is happy to respond.

The Consultation Report on Page 29 deals with this point and states that the Anderson High School offers: *"a range of clubs, many of which run at lunchtime."*

For completeness, the current list of after-school activities on offer at the Anderson High School is set out here:

Music

- The Saturday Morning Music Club
- Senior Strings
- Fiddle Finale
- Tunester (folk band)
- Hansel (fiddle group)
- Junior Singing Group
- Shetland Youth Jazz Band
- Shetland Youth Wind Band
- Junior Strings
- Rock School

Clubs at Lunchtime

- Books and Banter
- Homework and Study
- Lunchtime Library Access
- Badminton
- Trampoline
- Dodgeball
- Football
- Netball

- Dance mats
- Beach Ball Volleyball
- Fitness Suite
- Touch Rugby
- Hip Hop and Street Dance
- Chess
- Internet
- Games and Puzzles
- Scripture Union
- Card Making
- Knitting

Others

- Duke of Edinburgh
- Subject Departments – Supported Study
- A range of school trips
- Activities Week

There is a comprehensive range of activities on offer at the Anderson High School to enable children to pursue personal interests and hobbies or continue their studies. These will offer children the opportunity to mix with others who may not be in their class group or their year group, and also give them the chance to meet different teachers.

Other Issues Related to the Responses Submitted During the Further Consultation Period

In addition, one respondent made a comment which related directly to Education Scotland's report on the educational aspects of the proposal. The comment raised concerns regarding the educational benefit of the proposed closure and Education Scotland's findings. The educational benefits identified by Education Scotland are found on Page 6 of Appendix B of the Consultation Report. Education Scotland clearly identifies a number of educational benefits associated with this proposed closure.

Minor Amendment to the Consultation Report

During the analysis of the additional submissions received, it was identified that the figures within the table on Page 13 of the Consultation Report were incorrect. A submission was received after the original consultation period had ended. It was accepted, its contents considered within the Consultation Report and it was sent to Education Scotland. However, the figures within the table on Page 13 were not updated. Therefore, the table has been amended showing 39 responses were received during the consultation period as opposed to 38.

Conclusion

Children's Services considers that the submissions made during the further consultation period do not raise any significant issues which are not already covered in the Consultation Report. A few additional points were made which have been addressed in this addendum.

Recommendations

The statutory consultation process required to consider a school closure proposal is a lengthy and stressful process, creating a great deal of uncertainty for all concerned. Therefore, having given due consideration to the additional submissions made to Children's Services during the further consultation period, Children's Services does not consider any material issues have been raised which would require the statutory process to be re-run at this time.

With the addition of this addendum, Children's Services considers that all points raised by respondents have now been addressed. Therefore Children's Services continues to recommend that:

- education provision at Skerries School Secondary Department be discontinued with effect from 4 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- 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;
- the catchment area for Anderson High School be altered to include the current catchment area for Skerries School Secondary Department.

Publication of Consultation Report and Addendum

This Consultation Report and Addendum 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 November 2013**.

Anyone who made written responses during the further consultation period has been informed about the publication of this Report and Addendum. The Addendum

includes a record of the total number of written submissions made during the further consultation period, and a summary of these written submissions.

This Consultation Report and Addendum is published on 19 November 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 Addendum 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.

Decision

This Consultation Report and Addendum, together with any other relevant documentation, will be considered by Shetland Islands Council Education and Families Committee on 10 December 2013. This decision is then subject to Shetland Islands Council approval on 11 December 2013.