



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

**10 February 2014  
12 February 2014**

## **Proposed Closure of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class - Decision**

**CS-02-14-F**

**Report Presented by Director of Children's Services**

**Children's Services**

### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This Report presents the Consultation Report on the proposed closure of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class. An Executive Summary of the Consultation Report is attached as Appendix 1, and the full Consultation Report is attached as Appendix 2.
- 1.2 Statutory Consultation was carried out on the proposal to close Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class between 30 September 2013 and 26 November 2013 in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Having weighed up the balance of evidence presented, the Consultation Report recommends approval to close Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class. The affected pupils would transfer to Bell's Brae Primary School from 18 August 2014 or as soon as possible thereafter; and pre-school children will access pre-school education in line with Children's Services Admissions Policy. If this approval is given to close Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class, 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 Bressay Primary School be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
  - (b) The pupils of Bressay Primary School continue their education at Bell's Brae Primary School from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter; and

- (c) The catchment area for Bell's Brae Primary School be altered to include the current catchment area for Bressay Primary School;
- (d) Pre-school education provision at Bressay Primary School Nursery Class be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- (e) Pre-school education provision for eligible children in Bressay continue in accordance with the Shetland Islands Council Admissions Policy.

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 Bressay Primary School and Bell's Brae Primary School to develop a transition plan that would ensure an effective transition for pupils to Bell's Brae Primary 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 On 11 September 2013 Shetland Islands Council resolved that statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class would commence on 30 September 2013 (Min Ref: 79/13).
- 3.2 Statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class was proposed by Children's Services owing to:
  - The continuing decline in the school roll, from 40 in 2002/2003 to ten in 2012/13, and four in 2013/2014;
  - No uptake of pre-school education in the Nursery Class for 2013/14;
  - The outcome of informal consultation with the Bressay community during the summer of 2013.
- 3.3 Statutory consultation commenced on 30 September 2013. In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a public meeting was held in the Bressay Public Hall on 30 October 2013, where nineteen people attended. An additional public meeting was held in Bell's Brae Primary School, the proposed receiving school, on 31 October 2013 where two people attended. Transcripts of these meetings are published on Shetland Islands Council's website and are appended to the Consultation Report.

- 3.5 In addition, twenty written responses were received on the Proposal.
- 3.6 Following the end of the statutory consultation period, in line with legislation, the Proposal Paper, all written responses and transcripts of the public meetings were then sent to Education Scotland who published a formal report on the educational aspects of the Proposal on 7 January 2014.
- 3.7 Children's Services published their response to the consultation, in the form of a Consultation Report on 20 January 2014. This was circulated at the time, both electronically and in paper copy. The Consultation Report contains:
- a record and a summary of the number of written representations received during the Statutory Consultation Period, and Children's Services' response to these;
  - a summary of the representations made at the public meetings held during the consultation period, and Children's Services' response to these;
  - the full text of Education Scotland's Report on the educational aspects of the Proposal and Children's Services' response to the issues raised in their report;
  - a statement of how Children's Services has reviewed the Proposal following all the representations made during the consultation period;
  - details of any omissions or inaccuracies in the Proposal Paper.
- 3.8 The Consultation Report has been published in electronic and printed formats and its publication has been advertised in the local media. It is available on Shetland Islands Council's website and free of charge in printed form from Hayfield House, Shetland Library, Bressay Primary School and Bell's Brae Primary School. An executive summary of the Consultation Report is also published on Shetland Islands Council's website and is Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.9 The Consultation Report contains a full analysis of all the issues raised through the Consultation Process. The summary of the written responses indicates that half of respondents disagree with the Proposal. The following table, an extract from the Consultation Report, shows an analysis of the responses, including the key issues of concern.

Number of written consultation responses received	<b>20</b>	<b>%</b>
Number of responses that:		
agreed with the Proposal	5	25%
disagreed with the Proposal	14	70%
did not indicate an opinion or requested further information	1	5%

Of the 5 who agreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:		
Financial Reasons	4	80%
Peer Interaction	3	60%
School Capacity	2	40%

Of the 14 who disagreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:		
Community Concerns	10	71%
Travelling distance/time	9	64%
Child Safety	8	57%
Quality of Education	6	43%
Class Sizes	5	36%

3.10 The Consultation Report is a comprehensive analysis of all the issues which have been raised and Children's Services' responses to those. The key points made and responses provided are considered under the following headings:

- Staffing;
- School Capacity;
- Transport/Child Safety;
- Peer Interaction/Class Sizes;
- Community Concerns;
- After School Activities;
- Quality of Education;
- Placing Requests;
- Democratic (or decision making process);
- Employment;
- Financial;
- Nursery.

3.11 The key conclusions from the Consultation Report are set out below.

- a) Throughout the Consultation, Children's Services has given special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- b) 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.
- c) To ensure we fulfilled the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 in their fullest regard, we commissioned a socio-economic study (Appendix G of Appendix 2) on this proposal and a health impact assessment (Appendix E of Appendix 2). We also carried out an Integrated Impact Assessment (Appendix F of Appendix 2).

- d) Education Scotland also visited Bressay Primary School to speak to parents, children and staff. They had the opportunity to view the Proposal Paper and all written representations. In summary, the report by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal acknowledges that:

*“Almost all stakeholders agree that the children who currently attend Bressay Primary School would benefit educationally from the implementation of this proposal.”*

- e) Their Report describes three educational benefits for the children who attend Bressay Primary School which Education Scotland believe will accrue from the implementation of this Proposal. In summary these are:

- that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
- that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have access to a wider range of teaching staff with a range of experiences;
- that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would then attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement.

- f) In addition Education Scotland identifies benefits to Shetland Islands Council which would arise from the implementation of the proposal for the Council. This is that:

- the Council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area. Whether the current Bressay Primary School was to be mothballed or sold, there are significant resources within the building which could be redistributed across the remaining educational estate. This includes its library stock, basic classroom resources and 19 computers, each of which uses a current operating system.

- g) All the benefits identified by Education Scotland concur with those identified by Children's Services in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A of Appendix 2). The educational benefits of the Proposal identified by Children's Services are summarised on Page 19 of the Proposal Paper (Appendix A of Appendix 2) as follows:

- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning, and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have access to a wide range of teaching staff with a range of experiences;

- that pupils from Bressay Primary School would attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement;
  - that, as a result of this Proposal the Council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area.
- h) We know excellent high-quality education is delivered in our small schools in Shetland, and although Curriculum for Excellence is entirely able to be delivered to an equally high standard in a small school, for some aspects of it, delivery can be more challenging.
- i) Bressay Primary School and Bell's Brae Primary School are only 2.5 miles apart, including the short seven-minute ferry crossing. The transfer of pupils from Bressay Primary School would not result in unacceptable travel time for pupils, however this does mean a different type of journey for these pupils.
- j) Only four of the sixteen children who could attend Bressay Primary School currently do go there, and of the twelve placing requests there are out of the school, seven of these are to Bell's Brae Primary School. There are four children in Bressay who are currently eligible for pre-school education. Of these, none attend Bressay Primary School Nursery Class.
- k) There is considerable spare capacity in Bressay Primary School and the children could be accommodated in Bell's Brae Primary School without the need for any additional staffing.
- l) Of the twenty written responses received during the consultation, 70% disagreed with the proposal, 25% agreed with the proposal and 5% did not express an opinion.
- m) This proposal, if implemented, has the potential to provide recurring savings to Shetland Islands Council of £74,693. 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:

#### Shetland Islands Council's Corporate Plan

- We must cost-effectively provide the essential services that people in Shetland really need. We will have to change how we do some things to make services more efficient and to make sure we can continue them in the long term, but we will do that with people, not to them;

- We are determined that our organisation will be run to the very highest standards;
- We will take difficult decisions when we have to and we will balance the books;
- We will ensure the best possible start for every child;
- All children and young people deserve the best chances in life;
- We are determined that our young people will have the best chance to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens;
- Carry out projects for change to achieve our targets within the Medium Term Financial Plan;
- Have enough appropriate school buildings to provide Curriculum for Excellence across Shetland to prepare young people for further education, employment or training.

#### Shetland Single Outcome Agreement 2013

- Shetland is the best place for children and young people to grow up in;
- We live longer, healthier lives;
- People are supported to be active and independent throughout adulthood and in older age;
- Shetland stays a safe place to live, and we have strong, resilient and supportive communities;
- Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities and our people have the skills to match, good places to stay and the transport people and businesses need;
- We have tackled inequalities by ensuring the needs of the most vulnerable and hard to reach groups are identified and met, and that services are targeted at those most in need;
- We deliver all our services in an environmentally sustainable manner to safeguard and enhance our outstanding environment which underpins all our actions and our economic and social well-being;
- We have financial sustainability and balance within each partner; and a better balance between a dynamic private sector, a strong third sector and efficient and responsive public services.

#### Children's Services Directorate Plan

- To get it right for every child;
- We deliver the best possible service we can which balances access, opportunities and resources.

- 4.2 Community /Stakeholder Issues – in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Children's Services has consulted with all relevant stakeholders / consultees. Full details of the outcomes of the consultation are in the Consultation Report attached as Appendix 2.
- 4.3 Policy And/Or Delegated Authority – in accordance with Section 2.3.1 of the Council's Scheme of Administration and Delegations, the Education and Families Committee has responsibility and delegated authority for decision making on matters within its remit which includes school education. However, as the decision required would be a variation of an existing plan and policy, a decision of the Council is

required. This report is related to the function of an education authority.

- 4.4 Risk Management – The outcome of the Appeal in the Court of Session and the report from the Commission on Rural Education are both now available. There may be changes in legislation but these are not to be passed until at least Spring 2014. In the meantime the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 is the legislation to be followed. Failure to reduce the net ongoing running costs of the Council carries a significant risk of the Council's financial policies not being adhered to and will require a further draw from Reserves.
- 4.5 Equalities, Health And Human Rights – An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out in respect of this closure proposal for Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class. A summary of the impacts forms part of the Consultation Report at Section 13, including how adverse impacts can be mitigated against. The full Integrated Impact Assessment is an Appendix F to the Consultation Report.
- 4.6 Environmental – None

#### 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 £74,693 from this proposal make an important and ongoing contribution to achieving this target.
- Failure to agree to the closure of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class would result in an additional cost pressure of £6,224 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 Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class. Children's Services will ensure that consultation with all staff affected and with Trade Unions will be held following any decisions taken.
- 4.10 Assets And Property – Within our commitments there are implications for assets and property regarding the use of buildings. If there is a decision to close Bressay Primary School, Bressay Primary School building would become surplus to the school estate. Potential future use of the building is discussed in the Consultation Report.

## **5.0 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The Consultation Report on the proposal to close Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class recommends that:
- 5.1.1 Education provision at Bressay Primary School be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;

- 5.1.2 The pupils of Bressay Primary School continue their education at Bell's Brae Primary School from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- 5.1.3 The catchment area for Bell's Brae Primary School be altered to include the current catchment area for Bressay Primary School;
- 5.1.4 Pre-school education provision at Bressay Primary School Nursery Class be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- 5.1.5 Pre-school education provision for eligible children in Bressay continue in accordance with the Shetland Islands Council Admissions Policy.

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For further information please contact:

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*Report Finalised: 28 January 2014*

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#### List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Executive Summary of the Consultation Report

Appendix 2: Consultation Report

#### Background Documents

CS-46-13-F: Proposed Statutory Consultation for Bressay Primary School and Nursery Department

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=14899>

END



## **Proposed closure of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class**

### **Consultation Report**

#### **Executive Summary**

Shetland Islands Council, Children's Services recommends that:

- Education provision at Bressay Primary School be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- The pupils of Bressay Primary School continue their education at Bell's Brae Primary School from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- The catchment area for Bell's Brae Primary School be altered to include the current catchment area for Bressay Primary School;
- Pre-school education provision at Bressay Primary School Nursery Class be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- Pre-school education provision for eligible children in Bressay continue in accordance with the Shetland Islands Council Admissions Policy.

The statutory consultation period in relation to the proposed closure of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class ended on Tuesday 26 November 2013.

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

#### Representations

Nineteen people attended the Public Meeting held in Bressay Public Hall on 30 October 2013.

Two people attended the additional Public Meeting held at Bell's Brae Primary School on 31 October 2013.

Appendices C and D of the Consultation Report contain the full minute of each public meeting.

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

Number of written consultation responses received	<b>20</b>	<b>%</b>
Number of responses that:		
agreed with the Proposal	5	25%
disagreed with the Proposal	14	70%
did not indicate an opinion or request further information	1	5%

For those who agreed with the proposal, the most often stated reasons were: financial reasons, peer interaction and school capacity.

For those who disagreed with the proposal, the most often stated reasons were: community concerns, transport, child safety, quality of education, and class sizes.

### **Children's Services response to key issues**

#### **Community concerns**

##### Key issues raised:

- Bressay Primary School plays a key role in the community and community events in the school are well attended. Members of the wider community are unlikely to attend school events in Lerwick. The school plays an important role in welcoming newcomers to the area. Closure of the school would be detrimental to the community and would make it less attractive to new families.
- The proposal to close Bressay Primary School reflects the socio-economic decline of the island. Bressay requires stability through the establishment and maintenance of affordable ferry fares. A fixed link should be investigated.
- The proposal discriminates against parents who live and work in Bressay and against their children.

### Response:

- In 2007, Shetland's Community Planning Partnership commissioned Hall Aiken to research historic and future population trends, and factors affecting this, in Shetland. Their full report is: 'Shetland's Population and Migration Study'. The report did not identify the presence of a school as a critical factor in the economic sustainability of a community.
- Children's Services envisages that, no matter what decision is taken on the future of the Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class, the socio-economic study prepared during the statutory consultation process will be very helpful to informing the priorities for the Bressay Community Development Group.
- The Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, published in April 2013, makes the following statement about rural schools: "It is important to recognise that a school's primary function is to provide pupils with the best possible educational experience."

### **Transport**

#### Key issues raised:

- The travel time for some children could be 50-55 minutes. This would leave children with less time to spend with their families, and less time for play/out of school activities.
- The transport costs for the bus service are out of date. Transport for children currently at Bressay Primary School will not be available after Easter and should not be included in the savings figure. A rise in ferry fares would have a significant impact on the achieved savings.
- Would it be possible for children from Bressay currently attending other schools (e.g. Sound Primary School) to access transport? Would it be possible for nursery children to access the school transport?

### Response:

- Travel time commences from the time that the child is met by the school transport at the designated pick up point. That may, or may not be the child's home. Shetland Islands Council's policy on daily travel for primary aged children is that primary-aged children should not travel for longer than 40 minutes in a single journey.
- The transport costs quoted are based upon current journeys in Bressay. All contracts have been subject to an indexation uplift based on the Retail Index Price (RPI) and local fuel prices, to keep those contract prices current. The current provision will cease at the end of the contract term – Summer 2014 –

however the full costs of the necessary transport arrangements will be met by Children's Services.

- Transport could be provided to pupils from Sound Primary School or other schools, where spare capacity was available and on the understanding that those seats would have to be relinquished should the need arise. However, this transport would be to Bell's Brae Primary School only and any onward transport would need to be the subject of a separate arrangement between the operator and the parents. The local authority does not provide transport for children to attend nursery.

### **Child Safety**

#### Key issues raised:

- If there is an emergency at the school, it may take a parent based in Bressay as long as two hours to reach the school. Not all families on Bressay have friends and family in Lerwick who can act as emergency accommodation for children if they get stranded. Who would look after the children if the ferry stops and they get stuck out of Bressay?
- High winds sometimes mean the Bressay ferry needs to make a number of attempts to dock. This situation would not be fair for primary school pupils to be exposed to.
- An escort will be required on the ferry and the bus at all times. Who will take a small child to the toilet on the ferry?

#### Response:

- To date, no Bressay primary children currently attending schools in Lerwick have been stranded. Strong communication links exist between transport, the ferry crew and the Head Teachers at both Bell's Brae Primary School and Sound Primary School, so that if bad weather is expected, then the children are always sent home. This happens very rarely, and not once in the past twelve months.
- Should the ferry service be suspended for any reason, then any children will initially be looked after by school staff in situ. In the unlikely event that the need should arise, emergency accommodation could be provided in the Janet Courtney Hall of Residence if any parent is unable to supply an emergency address for their child.
- Should the children be stranded in Bressay due to any unforeseen stoppage, then parents would be advised by the bus operator of an alternative pick up time. Similarly, should any child fall ill at school, he or she would be looked

after by a member of school staff until they could be collected by their parent or carer.

- In the event of high winds, the ferry Master's primary responsibility is the safety of his passengers. There may be times when a different approach to the ferry terminal may be required, but the Master would assess any risk and only depart when confident of making a safe docking alongside. Parents can be assured that if the ferry is running then their children will be safely transported.
- Given that the journey from Bressay to Lerwick is a short one and assuming that children would be toileted before leaving home, there should be no requirement for them to use the toilet on the ferry. If any child has any additional needs in this regard then appropriate arrangements will, of course, be made.

### **Quality of education**

#### Key issues raised:

- Children in Bressay Primary School are being encouraged to learn across age stage and gender which is a better preparation for the real world.
- The current teaching in Bressay Primary School is providing very personalised excellent education ensuring children are not disadvantaged with small numbers.
- Educational links to the Bressay community would be lost if children from the island are educated in Lerwick. Separating children from the island into different classes separates local parents who otherwise would be working towards common goals.

#### Response:

- Education Scotland's Report on the educational aspects of the Proposal also supports this argument. On Page 4 of their Report it states that: "The first reasonable benefit which will result from the implementation of the proposal is that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning and for social interaction with others of similar ages.
- On Page 7 of the same report, Education Scotland conclude that, "Overall, the educational benefits outlined by the council demonstrate that the proposal is in the best interests of the children who currently attend Bressay Primary School and should broaden and enhance their learning experiences."

## **Class sizes**

### Key issues raised:

- Learning in small groups is beneficial to children's education.
- The small roll in Bressay Primary School provides for more teacher attention for the children. They get extra help if they need it.
- Children's Services' claims that Curriculum for Excellence cannot best be delivered in a small school. Ollaberry Primary School, a small primary school, has just received an excellent report with practice that Education Scotland wish shared with others. Many small primary schools receive better Education Scotland results than large primary schools in Lerwick.

### Response:

- Building The Curriculum 3, published by the Scottish Government in 2008, sets out the framework for all schools to follow in developing Curriculum for Excellence. Amongst the attributes and capacities which must be developed in each child are:
  - To learn independently and as part of a group;
  - To relate to others and manage themselves;
  - To communicate in different ways and in different settings;
  - To work in partnership and in teams.

It is elements of these aspects of the requirements of the curriculum which, within a primary school where there are only a few children and perhaps only one at a particular stage, can be more challenging. We know that all our staff do their utmost to fulfil absolutely all the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence. However given the limitations on the numbers available in the school, it is more challenging to secure these outcomes in the absolute best way possible. In 2014/15, Bressay Primary School is predicted to have three children: one in Primary 2, one in Primary 3 and one in Primary 6.

We know excellent high quality education is delivered in our small schools; and although Curriculum for Excellence is able to be delivered to an equally high standard in a small school, the delivery of some aspects can be more challenging



## **Shetland Islands Council Children's Services**

### **Consultation Report**

**The following schools are affected by this Consultation Report:**

- **Bressay Primary School**
- **Bressay Primary School Nursery Class**
- **Bell's Brae Primary School**

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

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## **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](http://www.shetland.gov.uk).

### **1.2 Advertisement in Local Media**

A Notice of Consultation was published in local media on Friday 27 September 2013.

### **1.3 Length of Consultation Period**

The consultation period for the Proposal ran from Monday 30 September 2013 until Tuesday 26 November 2013. This period allowed for the statutory minimum of 30 school days.

### **1.4 Public Meetings**

Public meetings were held on:

Wednesday 30 October 2013  
7.00pm to 9.00pm  
at Bressay Public Hall  
Bressay  
ZE2 9ER

and

Thursday 31 October 2013  
7.00pm to 9.00pm  
at Bell's Brae Primary School  
Lerwick  
ZE1 0QJ

A note was taken at the meetings of questions and views. These notes are published on the Shetland Islands Council's website and form Appendix C and Appendix D to this Consultation Report.

### **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. 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 **20 January 2014**.

Anyone who made written representations 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 20 January 2014 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 February 2014. This decision is then subject to Shetland Islands Council approval on 12 February 2014.

## **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 12 February 2014 to decide if they will call-in the proposal. Within the first three weeks of that six-week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the six-week call-in process has been notified to Shetland Islands Council, they will not

proceed to implement the Proposal approved at Stage 1.7 above. If the Scottish Ministers call-in the Proposal they may refuse to consent to the Proposal or grant their consent to the Proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally. Until the outcome of the call-in has been notified to Shetland Islands Council, they are unable to proceed to implement the Proposal.

#### **1.9 Note on Corrections**

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

#### **1.10 Distribution**

A copy of this Consultation Report is available on the Shetland Islands Council website: [www.shetland.gov.uk](http://www.shetland.gov.uk).

Copies are available for inspection (free of charge), at Hayfield House, affected schools and the Shetland Library.

The list of Consultees are:

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

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

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

Or by email: [bressayconsultation@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:bressayconsultation@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 Bressay Primary School be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
2. The pupils of Bressay Primary School continue their education at Bell's Brae Primary School from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
3. The catchment area for Bell's Brae Primary School be altered to include the current catchment area for Bressay Primary School;
4. Pre-school education provision at Bressay Primary School Nursery Class be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
5. Pre-school education provision for eligible children in Bressay continue in accordance with the Shetland Islands Council's Admissions Policy.

- 2.2 The purpose of the Consultation Report is to:

- provide a record of the total number of written representations made during the statutory consultation period;
- provide a summary of the written representations;
- provide a summary of oral representations made at the public meetings held on 30 October and 31 October 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 The Proposal to discontinue primary and pre-school education at Bressay Primary School is not part of the Blueprint for Education in Shetland. However specific decisions have been taken by Shetland Islands Council in relation to the Blueprint for Education which have a bearing on this Proposal.
- 3.2 Children's Services reported to Councillors on 20 September 2012 to propose a Blueprint for Education 2012-2017. At that meeting Shetland Islands Council 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".

- 3.3 **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.]**

- 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 sustainable.
- 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.

- 3.4 Shetland Islands Council also approved a Plan for Delivering Education 2012-2017 which contained a number of closure proposals, however consideration of the future of Bressay Primary School was not part of this Plan. This proposal to discontinue

all education provision at Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class is being progressed due to:

- the continuing decline in the school roll;
- no uptake of the pre-school provision available at the school and;
- as a result of discussions which have been ongoing with parents in Bressay and with the Bressay community during the Summer of 2013.

3.5 A report on the future of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class was presented at Education and Families Committee on 11 September 2013 and Shetland Islands Council on 11 September 2013. The recommendation was that Children's Services proceed to statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Bressay Primary School and Bressay Primary School Nursery Class. Education and Families Committee recommended to Shetland Islands Council to move to statutory consultation and Shetland Islands Council accepted this recommendation.

3.6 In taking forward any proposal which may involve a formal decision being taken on the delivery of school education in Shetland, Children's Services must ensure the proposal fits within the strategic planning framework of the Shetland community and also specifically Shetland Islands Council.

3.7 The proposal to discontinue primary and nursery education at Bressay Primary School links to these policy frameworks as follows.

The Shetland Partnership Community Plan 2013 – 2020 has as its aim: “to make Shetland the best place to live and work by creating communities that are: Wealthier and Fairer; Learning and Supportive; Healthy and Caring; Safe; Vibrant and Sustainable.” The Community Plan also incorporates the priorities from the Single Outcome Agreement 2013.

The key priorities in the Community Plan are to ensure:

- Shetland is the best place for children and young people to grow up in;
- We live longer, healthier lives;
- People are supported to be active and independent throughout adulthood and in older age;
- Shetland stays a safe place to live, and we have strong, resilient and supportive communities;
- Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities and our people have the skills to match, good places to stay and the transport people and businesses need;
- We have tackled inequalities by ensuring the needs of the most vulnerable and hard to reach groups are identified and met, and that services are targeted at those most in need;
- We deliver all our services in an environmentally sustainable manner to safeguard and enhance our outstanding environment which underpins all our actions and our economic and social well-being;
- We have financial sustainability and balance within each partner; and a better balance between a dynamic private sector, a strong third sector and efficient and responsive public services.

Children's Services is committed to the Community Plan, and in particular, to the priorities which relate to ensuring that Shetland is the best place for children to grow up in.

The Community Plan also makes it clear that people and communities should be genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them.

3.8 Shetland Islands Council priorities were approved within the updated Medium Term Financial Plan on 28 August 2013 by Shetland Islands Council. The core themes set out as Council priorities were:

- being a properly led and well managed council, dealing with the challenges of the present and the future, and doing that within our means;
- providing critical services for children and adults and the transport services we all need;
- mindful of how change could affect the vulnerable and disadvantaged;
- helping build a healthy economy and strong communities;
- working with all our partners to achieve the best results possible.

The Proposal to discontinue primary and pre-school education at Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class supports these priorities, in particular the first two.

3.9 An updated Council Corporate Plan 2013-17 was also approved by Shetland Islands Council on 12 June 2013. It links back through to the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013, and sets out the Council's priorities for the rest of this Council's term. The priorities in the Corporate Plan which are relevant to this proposal are listed here.

- We must cost-effectively provide the essential services that people in Shetland really need. We will have to change how we do some things to make services more efficient and to make sure we can continue them in the long term, but we will do that with people, not to them.
- We are determined that our organisation will be run to the very highest standards.
- We will take difficult decisions when we have to and we will balance the books.

3.10 Within the Action Plan section of the Corporate Plan the actions set out below relate directly to the delivery of this proposal to discontinue primary and nursery education at Bressay Primary School.

- We will ensure the best possible start for every child.
- All children and young people deserve the best chances in life.
- We are determined that our young people will have the best chance to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- Carry out projects for change to achieve our targets within the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- Have enough appropriate school buildings to provide Curriculum for Excellence across Shetland to prepare young people for further education, employment or training.

3.11 In addition to these, the Corporate Plan also makes commitments to support communities in Shetland under challenging circumstances which will be important during the statutory consultation process required to consider the future of a school.

- We will listen to communities so we understand their needs, and we will talk and listen to them when we are making decisions.

- We must make sure we take the right actions now to protect the long-term well-being of Shetland.
- We will make spending decisions that realistically reflect the money we have.

3.12 Children's Services Directorate Plan 2013-14, in turn, has the following relevant priorities.

- To get it right for every child.
- We deliver the best possible service we can which balances access, opportunities and resources.

## **4. Consultation Process**

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

- The Proposal Paper was issued on 30 September 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 27 September 2013. A Notice of Consultation appeared on [www.shetnews.co.uk](http://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 30 October 2013 at Bressay Public Hall and 31 October 2013 in Bell's Brae Primary School.
- The Quality Improvement Officer for both schools consulted with staff and children separately.
- The Consultation period ended on Tuesday 26 November 2013.
- Education Scotland's involvement consisted of the Proposal Paper being sent to them. They also received a copy of all written representations. They visited Bressay Primary School and Bell's Brae Primary School and spoke to relevant consultees. They then prepared a Report on the educational aspects of the Proposal. This is attached as Appendix B.

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

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

## **5. Representations**

5.1 Nineteen people attended the Public Meeting held in Bressay Public Hall on 30 October 2013. The minute of this public meeting is attached as Appendix C. Two people attended the additional Public Meeting held at Bell's Brae Primary School on 31 October 2013. The minute of this public meeting is attached as Appendix D.

- 5.2 The total number of written representations received during the Consultation period was twenty.

Parent / Carer	6
Shetland Resident	7
Parent Councils	1
Community Councils	0
SIC Employee	1
Friend	1
Other	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

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

## 6. Summary of the Written Representations

Number of written consultation responses received	<b>20</b>	<b>%</b>
Number of responses that:		
agreed with the Proposal	5	25%
disagreed with the Proposal	14	70%
did not indicate an opinion or request further information	1	5%

Of the <b>5</b> who agreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:		
Financial reasons	4	80%
Peer interaction	3	60%
School capacity	2	40%

Of the <b>14</b> who disagreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:		
Community concerns	10	71%
Travelling distance/time	9	64%
Child Safety	8	57%
Quality of education	6	43%
Class sizes	5	36%

**7. Summary of oral representations made at the statutory public meeting held at Bressay Public Hall on Wednesday 30 October 2013**

- If you close a school on an island like Bressay, is there any scope that it can be opened again in the future? It is a bit too much to condemn all future children in Bressay to have to go to school elsewhere.
- Could we possibly look at retaining the building for a period of time, until we see what happens, rather than selling it off?
- If there is no nursery here, children will have to go to Lerwick. Do parents have to transport their children to nursery and back themselves?
- Have you looked into the transport?
- Some children live up to two miles from the hall, are they expected just to make their own way there?
- Perhaps the ferry service would have to consider putting on extra runs so that commuters can still take their cars over at the required time to get to their work.
- You are required to provide transport to children who live more than two miles away from school. Therefore you will have to pick up everybody to take them to Bell's Brae.
- My children will be travelling between 50 and 55 minutes each way with your proposal. That is quite a long travelling time for a small child.
- How equal is it when one child is travelling an hour and a half each day to get to and from school, when another child at the next desk might only have a ten-minute journey to school? One child has time to play, and we are told play is very important, the other child is sitting on a bus, maybe a ferry, maybe waiting for a ferry.
- The primary schools in Lerwick are very full and this school has excellent facilities and has given a good service. Would there be any way that some part of the children's education could take place here?
- Has any work been done, even in the past five years, to turn around the decline in the school roll?
- Is there any other area in Shetland where primary children are obliged to use a ferry or a boat service to get to school?
- Would there be any change under the many interesting proposals that have been discussed through the Blueprint and any succeeding proposals?
- Perhaps there is some kind of general message here to the Council that the community of Bressay has been neglected since 2007 when we did not get a fixed link?
- If the Bressay community is now just getting to the point where it feels it needs a development group to turn the community around, then they might want to try to hang on to the school. But once the school has gone, that's it.
- My children are getting a good education here at the moment.
- You say in the proposal that you want a school estate which is flexible and responsive. If you close Bressay Primary School then you won't have that.
- The Bressay Community Council is looking to set up a Development Group.
- Is there an implication for children from Bressay who are placing requests to Sound, that they will not actually have transport provided to Sound?
- Has any consideration been given to when the ferry stops due to bad weather and what will happen in that kind of situation?

## 8. Summary of oral representations made at the additional public meeting held at Bell's Brae Primary School on Thursday 31 October 2013

- What is the general mood in Bressay? Are there any parents adamantly against closure?
- A friend in Bressay sends her children to Bell's Brae Primary School and is very happy with the provision there; that friend lives at the "back" of Bressay.
- Bell's Brae Primary School could absorb the Bressay pupils without difficulty and those pupils could flourish in the school.
- Bressay families sending their children to Lerwick schools is not a new development, it happened in the past and those children have gone on to be successful.
- There is a difference between Bressay families choosing to send children to Lerwick schools, and that decision being forced upon them.
- The current ferry is not big enough to accommodate two minibuses on the same crossing.

## 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: Staffing**

#### **Points Made**

- Do not close Bressay Primary School as Bell's Brae Primary School is understaffed.

#### **Response**

As outlined in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) on Page 16-17 at 4.30, Bell's Brae Primary School is staffed as a primary with two classes at each stage. This gives it an operating capacity of 434 children. Currently the roll is 295. Therefore the school is well staffed for its roll. Bell's Brae Primary School also has an appropriate number of support staff posts in line with the school roll.

**Issue: School Capacity****Points Made**

- As Bressay Primary School is operating at 5.3% capacity, the school is not being used efficiently and the cost per pupil is significantly higher than in Lerwick.
- Bell's Brae Primary School has the capacity to take more children.
- It seems unfair to fund Bressay Primary School to meet the needs of only two families.

**Response**

As outlined in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) on Page 20 at 5.17, Bressay Primary School is operating at 5.3% capacity; Bell's Brae Primary School is operating at 68% capacity. The latest information on cost per pupil indicates that in this financial year, the estimated total cost per pupil at Bressay Primary School is £39,259; the total cost per pupil at Bell's Brae Primary School is £5,481. National figures for 2013/14 are not available. The latest published figures are for 2011/12 and show that the average cost per primary pupil in Shetland is £6,614 and in Scotland is £4,090.

**Issue: Transport/Child Safety****Points Made**

- There are adequate ferries to transport children to Lerwick primary schools.
- Providing transport to Bell's Brae Primary School would unite the children in a currently fragmented community divided between schools.
- Not all families on Bressay have friends and family in Lerwick who can act as emergency accommodation for children if they get stranded.
- Who would look after the children if the ferry stops and they get stuck out of Bressay?
- High winds sometimes mean the Bressay ferry needs to make a number of attempts to dock. This situation would not be fair for primary school pupils to be exposed to.
- Cautious parents may just keep their children at home if there are high winds and bad weather. They will miss out on their education.
- The bus will have to fit with the ferry timetable. This means that children will have to leave home 55 minutes before school starts and only return home 50 minutes after school finishes. This is excessive for a five or a six year old.
- Children as young as four and a half will have to set off at 8.00 am in the morning and not get home until nearly 4.00 pm.

- Young children will get frightened on the ferry in bad weather conditions.
- What happens if a child needs the toilet on the ferry?
- If a child falls ill or has an accident at school it may take the parents up to two hours to get to them. Parents will be unavailable for their children.
- The proposed travel time is too long meaning children would have less time with their families. There will be less time for children to play and do other activities at home.
- Time to play is important, as is time spent with family and friends.
- Journey times for all children will increase, and for some it will result in 45 minutes of travel time which is unacceptable.
- My child is best off educated in Bressay where if they are ill or an incident occurs, myself or a member of our family can take care of them.
- Travel time starts from when a child leaves home up to when the school starts, including waiting time.
- Travel time will be 50-55 minutes each way.
- A rise in ferry fares could make have a significant impact on the figures produced by Children's Services for transport.
- The transport costs for the bus service are based on considerably out-of-date figures.
- Transport for children currently at Bressay Primary School will not be available after Easter so should not be included in the savings figures.
- Term-time transport of primary children will require an additional run to be scheduled in the ferry service to Lerwick, between 7.30 am and 8.30 am, as these are also the prime time for commuters travelling to work, and there is no booking system on the Bressay ferry service.
- Transport arrangements need to be carefully considered to ensure children are safe.
- Don't believe it is possible to put arrangements in place for Bressay children to stop them ever getting stranded.
- A ferry making several attempts to dock in bad weather would be difficult for children to see.
- An escort will be required on the ferry and the bus at all times. Who will take a small child to the toilet on the ferry?
- Who is going to be responsible for the children if the ferry is delayed?

- If the ferry is delayed, children will end up having a very long day and be tired and unable to do their best educationally.
- It is wrong that children as young as five are educated on another island.
- Would it be possible for the children from Bressay who currently attend Sound Primary School to access the transport in the proposal, if there is capacity? This would maintain their interaction with children from Bressay and prevent them from being disadvantaged because of a decision taken before the proposal was put forward.
- Would it be possible for nursery children to access the school transport if there was space, and parents wished it?

## Response

If any parent is unable to supply an emergency address for their child, then in the unlikely event that the need should arise, provision can be made in the Janet Courtney Hall of Residence for that child to be looked after until he or she can be transported home, or stay overnight, if required.

Should the ferry service be suspended for any reason, then any children will initially be looked after by a member of school staff in situ, or as above, by staff at the Janet Courtney Hall of Residence, in those exceptional circumstances. Should the children be stranded in Bressay due to any unforeseen stoppage, then parents would be advised by the bus operator of an alternative pick up time. Similarly, should any child fall ill at school, he or she would be looked after by a member of school staff until they could be collected by their parent or carer.

However, thus far, no Bressay primary children currently attending schools in Lerwick have been stranded. Strong communication links exist between transport, the ferry crew and the Head Teachers at both Bell's Brae Primary School and Sound Primary School, so that if bad weather is expected, then the children are always sent home. This happens very rarely, and not once in the past twelve months. Further, Short Messaging Service, Twitter and email notification systems currently exist and all partners in this proposed arrangement would have access to these systems – in fact, a good number of Bressay residents have already registered for one or other service, which gives early notification of any proposed changes to the ferry crossings.

The Ferry Service does have two standby vessels, which at any one time, one is available for service should the need arise.

In the event of high winds, the ferry Master's primary responsibility is the safety of his passengers. There may be times when a different approach to the ferry terminal may be required, but the Master would assess any risk and only depart when confident of making a safe docking alongside. Parents can be assured that if the ferry is running then their children will be safely transported. With regards to the bus transport, all transport providers are contractually obliged to provide risk assessments around pick up points and the route(s) to be travelled. New risk assessments will be carried out for the required transport provision, should the decision be taken to close Bressay Primary School. The local authority will

separately carry out Road Safety Audits if necessary, or if requested.

Travel time commences from the time that the child is met by the school transport at the designated pick up point. That may, or may not be the child's home. Shetland Islands Council's policy on daily travel for primary aged children is that primary-aged children should not travel for longer than 40 minutes in a single journey.

Given that the journey from Bressay to Lerwick is a short one and assuming that children would be toileted before leaving home, there should be no requirement for them to use the toilet on the ferry. If any child has any additional needs in this regard then appropriate arrangements will, of course, be made.

With regard to the bus transport costs, the figures quoted are based upon current journeys in Bressay. All contracts have been subject to an indexation uplift based on the Retail Price Index (RPI) and local fuel prices, to keep those contract prices current. Given the distance(s) involved, there is no requirement for the Children's Services Department to continue to provide transport, so the current provision will cease at the end of the contract term – Summer 2014. However, the full costs of the necessary transport arrangements will be met by the Children's Services Department. Full details of the savings are in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A).

Further, we are aware that an internal review of ferry fares is due to begin in mid January 2014. The Children's Services Department will make any necessary additional budgetary provision, depending on the outcome of this review, although these charges are internal to the Shetland Islands Council in any event.

In respect of the request that children from Bressay who currently attend Sound Primary School have access to the transport put in place for those who will attend Bell's Brae Primary School, Children's Services Department will be happy to grant access to spare seats should there be capacity, on the understanding that those seats would have to be relinquished should the need arise. However, that transport will be to Bell's Brae Primary School only; any onward transportation to Sound Primary School would need to be the subject of a separate arrangement between the operator and the parents – the local authority has no locus in this regard. Neither does the local authority provide transport for children to attend nursery.

Merging the transport arrangements from Bressay for both primary and secondary pupils will be considered however, that may be more appropriately done once the new Anderson High School is open and the children are all travelling in the same direction, once the ferry has docked in Lerwick.

Concern has been raised about the capacity of the ferry to carry two taxis at peak times however, it has become clear that a number of the vehicles currently requiring passage at those times carry primary aged children to and from school in Lerwick. Were the school to close, it is to be expected that some of those parents would use the school transport which would be provided, thus reducing the overall number of vehicles. Flexibility does exist within the Ferry Service for priority to be given to those vehicles, and for them to be loaded five minutes before departure, should the Council determine that this should be the case.

The Children's Services Department is proposing that the following transport arrangements are put in place should the proposal to close Bressay Primary School be agreed:

- transport would be provided in two taxis;
- pick up point Number One would be Bressay Public Hall for one child, year round, and for one other who would be entitled to transport in the winter months only, under the terms of Shetland Islands Council's current policy;
- pick up point Number Two would be the Bressay Ferry Terminal for the remaining six children;
- pick up from Bressay Public Hall will be at 8.15am and then from Bressay Ferry Terminal at 8.20am. That would mean that the children would leave Bressay on the scheduled 8.30am crossing. Arrival at Lerwick is at 8.37am and arrival at Bell's Brae Primary School would be at 8.50am.

These timings are generous, meaning that for seven of the pupils the journey will be 30 minutes duration; for the one other, 35 minutes. This also allows for any slight delays to the loading or unloading of the ferry at either end of the crossing.

In response to other points raised regarding daily ferry travel for primary pupils, there is nowhere else in Shetland where primary pupils have to travel by ferry each day to access school education. We have had primary pupils in the past who have done so as a result of placing requests, and a number are of course currently doing this currently on a daily basis from Bressay.

Argyle and Bute do have primary pupils accessing their school education by ferry. There are three examples of this in their local authority. One pupil travels from Isle of Erraid to Bunessan Primary School. The Isle of Erraid is a retreat, and the pupil accesses school via a community owned boat, and then a public bus service. Six pupils travel daily from Easdale Island to Easdale Primary School and one pupil travels from Kerrera to Oban.

### **Issue: Peer Interaction/Class Sizes**

#### **Points Made**

- By moving Bressay Primary School children to Bell's Brae Primary School they would benefit from more social interaction.
- By moving Bressay Primary School children to Bell's Brae Primary School they would benefit from more group work and a wider range of teaching staff and styles.
- Larger schools provide access to a peer group.
- Children in Bressay Primary School are privileged to receive the level of individual teaching that is not available in a larger class.

#### **Response**

The Proposal Paper (Appendix A), on Page 19 at 5.11 identifies these issues relating to children having access to a larger peer group and access to a larger staff group as educational benefits of the Proposal, as follows:

Children's Services considers that there would be educational benefits to the pupils currently attending Bressay Primary School should they attend Bell's Brae Primary School. These are:

- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning, and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have access to a wide range of teaching staff with a range of experiences;
- that pupils from Bressay Primary School would attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement;

Schools in Shetland give the community a wide range of class sizes and composite arrangements, from Primary 5 classes of 30 children through to Primary 1 to Primary 7 multi-composites of thirteen children. There is no evidence to suggest that any of our children are benefiting, or indeed suffering, as a consequence of the social interaction they are able to be exposed to. We expect that head teachers will do their utmost to ensure children gain a wide range of social experiences. However we do not think it is outrageous to suggest that perhaps a Primary 2 child who is the only child at that stage in a school might enjoy playing with others of a similar age on a daily basis. This Proposal offers children that opportunity. We agree that children from Bressay Primary School take part in team events but if they attended Bells Brae Primary School the number of opportunities they would have both formally and informally to work and play together would be increased. Opportunities would exist simply because of the size of the school and would not require any extra effort to generate.

The Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, published in April 2013, also commented on the issue of peer interaction in small rural schools:

*"In small rural schools where pupil numbers are low, opportunities for children to work collaboratively with peers of a similar age, stage and gender can be limited. Education Scotland's evidence demonstrated that schools are sensitive to these issues and the overall quality of children and young people's experiences is not diminished by these factors."* (Page 26).

Again, Education Scotland, on Page 4 of their report on the educational aspects of this Proposal agree that there are educational benefits to be gained from access to a larger peer group, and from being part of a class of similar-aged children:

*"The first reasonable benefit which will result from the implementation of the proposal is that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning and for social interaction with others of similar ages. At present there are four children attending Bressay Primary School at stages from P1 to P7. This makes learning together an essential aspect of what is done in lessons and much of their education takes place in this group in a project-based approach. However, the opportunity for children to work with a range of others is extremely limited, even if the adults leading the lessons participate as members of the group. There would be many more opportunities, even within a single class, for children to work with a range of other learners if they attended Bell's Brae Primary School. Children who currently attend this school speak very enthusiastically about the range of opportunities they get to learn together in different groups and to become*

*involved in active learning opportunities. Similarly, children attending Bressay Primary School have extremely limited opportunity for social interaction with others of similar ages when they are at school. This would be significantly enhanced by attending a school such as Bell's Brae Primary School which has two classes at each stage and a current roll of 295 children. There are relatively few opportunities for the small number of children at Bressay Primary School to become involved with team games, despite the facilities which are available at the school, including an onsite all-weather court. By contrast, there are many opportunities to get involved in team sports at Bell's Brae Primary School, including successful netball, football and hockey teams. There are also opportunities for a variety of informal team games to be played at break times around the school."*

Children's Services appreciates that parents may value the level of teacher attention their children may receive in a very small class. There is a variety of research which argues for small or larger class sizes being most effective. What is most consistently evidenced is that good teaching is what maximises children's potential. We ensure through our annual audit of provision for children with additional support needs that the needs of all our pupils in all our schools are met such that they can achieve their full potential. It is also the responsibility of the Head Teacher in any school to ensure equality of opportunity for all children who attend their establishment no matter its size.

Additionally, Bressay Primary School is a single teacher school, and roll projections would indicate this is not going to change in foreseeable future. The current roll is four children taught in one multi-composite class. As the Head Teacher is seconded at present, the management of the school is being supported by an experienced member of staff from the central service and the class is being taught by a single class teacher with support from visiting specialists teachers of expressive arts each week.

If the school was able to be staffed with its correct staffing complement, the single multi-composite class would have a teaching Head Teacher, with 0.33 of management time, giving the children two teaching staff each week providing almost all of their curriculum.

The children who attend Bressay Primary School may then, only have these same one or two class teachers teaching them for the seven years of their primary education. Whilst staff undertake ongoing continuing professional development all of the time, ostensibly the children could experience the same teaching style throughout their primary education.

In contrast Bell's Brae Primary School has fourteen classes, two at each stage. This gives the children access to seven different class teachers, through their primary education, all with a wide variety of experience and different skills and strengths. As the children move through the primary then, they have the opportunity to experience a range of teaching styles and a range of skills to motivate them and stimulate their learning.

What is most significant here though, is the difference the respective school sizes create with respect to collegiate time for collaborative working and for opportunities for different teachers to work together on different school development priorities which improve the learning experiences for the children. Bressay Primary School has 1.33 full-time equivalent teachers to work on curriculum development. With

the allowance of five hours per week for collegiate time this gives, across a year, this gives 260 hours of time to work on school improvement each year. In contrast Bell's Brae Primary School, in its mainstream department, with 14.5 full-time equivalent class teachers and two Depute Head Teachers has 3217 hours to dedicate to school improvement. All schools have the same key priorities to secure improvement on, but with its larger size, Bell's Brae Primary School has the capacity, in any given year, to overtake more improvements to benefit the learning experience of the children. The larger staff group at Bell's Brae Primary School also allows staff to form working groups to take forward development priorities and the membership of these groups can vary from year to year, maximising teachers' interests, skills and enthusiasm. Bressay Primary School cannot facilitate this variety and all of the work fall to the same individuals, whether or not it marries with their specific skills and interests.

The variety of staff also lends itself to staff collaborating more closely and being imaginative with groupings of children for particular learning activities in the school. Children in Bressay Primary School have inherent limitations on how they can work in groups for learning activities as there are only four of them and they are each at a different stage.

Education Scotland in their report on the Proposal also recognise these points as educational benefits of the proposal as follows:

*"The second benefit which will result from the implementation of the proposal is that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have access to a wider range of teaching staff with a range of experiences. Bressay Primary School currently has access to a full-time teacher, a part-time acting headteacher, a part-time classroom assistant and visiting specialists in music, art and physical education. There is no instrumental tuition provided. There are no children in the nursery class and so staffing is not provided for this. Bell's Brae Primary School has a headteacher, three depute headteachers, 14.5 full-time equivalent teachers, 1.6 full-time equivalent auxiliaries and visiting specialists in music, art and physical education who are based in the school for at least three days per week. Children can also access music instruction in piano, cello, woodwind and fiddle from P5 onwards. Additionally, there is a nursery department and a specialist department for children with severe and complex additional support needs. There are, therefore, many more members of staff in Bell's Brae Primary School than in Bressay Primary School and they use their wider range of talents and experiences within their classes, and also to run clubs and after school activities such as the various sports teams. (Pages 4-5).*

*"The third benefit which will result from the implementation of the proposal is that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would then attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement. As outlined above, there is a single class teacher in Bressay Primary school, with occasional support from an acting headteacher and visiting specialists. This provides the teacher with limited opportunities to work collaboratively and collegiately, although links have been made with other provisions in Lerwick. In contrast there are many opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively and collegiately within Bell's Brae Primary School. Each teacher has at least one 'stage partner' with a class at the same level, with whom they can discuss their plans. They can also work with other teachers on interdisciplinary learning approaches and discuss how best to meet needs in the class with additional support needs staff." (Page 5).*

## **Issue: Community Concerns**

### **Points Made**

- The proposal discriminates against parents who live and work in Bressay and their children.
- Bressay Primary School plays a key role in the community and community events in the school are always well attended.
- Closing Bressay Primary School will lead to the demise of the community.
- Being educated in your own community is very important and gives children a sense of belonging and children learn to care about the community and the people in it.
- We want to use the drop in numbers of children at the school as a catalyst to re-generate the Bressay community and we need time to do this. Consulting on school closure will take this opportunity away.
- Bressay Primary School is very important to Bressay and allows new families to integrate and ensures strong bonds between the generations. Bressay Primary School and its Parent Council have played a huge role socially; it would be a huge loss to the community.
- Bressay Primary School has been central in welcoming newcomers to Bressay.
- Leaving Bressay with no primary school and no Nursery Class will discriminate against families coming to live on the island in the future.
- It would be beneficial if the school building could be retained to promote the future sustainability of the island.
- The proposal to close Bressay Primary School reflects the socio-economic decline of the island. Bressay requires stability through the establishment and maintenance of affordable ferry fares.
- A fixed link should be investigated.
- If Bressay Primary School closes it is likely to make Bressay unattractive to new families. This may have longer term consequences.
- Bressay Primary School is a focal point for the community. Members of the wider community are unlikely to attend school events in Lerwick.
- The Bressay Development Group should be allowed time to develop a strategy and begin implementing change before a decision on school closure is taken.

## Response

As set out in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) on Page 27 at 6.8, in 2007, Shetland's Community Planning Partnership commissioned Hall Aiken to research historic, and future population trends and factors affecting this in Shetland. Their full report is: 'Shetland's Population and Migration Study'.

Hall Aiken noted that historically the population of Shetland has fluctuated significantly from a high point of over 30,000 to its lowest level of 17,000; and that population change has always closely mirrored economic opportunities and the population increased by around a third between 1971 and 1981 due to the major oil-related developments at Sullom Voe.

The conclusions of this study were that in Shetland, based on the trends at the time there would continue to be:

- a steep drop in the numbers of children under 16;
- a decline in the numbers of 16 to 24 year olds after 2010;
- a rapid and continuing increase in the elderly population.

The study also examined factors which influence population change in Shetland. In summary their conclusions were:

- economic development;
- infrastructure (including access to high quality, affordable housing) and
- social issues.

Hall Aiken did not identify the presence of a school as a critical factor in the economic sustainability of a community. In fact, to address the issues Shetland faces in terms of population decline, the report recognises the over-reliance of Shetland on jobs in the public sector, and promotes the importance, for sustainability, of:

- promoting enterprise;
- developing innovation or competitiveness;
- generating revenue streams (for example, through renewables); or
- developing business infrastructure (for example, broadband or incubator units).

Taking on board the depth of previous community concerns about the impact a rural school closure might have in Shetland, Children's Services also commissioned a socio-economic study to be carried out on the Bressay Primary School catchment area. An independent socio-economic study provides a key perspective on the potential impact a rural school closure may have on the community. Therefore it supports a local authority in addressing Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, which requires a local authority to have special regard to three additional factors in considering the closure of a rural school. One of these special factors is the impact on the community.

Steve Westbrook, Economist, Nairn, in partnership with Sandy Anderson, was commissioned by the Director of Children's Services to undertake a socio-economic study on the potential impacts on the community of Bressay of the Proposal to close Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class, should it go forward. The full text of the study can be found as Appendix G.

The terms of reference for the study were to:

- *provide information on the economy of Bressay Primary School's catchment area (i.e. employment, business output, etc);*
- *identify the workforce requirements of businesses based in the Bressay Primary School catchment area;*
- *identify the direct and other impacts of closing Bressay Primary School;*
- *identify the potential impacts relating to families leaving Bressay as a result of the school's closure;*
- *investigate possible mitigating factors should the school close, such as the prospect for additional private and public sector employment.*

The main conclusions from the Report are that:

- *The net annual savings to Shetland Islands Council from closing Bressay Primary School are estimated by the Council at around £75,000;*
- *Bressay's population declined between 2001 and 2011 and indications are that it is declining further. This contrasts with a trend of population increase between 1971 and 2001;*
- *The number of retired people living in Bressay has increased, while the number of young children has fallen. There were 109 people (30% of the population) aged 60 or over in 2011;*
- *Bressay has few local services and facilities, with almost all service provision and leisure opportunities in Lerwick;*
- *Average house prices in Bressay are well below those for Lerwick and Shetland as a whole;*
- *People living in Bressay have access to the employment market throughout much of Shetland. 60% of residents in employment or self-employment work in Lerwick and 27.5% on Bressay;*
- *There are few employers on Bressay, and they recruit from the wider Shetland area. Much of the work carried out by local people on Bressay is through self employment;*
- *Bressay contributes some £4 million per annum to the Shetland economy;*

- *The average household income on Bressay was estimated at £35,247 in 2011. Within that average, the range across postcode areas varies widely from £22,300 to £55,500;*
- *Total household income in Bressay is estimated at some £6.13 million;*
- *There are currently 16 primary school age children living in Bressay, of whom 12 are attending primary schools outwith Bressay. None of the children eligible for nursery provision attend in Bressay;*
- *Classes at Bressay Primary School start at 9.30am, which makes it difficult for working parents. With no formal provision and no private childcare on Bressay, parents must depend on family or other networks for pre-school or after school care;*
- *The direct impact of closing the school would be the loss of 1 full time and 5 part time jobs. In partial compensation, additional work would be created in transporting pupils from Bressay to Lerwick, with the increase in school transport costs estimated at around £40,000. If the school transport contract were to be let in Bressay, the loss to the local economy would be offset by this additional income;*
- *Some parents are clearly concerned at the possibility of the school closing, and while we found no evidence that any would immediately leave the island, the lack of a primary school would make it less attractive for families moving to or within Shetland;*
- *Closing Bressay Primary School could reduce the number of potential in-migrants with families coming to live on the island. This would be likely to accelerate the trend towards an ageing population;*
- *The school has been a focus for social cohesion in the past, bringing the community together. Its loss will put pressure on other voluntary activity to fill that gap and this will need support;*
- *The newly formed Bressay Development Association will need support to address the challenges faced by the community;*
- *Employment could be generated on the island through decentralisation of Council staff and/or small business development. Improved broadband provision would facilitate this, and the school building (if primary education ceases) could be converted for office/workshop uses;*
- *Support for new business development or social enterprises could be provided by the Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and other organisations.*
- *Should a fixed link be provided in the future between Bressay and Shetland mainland, this would have major implications for Bressay's economic development, housing development, and (possibly) demographic structure.*

The socio-economic report highlights that a Development Group has already been set up on the island. It is fair to say that the impetus to commence this work has been partly triggered by the situation the school finds itself in.

Work to set up a Bressay Community Development Group is being supported by Shetland Islands Council Development Directorate, through its Community Planning and Development Service. On 4 November 2013, an Interim Steering Group meeting was held in Bressay. This meeting was open to the public and was attended by 23 people. On 11 November 2013, a facilitated Community Workshop provided an opportunity for members of the community to consider the key issues facing the community. This included discussions on what Bressay has to offer, what the community can do to make a difference and what changes or developments would make the biggest positive impact to ensure Bressay has a vibrant and sustainable future. Thirty-seven people attended this workshop, and of those twelve agreed to join the interim Steering Group, which will in due course constitute as the Bressay Development Association. On 10 December 2013, the Steering Group met to consider the outputs of the workshop, and a draft constitution. Meetings scheduled in January 2014 will see the formation of the Bressay Development Association, the election of a committee, and work commence on the preparation of a development /action plan.

Children's Services envisages that no matter what decision is taken on the future of the Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class, that the socio-economic study will also be very helpful to informing the priorities for the Development Association.

The new Community Plan for Shetland 2013-2020 has also just been agreed in August 2013. This describes how the public sector will work together with the private and third sector to improve the communities in Shetland. There are commitments in the Plan that are important to securing a sustainable future for all areas of Shetland, and these will be important for the community of Bressay to consider if Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class close. Outcome 1 is: *"Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities"*; and Outcome 11 is: *"We have a strong voluntary sector and social enterprises, encouraging community enterprise and co-operatives, with increased capacity to deliver services based on needs and aspirations of local communities."* Within these there are clear objectives: to increase sustainable economic growth; increase the number of business start ups; secure population growth; increase the role of community enterprise; improve the sustainability of community groups; and involve communities in deciding what is needed to improve their area.

The Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, published in April 2013, makes the following statement about this aspect of rural schools: *"It is important to recognise that a school's primary function is to provide pupils with the best possible educational experience."* (Page 30).

**Issue: After- School Activities****Points Made**

- As children grow they would be able to go across to Lerwick and participate in other activities.
- Children from Bressay will have to travel home immediately after school and will therefore not be able to participate in any after-school clubs at Bell's Brae.
- Children will arrive home in Bressay so late that the local after-school club will not be viable.

**Response**

We have a number of schools where after-school activities are offered in the school or at an adjacent leisure centre. The relatively high numbers of children in Shetland who have to access school transport to get to school means that many children are unable to access after-school activities except through the support of their parents or with parents working together to share transport.

Taking account of this, our school staff do also offer clubs during lunch-times for the very reason that this enables children who have to get school transport access to extra-curricular activities.

Bell's Brae Primary School also offers a club at playtime for children who need extra help.

**Issue: Placing Requests****Points Made**

- Most of the parents of Bressay are choosing to send their children to school in Lerwick, so it makes sense to provide the majority with what they want.

**Response**

As outlined in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) on Page 15 at 4.23 there have been nineteen placing requests out of Bressay Primary School in the last five years. The current possible roll for Bressay Primary School in 2013/14 is sixteen, and there are only four children attending at present.

## **Issue: Quality of Education**

### **Points Made**

- Children in Bressay Primary School are being encouraged to learn across age stage and gender which is a better preparation for the real world.
- Learning in small groups is beneficial to children's education.
- The current teaching in Bressay Primary School is providing very personalised excellent education ensuring children are not disadvantaged with small numbers.
- Children's Services' claims that Curriculum for Excellence cannot best be delivered in a small school. Ollaberry Primary School, a small primary school, has just received an excellent report with practice that Education Scotland wish shared with others.
- Children's Services' staff have suggested home schooling may be more appropriate in my family's circumstances than education in Lerwick. This suggestion is contrary to their claim that children need a large group of peers to learn effectively.
- The Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education states that there is no issue with Curriculum for Excellence being delivered in small primary schools.
- Many small primary schools receive better Education Scotland results than large primary schools in Lerwick.
- Children do not receive a poorer education in a small school.
- Bressay Primary School has provided excellent education over the years.
- Bressay Primary School provided a wide range of educational opportunities to me, including instilling in me great values.
- Educational links to the Bressay community would be lost if children from the island are educated in Lerwick.
- The small roll in Bressay Primary School provides for more teacher attention for the children. They get extra help if they need it.
- Separating children from the island into different classes separates local parents who otherwise would be working towards common goals.

## Response

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

- To learn independently and as part of a group;
- To relate to others and manage themselves;
- To communicate in different ways and in different settings;
- To work in partnership and in teams.

It is elements of these aspects of the requirements of the curriculum which, within a primary school where there are only a few children and perhaps only one at a particular stage, can be more challenging. We know that all our staff do their utmost to fulfil absolutely all the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence. However given the limitations on the numbers available in the school, it is more challenging to secure these outcomes in the absolute best way possible. In 2014/15, Bressay Primary School is predicted to have three children: one in Primary 2, one in Primary 3 and one in Primary 6.

We know excellent high quality education is delivered in our small schools; and although Curriculum for Excellence is able to be delivered to an equally high standard in a small school, the delivery of some aspects can be more challenging.

Within Curriculum for Excellence, Experiences and Outcomes, the approaches outlined in Building the Curriculum 3 are then broken down further. There are a number of references to effective teaching approaches across, all, or a number of the curricular areas, which demonstrate that a learning environment of a one-teacher school with only a very few pupils learning at different levels is not best placed to provide on a regular ongoing basis. There is an emphasis on active and collaborative learning and sharing ideas with others.

For example:

*Features of effective learning and teaching in health and wellbeing:*

- *Uses a variety of approaches including active, co-operative and peer learning and the effective use of technology.*

*Broad features of assessment in literacy:*

- *Using individual talks, presentations and group discussions;*
- *Increasing awareness of others in sustaining interactions, the clarity of their ideas and expressions, and their skills in listening to others and taking turns.*

*Listening and talking for learning:*

- *Engage with others in group and class discussions;*
- *Learn collaboratively – for example when problem solving;*
- *Explain their thinking to others.*

*Effective learning and teaching in numeracy:*

- *Active learning, and planned and purposeful play;*
- *Both collaborative and independent learning.*

*Effective learning and teaching in mathematics:*

- *At all stages, an emphasis on collaborative learning will encourage children to reason logically and creatively through discussion of mathematical ideas*

*and concepts;*

- *Opportunities for discussion, communication and explanation of thinking.*

*Modern languages:*

- *I can read on my own and with others, a variety of simple texts in the language.*

*Literacy and English:*

- *I am learning to take turns and am developing my awareness of when to talk and when to listen.*

In addition, within the actual experiences and outcomes there are numerous outcomes which relate to being with, learning and working with others. Again, some examples are set out below.

*Health and Wellbeing:*

- *I value the opportunities I am given to make friends and be part of a group in a range of situations.*

*Mathematics:*

- *I can share ideas;*
- *I can explain my ideas to others;*
- *I have worked with others to (explore a variety of mathematical concepts).*

*Expressive Arts:*

- *Inspired by a range of stimuli, and working on my own and/or with others. I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through musical activities;*
- *I can give and accept constructive criticism on my own and others' work.*

*Literacy and English*

Within a number of the experiences and outcomes for talking and listening, the statements start with:

- *When I engage with others... I can...*

These are a selection of examples. Providing these experiences, and creating the climate, for these learning opportunities happen more easily, and naturally, in a larger school with a larger number of children in a class and at a particular stage of learning.

Education Scotland's Report on the educational aspects of the Proposal also support this argument. On Page 4 of their Report it states that:

*"The first reasonable benefit which will result from the implementation of the proposal is that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning and for social interaction with others of similar ages. At present there are four children attending Bressay Primary School at stages from P1 to P7. This makes learning together an essential aspect of what is done in lessons and much of their education takes place in this group in a project-based approach. However, the opportunity for children to work with a range of others is extremely limited, even if the adults leading the lessons participate as members of the group. There would be many more opportunities, even within a single class, for children to work with a range of other learners if they attended Bell's Brae Primary School.*

*Children who currently attend this school speak very enthusiastically about the range of opportunities they get to learn together in different groups and to become involved in active learning opportunities. Similarly, children attending Bressay Primary School have extremely limited opportunity for social interaction with others of similar ages when they are at school. This would be significantly enhanced by attending a school such as Bell's Brae Primary School which has two classes at each stage and a current roll of 295 children. There are relatively few opportunities for the small number of children at Bressay Primary School to become involved with team games, despite the facilities which are available at the school, including an onsite all-weather court. By contrast, there are many opportunities to get involved in team sports at Bell's Brae Primary School, including successful netball, football and hockey teams. There are also opportunities for a variety of informal team games to be played at break times around the school." (Page 4).*

### **Issue: Democratic (or decision making process)**

#### **Points Made**

- The school should be mothballed not closed, as families may wish their children to be educated in an island environment in the future. Parameters need to be agreed as to what criteria would be used to re-open the school, based on numbers at similar small rural primary schools.
- I have been put under pressure to move my children this summer. I don't think this is acceptable.
- Parents were given less than a week to decide on statutory consultation or to mothball the school, with no guarantee as to its future.
- I hope for everyone, that Scottish education stops changing. I wish you luck and good wishes.
- I sympathise with parents just now as education is changing as it is difficult to see what to do for the best education for their children.
- Poor decisions in the past for Bressay have contributed to the position it now finds itself in e.g. the decision not to have a fixed link.
- The Council's current policy of guaranteeing primary education on islands should apply to Bressay.
- If Bressay Primary School closes, it will never re-open.
- No positive attempt has been made by the Council to reverse the trend in the school roll, so it is wrong to say that this trend is irreversible.

## Response

Mothballing a school is not governed by legislation and therefore there is no legal process to follow.

However, the Scottish Government's guidance on the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 states the following:

*"Authorities sometimes "mothball" a school whose roll has either naturally fallen to zero or has done so as a result of placing requests made in respect of alternative schools. Authorities may take the view that mothballing the school is appropriate if there is a possibility of the school roll increasing again in the future, warranting the school's reopening. Mothballing, as temporary rather than permanent discontinuance, does not require consultation in terms of the Act. If the authority, at a later date, decided to permanently close a mothballed school, such as to preclude its reopening if local demand for school places should rise again, the provisions of this Act would require to be complied with, before such a decision could be taken."*

Bressay Primary School roll has not fallen to zero. Therefore, to mothball the school at this time would preclude some children from attending who still wished to do so. Children's Services considers that this could be open to challenge that we have, in effect, discontinued their education and have therefore closed the school, but without following the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

It would also be very difficult to come to any kind of agreement about the terms on which the school would re-open. Such an agreement would not be legally binding and if there was to be a specified period or required numbers of children - what about the parents who would want to access the school within that period or before the numbers reached the specified level? The school has effectively been closed to them.

If a school is closed permanently following implementation of a decision under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a new school could be established in the future. A proposal to establish a school also requires statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

In September 2012, Shetland Islands Council, as part of the Refresh of the Blueprint agreed a set of Commitments for Education. One of these related to the provision of primary school education on islands in Shetland:

*"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/schools which are viable both educationally and financially."*

There is no commitment to provision of education on any other islands in Shetland, apart from the remote isles, and Bressay is not considered to be a remote isle.

Some parents of pupils who attend Bressay Primary School have asked Children's Services about how the roll could be increased through placing requests into Bressay Primary School. As Bressay Primary School is now a one-teacher primary school, in accordance with our Admissions Policy, Children's Services would not allow the roll to go up through placing requests such that another teacher would be employed, therefore there is limited scope here to increase the roll. In addition, any placing requests into the school would be required to make

their own travel arrangements to the school, which would include paying ferry fares each day.

In addition, the information provided by parents of pupils who have requested places in other schools indicates that for a large majority it is their wish for their child(ren) to be educated in a larger school with access to a peer group.

If there is a decision to close Bressay Primary School and Nursery class, the future of the school building will be determined in accordance with Shetland Islands Council policy. This means that Children's Services would declare the property to be surplus. It would then be transferred to become the responsibility of the Asset and Properties Unit. They would then arrange re-use or disposal of the property as per a decision taken through Executive Committee as to the future of the building.

Children's Services does appreciate that some parents believe that there was a short timescale in deciding to move to statutory consultation on the future of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class. It became clear during the Summer term of 2013 that there were to be no children in the Nursery Class and that there were further placing requests from parents of primary aged children to attend schools outwith Bressay, bringing the school roll to a very critical level.

While Bressay Primary School is outwith the Blueprint for Education workstream, the same Principles for Education in Shetland apply to Bressay Primary School as apply to all our other schools. We were concerned that we were no longer able to provide the children who attend Bressay Primary School with an education which was in keeping with the agreed Principles for Education in Shetland. Therefore Children's Service began discussions with parents.

#### **Issue: Employment**

##### **Points Made**

- Job opportunities provided by Bressay Primary School will be lost.

##### **Response**

As outlined in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) on Page 24 at 5.30 and 5.31, staff employed at the school would each be consulted properly on their future utilising relevant Shetland Island Council policies.

Any staff transfers, and alternative arrangements for staff resulting from the closure of Bressay Primary School, will be conducted according to the appropriate Shetland Islands Council policies and agreements. Shetland Islands Council has recently approved new policies on:

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

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.

Children's Services appreciates there may be the loss of some jobs on the island, but it would always be our aim to find suitable alternative employment for any staff member who wished that, thus ensuring, where we can, that individuals remain in employment.

#### **Issue: Financial**

##### **Points Made**

- What efforts have the council made to reduce costs in Bressay Primary School?

##### **Response**

Within the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) on Page 26 at 6.3 and 6.4, Children's Services describes the work that has been done across all schools to make savings in the last four years. The list is as follows:

- 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 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. The service delivery in Bressay Primary School has been affected, like all other schools, by these changes. It is difficult for the Schools/Quality Improvement Service to consider where further changes can be made in all schools without detrimentally affecting the quality of education it offers to all children.

**Issue: Nursery****Points Made**

- The proposal means that pre-school children in Bressay will have to access nursery education in Lerwick. For a couple of hours provision parents will not be able to get back home to Bressay before they have to return and collect their child. Parents can't then work during this time, and the ferry costs will be prohibitive. The result will be that children will miss out on nursery education.
- Providing no nursery education discriminates against families who don't work in Lerwick during the day.

**Response**

Education authorities are required to provide a free pre-school education place to all eligible three and four year olds. There are no catchment areas for pre-school education and therefore no requirement to provide transport. We do not have nursery education in all our schools, and although we do not have pre-school aged children travelling by ferry in other areas of Shetland, we do have long distances of road travel for some parents to access pre-school education. Examples would be from the Sandness area to Happyhansel Nursery Class, and from the Cullivoe area to Mid Yell Junior High School Nursery Class.

Children's Services notes that no families of pre-school children in Bressay are currently making use of the Nursery class at the school, so there is evidence to suggest that families can manage to access pre-school education outside of the island. In addition, from August 2014, the entitlement to pre-school education rises from 475 hours per school year to 600 hours. Plans for how this will change how pre-school provision is configured in Shetland are not yet finalised, but it is likely to mean that a daily session of pre-school education is offered in a longer block than the current 2.5 hours, making it more viable for parents to access.

## 10. Summary of Consultation with Children

### 10.1

#### Meeting with Bressay Primary School Pupils

##### Points Made

- I don't want Bressay Primary school to close.
- I don't think that it is a good idea and I don't want the school to close.
- I don't want to go to Bells Brae Primary School.
- What if the children are ill and the ferry takes a long time?
- What would happen if the taxi got a flat tyre, would we have to push it?
- This is the best school, so how can you close it?
- I feel sad.
- I feel angry.
- I feel cross.
- I want to shout at the Council.
- I am not happy.

##### Response

Children's Services knows how important Bressay Primary School is to its children, and knows it will be a big change for everyone to leave. Children's Services will do its best to work with staff, children and parents to make this change, should it happen, as easy as possible. We will listen to children's concerns along the way, and make sure they are taken account of. If the school does close we will set up a Group to support you to make the change to Bell's Brae Primary School and you can tell them all the things you are worried about and what you think would help you. You can have visits before making the change, and you will be able to take things with you from the school that are important to you.

#### Meeting with Bell's Brae Primary School Pupils

##### Points Made

- It will be dangerous for the children travelling everyday on the ferry. What would happen when the weather is bad.
- The children would benefit from being in larger groups for learning.
- It will be expensive for all that travel.
- The crossing is seldom too rough for the ferry to cross.
- It would be better to transfer to Anderson High School as part of a larger Bell's Brae Primary School group.
- At Bells Brae Primary School the children may be exposed to more illnesses.
- At Bell's Brae Primary School there will be more opportunities for outdoor activities so that the children will be healthier.
- The ferry is reliable.
- When the ferry has broken down in the past it is fixed very quickly.
- Eleven children in the group thought is a good idea for the Bressay Primary School children to transfer to Bell's Brae Primary School. One didn't.
- What would happen if the children got sea-sick?

## **Response**

Many people who have responded to the consultation on proposing to close Bressay Primary School are concerned about travel arrangements for the children who live on Bressay because they will have to get the ferry every day. We know this and we will make very careful arrangements for the children to make sure if there is bad weather coming, that they can get home.

The costs for transport the children are in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) and although there is a cost there for this travel, taking this into account, Children's Services is still able to make £74,693 of savings from this Proposal which will help ensure we do not have to make further cuts across all schools in the future.

We agree with the children at Bell's Brae Primary School that there will be better learning opportunities for children from Bressay in Bell's Brae Primary School if they are able to be part of bigger groups. We say this in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) as a benefit.

## **11. Summary of Consultation with Staff**

### **11.1**

#### **Meeting with Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class Staff**

##### **Points Made**

A meeting was held for current Bressay Primary School staff. Those who attended did not wish to have any comments recorded. Instead they indicated that should they wish to comment, they would make an individual written response. Children's Services entirely respected their views and thus no feedback was recorded from the meeting.

#### **Meeting with Bell's Brae Primary School Staff**

##### **Points Made**

- Get on and close it.
- Children won't have opportunity to mix or integrate in Bressay Primary School due to the small numbers there.
- We can evidence educational and social benefits for children through learning in larger groups.
- There are social benefits to be gained.
- Will transport be available for children who were previously enrolled in Bell's Brae Primary School as placing requests?
- Ferry fares are an issue for some current parents.
- Transition for a single P7 pupil to Anderson High School may be difficult.
- There are after school clubs available in Bell's Brae Primary School for children to access.
- Teaching a multi-composite class is very difficult.

## Response

If the catchment area for Bell's Brae Primary School is altered to include the current catchment area for Bressay Primary School, then all the children who would have attended Bressay Primary School, if they are attending Bell's Brae Primary School, will be eligible for school transport.

The other points made by the staff at Bell's Brae Primary School concur with the key educational benefits we outline in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) on Page 19 at 5.11:

Children's Services considers that there would be educational benefits to the pupils currently attending Bressay Primary School should they attend Bell's Brae Primary School. These are:

- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning, and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have access to a wide range of teaching staff with a range of experiences;
- that pupils from Bressay Primary School would attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement;
- that, as a result of this Proposal the Council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area.

These educational benefits are also reiterated by Education Scotland in their report on the proposal as follows:

*"The first reasonable benefit which will result from the implementation of the proposal is that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning and for social interaction with others of similar ages. At present there are four children attending Bressay Primary School at stages from P1 to P7. This makes learning together an essential aspect of what is done in lessons and much of their education takes place in this group in a project-based approach. However, the opportunity for children to work with a range of others is extremely limited, even if the adults leading the lessons participate as members of the group. There would be many more opportunities, even within a single class, for children to work with a range of other learners if they attended Bell's Brae Primary School. Children who currently attend this school speak very enthusiastically about the range of opportunities they get to learn together in different groups and to become involved in active learning opportunities. Similarly, children attending Bressay Primary School have extremely limited opportunity for social interaction with others of similar ages when they are at school. This would be significantly enhanced by attending a school such as Bell's Brae Primary School which has two classes at each stage and a current roll of 295 children. There are relatively few opportunities for the small number of children at Bressay Primary School to become involved with team games, despite the facilities which are available at the school, including an onsite all-weather court. By contrast, there are many opportunities to get involved in team sports at Bell's Brae Primary School, including successful netball, football and hockey teams. There are also opportunities for a variety of informal team games to be played at break times around the school."* (Page 4).

## 12. Children's Services Response to 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 close Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class. This Report is attached as Appendix B.

In summary, the Report by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal acknowledges that:

- *"Almost all stakeholders agree that the children who currently attend Bressay Primary School would benefit educationally from the implementation of this proposal." (Page 6)*

Their Report describes three educational benefits for the children who attend Bressay Primary School which Education Scotland believes will accrue from the implementation of this Proposal. In summary these are:

- that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
- that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have access to a wider range of teaching staff with a range of experiences;
- that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would then attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement.

In addition Education Scotland identifies benefits to Shetland Islands Council which would arise from the implementation of the proposal for the Council. This is that:

- the Council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area. Whether the current Bressay Primary School was to be mothballed or sold, there are significant resources within the building which could be redistributed across the remaining educational estate. This includes its library stock, basic classroom resources and 19 computers, each of which uses a current operating system.

All the benefits identified by Education Scotland concur with those identified by Children's Services in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A). A summary can be found on Page 19 at 5.11 as follows:

- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning, and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have access to a wide range of teaching staff with a range of experiences;
- that pupils from Bressay Primary School would attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement;
- that, as a result of this Proposal the Council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area.

- 12.2 The Report by Education Scotland does raise some additional points not covered in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A). In line with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 Children's Services must provide a response to these points. These relevant points from Education Scotland's Report, and Children's Services response to them, is set out below.

<p><b>Relevant Point</b></p> <p><i>The children who currently attend Bressay Primary School realise that there are a number of significant changes for them in the proposal. They will have to travel further to school and this will involve the use of a bus and ferry in each direction to get them from the island of Bressay to Bell's Brae Primary School in Lerwick. They will no longer be taught in the same group, and their classes will be significantly larger. Most of their concerns relate to the making of new friends at Bell's Brae Primary School and the daily travel arrangements. They realise that certain things, such as waiting for school lunches, will take longer than at present because of the greater number of children in the school. They hope that they will have at least as good an opportunity to go on school trips as they enjoy these. (Page 2).</i></p>
<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>If there is a decision to close Bressay Primary School, it will be the responsibility of the Transition Group which is set up to ensure that the views of the children who move from Bressay Primary School are listened to, and to ensure that their particular concerns are addressed properly. The Transition Group can continue to meet for as long as is required to monitor issues like daily travelling experiences of the children, their pastoral needs in Bell's Brae Primary School and even how lunchtimes work out for them.</p>
<p><b>Relevant Point</b></p> <p><i>Foremost of the concerns from the parents of children who currently attend Bressay Primary School, is the issue of greater travel time, with the concern being expressed that the proposal could add on an extra 1½ hours to a child's school day. (Page 2).</i></p>
<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Children's Services is proposing that the following transport arrangements are put in place should the proposal to close Bressay Primary School be agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transport would be provided in two taxis;</li> <li>• pick up point Number One would be Bressay Public Hall for one child, year round, and for one other who would be entitled to transport in the winter months only, under the terms of Shetland Islands Council's current policy;</li> <li>• pick up point Number Two would be the Bressay Ferry Terminal for the remaining six children;</li> <li>• pick up from Bressay Public Hall will be at 8.15am and then from Bressay Ferry Terminal at 8.20am. That would mean that the children would leave Bressay on the scheduled 8.30am crossing. Arrival at Lerwick is at 8.37am and arrival at Bell's Brae Primary School would be at 8.50am.</li> </ul>

<p>These timings are generous, meaning that for seven of the pupils the journey will be 30 minutes duration; for the one other, 35 minutes. This also allows for any slight delays to the loading or unloading of the ferry at either end of the crossing.</p>
<p><b>Relevant Point</b></p> <p><i>Parents of the children who currently attend Bressay Primary School are also worried that the early morning ferry is already very busy and wonder what will happen if the school transport does not get on to the scheduled ferry to deliver children in good time. (Page 2).</i></p>
<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Concern has been raised about the capacity of the ferry to carry two taxis at peak times, however, it has become clear that a number of the vehicles currently requiring passage at those times carry primary aged children to and from school in Lerwick. Were the school to close, it is to be expected that some of those parents would use the school transport which would be provided, thus reducing the overall number of vehicles. Flexibility does exist within the Ferry Service for priority to be given to those vehicles, and for them to be loaded five minutes before departure, should the Council determine that this should be the case.</p>
<p><b>Relevant Point</b></p> <p><i>Further related concerns from the parents of children who currently attend Bressay Primary School include procedures when a child is unwell and needs to come home. (Page 2-3).</i></p>
<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Head Teacher of Bell's Brae Primary School is clear that children from Bressay would be treated the same as all the other children in the school. All parents/carers are busy and often children have to wait, to be collected if they are feeling unwell. If children have to wait staff at the school ensure that they are comfortable and well cared for until someone can come for them. Sometimes this is the parent/carers, other times it is someone else they know.</p> <p>The Head Teacher was also clear that this has never been an issue with any of the children that attend Bell's Brae Primary School from areas outwith Lerwick.</p> <p>If a child requires medical attention one of the school staff accompanies them down to the hospital until the parent/carer can come.</p> <p>All our schools are well equipped to dealing with this kind of issue and ensuring that the children are cared for until they can be collected from school.</p>
<p><b>Relevant Point</b></p> <p><i>Parents of children who currently attend Bressay Primary School feel that, subject to the proposal being given approval, the Bressay Primary School building should be 'mothballed', rather than sold, as there may be future uses for it. Some of the respondents to the consultation who are resident on Bressay are also keen that this option should be kept open. (Page 3).</i></p>

## Response

Mothballing a school is not governed by legislation and therefore there is no legal process to follow.

However, the Scottish Government's guidance on the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 states the following:

*"Authorities sometimes "mothball" a school whose roll has either naturally fallen to zero or has done so as a result of placing requests made in respect of alternative schools. Authorities may take the view that mothballing the school is appropriate if there is a possibility of the school roll increasing again in the future, warranting the school's reopening. Mothballing, as temporary rather than permanent discontinuance, does not require consultation in terms of the Act. If the authority, at a later date, decided to permanently close a mothballed school, such as to preclude its reopening if local demand for school places should rise again, the provisions of this Act would require to be complied with, before such a decision could be taken."*

The Bressay Primary School roll has not fallen to zero. Therefore, to mothball the school at this time would preclude some children from attending who still wished to do so. Children's Services considers that this could be open to challenge that we have, in effect, discontinued their education and have therefore closed the school, but without following the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

It would also be very difficult to come to any kind of agreement about the terms on which the school would re-open. Such an agreement would not be legally binding and if there was to be a specified period or required numbers of children - what about the parents who would want to access the school within that period or before the numbers reached the specified level? The school has effectively been closed to them.

If a school is closed permanently following the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 a new school could be established in the future. A proposal to establish a school also requires statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

## Relevant Point

*Parents of children who are pupils at Bell's Brae Primary School have no doubt that children from Bressay would benefit from coming to school in Lerwick. Some of them have daily experience of dealing with travel issues from Bressay to Bell's Brae Primary School and do not find that this is problematic, noting that the Bressay ferry will do 'double runs' rather than leave anyone stranded until the next timetabled ferry. Those who made placing requests from Bressay to Bell's Brae Primary School knew very quickly that they had made the correct decision and saw their children happier, growing in confidence and developing their social skills. They have seen friendships grow between Bressay and Lerwick children, including invitations to each other's birthday parties. They also feel that transport arrangements from Bressay could be merged with the provision already being made for secondary pupils, who could act as 'buddies' for younger children on the buses. (Page 3).*

## Response

Merging the transport arrangements from Bressay for both primary and secondary pupils will be considered, however, that may be more appropriately done once the new Anderson High School is open and the children are all travelling in the same direction, once the ferry has docked in Lerwick.

### 13. Integrated Impact Assessment

13.1 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.

13.2 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.

13.3 In the Integrated Impact Assessment for the proposed closure of Bressay Primary School the intended outcome of school closure will have:

- six Positive impacts;
- six Negative impacts;
- fifty groups/areas experiencing no impacts. These are recorded in the document as “Neutral – n/a”;
- two 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.

13.4 The Positive impacts can be summarised as follows.

The intended outcome has educational benefits of access to larger numbers of children who they can develop active learning opportunities with, work and play in teams, and can socialise with.

None of the operating costs required to run a school will be required if the school closes. Failure of Shetland Islands Council to reduce budgets will cause reputational damage. Closure will make an ongoing saving in Shetland Islands Council revenue budgets.

Capital spend would be required in future years to maintain the school.

13.5 The Negative impacts can be summarised as follows.

In previous consultations concerning small primary schools, consultees have felt there would be a negative effect on the community. Currently there are events held in the school which community members attend. There are sixteen children who could attend Bressay Primary School; only four actually attend. If Bressay Primary School is closed, Bressay children will not be in their communities for as long as they are now. They will not be able to walk or cycle to school. If Bressay Primary School closes, Bressay people who have fought to keep it open will feel their views have been ignored. Closure of the school would result in the loss of some part-time public sector jobs in the area.

13.6 The mitigation for Reducing Negative Impacts can be summarised as follows.

There will be similar opportunities at the receiving school and as a number of the local children already attend Bell's Brae Primary School. 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. Bressay children will have a short journey time home, and can still access community facilities like the playpark and shop every day.

Curriculum for Excellence requires all schools to provide primary children with two hours of physical activity each week; at Bell's Brae Primary School, children from Bressay would have increased access to sports centres, swimming pools and other alternative leisure activities.

Shetland Island Council's relevant policies for redundancy, redeployment, transfer and retirement will be used to support affected staff into positive futures.

## 14. Socio-Economic Study

14.1 In response to previous concerns expressed during statutory consultation periods about the potential socio-economic impacts closure proposals may have on rural communities in Shetland, Children's Services commissioned a socio-economic impact study to be carried out on the Bressay Primary School catchment area. An independent socio-economic study provides a key perspective on the potential impact a rural school closure may have on the community. Therefore it supports a local authority in addressing Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, which requires a local authority to have special regard to three additional factors in considering the closure of a rural school. One of these special factors is the impact on the community.

14.2 Steve Westbrook, Economist, Nairn, in partnership with Sandy Anderson, was commissioned by the Director of Children's Services to undertake a socio-economic study on the potential impacts on the catchment area for Bressay Primary School of the Proposal to close the school, should it go forward. The full text of the study can be found as Appendix G.

## **15. Health Impact Assessment**

- 15.1 Children's Services commissioned a Health Impact Assessment to be undertaken on the potential impacts of the proposal to close Bressay Primary School. The Health Impact Assessment was conducted by NHS Shetland in November 2013.
- 15.2 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.
- 15.3 The Health Impact Assessment was conducted using the following information sources: review of Community Development data; survey of local community; and general interest-based literature research in line with concerns raised. A Health Impact Assessment Tool was used and the findings and recommendations presented.
- 15.4 The main health impacts identified which will be further considered and mitigated where possible are as follows:
- In relation to the school children: safety concerns linked to transport, reduction in the physical activity levels and social interaction;
  - In relation to the local community: potential reduction in local household incomes, consideration of use of school building.
- 15.5 The full Health Impact Assessment can be found at Appendix E. The points raised in the Assessment are addressed in the Consultation Report in the sections which respond to the Transport Concerns, Peer Interaction / Class Sizes and Community Concerns.

## **16. Omissions or Inaccuracies**

- 16.1 One inaccuracy in the Proposal Paper was identified by Children's Services during the statutory consultation period. In accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, the details and the actions of Shetland Islands Council to deal with the inaccuracy are set out here.
- 16.2 In the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) on Page 17 at 4.30 (p17), the third bullet in the second bulleted list read "0.8 full-time equivalent music teacher". This has been corrected to "0.8 full-time equivalent PE teacher". The electronically available Proposal Paper was amended and a statement was made online and at each of the two public meetings.

## **17. Educational Benefits Summary**

17.1 Children's Services considers that there would be clear educational benefits to the pupils currently attending Bressay Primary School should they attend Bell's Brae Primary School. These are described in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) on Pages 19-20, and are summarised here:

- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning, and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have access to a wide range of teaching staff with a range of experiences;
- that pupils from Bressay Primary School would attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement;
- that, as a result of this Proposal the Council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area.

17.2 Education Scotland, in their Report on the educational aspects of the Proposal, also agree that there are educational benefits to be gained from this Proposal. The educational benefits identified by Education Scotland are exactly the same as those identified by Children's Services. They are summarised here:

- that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
- that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have access to a wider range of teaching staff with a range of experiences;
- that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would then attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement;
- the Council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area. Whether the current Bressay Primary School was to be mothballed or sold, there are significant resources within the building which could be redistributed across the remaining educational estate. This includes its library stock, basic classroom resources and 19 computers, each of which uses a current operating system.

## **18. Compliance with Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010: Consideration of the Three Factors of Special Regard**

18.1 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.

18.2 Bressay Primary School is designated as a rural school. In terms of Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Shetland Islands Council has given regard to the three required factors as follows:

<p><b>Factor</b></p> <p>Any viable alternative to closure.</p>
<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>Education Scotland in their report on the educational aspects of the proposal makes the following comment on this aspect of the proposal:</p> <p><i>“The council has fully investigated the viability of alternatives to the closure of the school, including the retention of Bressay Primary School. However, the roll has fallen dramatically over the past few years and shows no sign of increasing. Most parents on Bressay with children of primary school age opt to put in a placing request to either Bell’s Brae Primary School or Sound Primary School in Lerwick. There have been 19 placing requests from parents of children who could attend Bressay Primary School in the last five years, including six in the current session. These have mostly been due to the wish to have their children educated in a larger school with a peer group. There have been no placing requests into Bressay Primary School in this period. Other options such as shared management with another school have been explored but these are no more efficient than the current model. Additionally, Bell’s Brae Primary School has the capacity to include the remaining Bressay Primary School children next session without needing to increase its staffing as a result.” (Page 5).</i></p> <p>Consideration of possible viable alternatives to the closure of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class are discussed in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) on Pages 25-27. In summary these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether retaining the Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class is a tenable option;</li> <li>• shared management with another primary school;</li> <li>• increasing the roll at Bressay Primary School;</li> <li>• mothballing the school;</li> <li>• other ways of reducing costs within Bressay Primary School.</li> </ul> <p><b>Retaining Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class</b></p> <p>Maintaining primary education in Bressay Primary School does not offer best value in the use of public money. There are surplus primary places across Bressay Primary School and Bell’s Brae Primary School which therefore means inefficiency in the use of revenue funds of Shetland Islands Council.</p> <p>There are currently 509 primary places available across Bressay Primary School and Bell’s Brae Primary School. As of September 2013 the combined total primary roll of the two schools is 299 pupils. By placing all the primary pupils from the two schools into Bell’s Brae Primary School, the school would still only be 69% occupied, but would be operating more efficiently than at present.</p> <p>As it stands at present, Bressay Primary School is only 5.3% occupied.</p> <p>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</p>

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).

Olnafirth Primary School will also now close on 4 July 2014.

In addition, Children's Services has also implemented the following alternatives to school closures, to secure a sustainable school education service:

- 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.

### **Shared Management**

Children's Services has also in the past considered shared management for small primaries when it has proved difficult to recruit to a teaching Head Teacher post. This has been possible when an opportunity arises through a vacancy and through agreement with Parent Councils. However, the shared management model Children's Services operates does not save money, as by local agreement, each school in a shared management arrangement is allocated a principal teacher, and the principal teacher is allocated management time, which must be covered. Bressay Primary School has been involved in a shared management arrangement previously with Foula Primary School. The logistics of travel in this arrangement to enable the Head Teacher to support both schools meant that this became untenable.

### **Increasing the School Roll of Bressay Primary School**

Some parents of pupils who attend Bressay Primary School have asked Children's Services about how the roll could be increased through placing requests into

Bressay Primary School. As Bressay Primary School is now a one-teacher primary school, in accordance with our Admissions Policy, Children's Services would not allow the roll to go up through placing requests such that another teacher would be employed, therefore there is limited scope here to increase the roll. In addition, any placing requests into the school would be required make their own travel arrangements to the school, which would include paying ferry fares each day.

### **Mothballing**

Mothballing Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class was also discussed with parents and at a public meeting held in Bressay on 29 July 2013. However, Scottish Government guidance on mothballing assumes that a local authority opts for this when the roll of a school drops naturally to zero.

The Bressay Primary School roll has not fallen to zero. Therefore, to mothball the school at this time would preclude some children from attending who still wished to do so. Children's Services considers that this could be open to challenge that we have, in effect, discontinued their education and have therefore closed the school, but without following the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

It would also be very difficult to come to any kind of agreement about the terms on which the school would re-open. Such an agreement would not be legally binding and if there was to be a specified period or required numbers of children - what about the parents who would want to access the school within that period or before the numbers reached the specified level? The school has effectively been closed to them.

If a school is closed permanently following the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 a new school could be established in the future. A proposal to establish a school also requires statutory consultation under the 2010 Act.

### **Other Ways of Reducing Costs Within Bressay Primary School**

During discussions with parents there was a view that there could be a number of further savings made by Bressay Primary School which would support its viability. These included: packed lunches or the children going home for lunch; limiting the use of the building by closing off unused spaces; links with another school for PE lessons; video links to another class in another school to cover periods of required teacher non-contact time, with only a classroom assistant supporting the pupils or bringing in parent helpers. These suggestions would further limit the educational opportunities available for the pupils of Bressay Primary School, and would not provide any additional educational benefits.

During the statutory consultation period two respondents suggested that a viable alternative to closing Bressay Primary School would be to further develop links with another similar small rural primary school in Shetland to share resources and to provide opportunities for social interaction. This could be done but this does not improve the inefficiencies in staffing and building costs of keeping the school open. Opportunities for the children from such a link would undoubtedly be positive, but would not change the daily educational experiences of the children sufficiently to improve their opportunities to achieve aspects of learning which are integral to Curriculum for Excellence. Examples would be working collaboratively, active learning, co-operative learning activities, group work and team games.

**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**

Education Scotland in their report on the educational aspects of the proposal makes the following comment on this aspect of the proposal:

*"The council has looked at the likely effect on the local community with regard to sustainability, and on the community's access to the buildings, grounds and facilities if Bressay Primary School were to close. The school buildings are not currently used by the local community as there is a well-used community hall nearby and also a local football pitch, so there are no community groups which would be inconvenienced by the proposed school closure. There is, however, a number of local people currently employed in the school on part-time placements and they would be offered redeployment and transfer opportunities elsewhere by the council. The council is willing to explore options for the school building subsequent to closure, including use as a base for remote working, letting to businesses or selling it." (Page 6).*

Taking on board the depth of previous community concerns about the impact a rural school closure might have in Shetland, Children's Services also commissioned a socio-economic study to be carried out on the Bressay Primary School catchment area. An independent socio-economic study provides a key perspective on the potential impact a rural school closure may have on the community. Therefore it supports a local authority in addressing Section 12 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, which requires a local authority to have special regard to three additional factors in considering the closure of a rural school. One of these special factors is the impact on the community.

Steve Westbrook, Economist, Nairn, in partnership with Sandy Anderson, was commissioned by the Director of Children's Services to undertake a socio-economic study on the potential impacts on the community of Bressay of the Proposal to close Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class, should it go forward. The full text of the study can be found as Appendix G.

The terms of reference for the study were to:

- *provide information on the economy of Bressay Primary School's catchment area (i.e. employment, business output, etc);*
- *identify the workforce requirements of businesses based in the Bressay Primary School catchment area;*
- *identify the direct and other impacts of closing Bressay Primary School;*
- *identify the potential impacts relating to families leaving Bressay as a result of the school's closure;*

- *investigate possible mitigating factors should the school close, such as the prospect for additional private and public sector employment.*

The main conclusions from the report are that:

- *The net annual savings to Shetland Islands Council from closing Bressay Primary School are estimated by the Council at around £75,000;*
- *Bressay's population declined between 2001 and 2011, and indications are that it is declining further. This contrasts with a trend of population increase between 1971 and 2001;*
- *The number of retired people living in Bressay has increased, while the number of young children has fallen. There were 109 people (30% of the population) aged 60 or over in 2011;*
- *Bressay has few local services and facilities, with almost all service provision and leisure opportunities in Lerwick;*
- *Average house prices in Bressay are well below those for Lerwick and Shetland as a whole;*
- *People living in Bressay have access to the employment market throughout much of Shetland. 60% of residents in employment or self employment work in Lerwick and 27.5% on Bressay;*
- *There are few employers on Bressay, and they recruit from the wider Shetland area. Much of the work carried out by local people on Bressay is through self employment;*
- *Bressay contributes some £4 million per annum to the Shetland economy;*
- *The average household income on Bressay was estimated at £35,247 in 2011. Within that average, the range across postcode areas varies widely from £22,300 to £55,500;*
- *Total household income in Bressay is estimated at some £6.13 million;*
- *There are currently 16 primary school age children living in Bressay, of whom 12 are attending primary schools outwith Bressay. None of the children eligible for nursery provision attend in Bressay;*
- *Classes at Bressay Primary School start at 9.30am, which makes it difficult for working parents. With no formal provision and no private childcare on Bressay, parents must depend on family or other networks for pre-school or after school care;*
- *The direct impact of closing the school would be the loss of 1 full time and 5 part time jobs. In partial compensation, additional work would be created in transporting pupils from Bressay to Lerwick, with the increase in school transport costs estimated at around £40,000. If the school transport contract were to be let in Bressay, the loss to the local economy would be offset by this additional income;*

- *Some parents are clearly concerned at the possibility of the school closing, and while we found no evidence that any would immediately leave the island, the lack of a primary school would make it less attractive for families moving to or within Shetland;*
- *Closing Bressay Primary School could reduce the number of potential immigrants with families coming to live on the island. This would be likely to accelerate the trend towards an ageing population;*
- *The school has been a focus for social cohesion in the past, bringing the community together. Its loss will put pressure on other voluntary activity to fill that gap and this will need support;*
- *The newly formed Bressay Development Association will need support to address the challenges faced by the community;*
- *Employment could be generated on the island through decentralisation of Council staff and/or small business development. Improved broadband provision would facilitate this, and the school building (if primary education ceases) could be converted for office/workshop uses;*
- *Support for new business development or social enterprises could be provided by the Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and other organisations.*
- *Should a fixed link be provided in the future between Bressay and Shetland mainland, this would have major implications for Bressay's economic development, housing development, and (possibly) demographic structure.*

The report also considers what action that might be taken to mitigate the closure of the school, eg. to generate additional public and private sector employment. In addition, mitigating action could help to restore a sense of community. The report identifies the following possible actions:

- *Bressay's proximity to Lerwick has meant that most services and facilities required by residents are not located on the island and to access them residents must travel across the Bressay Sound on the ferry. This has also applied to work and leisure opportunities, and moving all education provision would be a further step towards dependence on Lerwick, reducing the identity of Bressay as a separate community. Friends made through work, education and leisure activities are from the wider area, including Lerwick, and people's lives become less focussed on their local community.*
- *For Bressay residents, there is the added factor of the ferry journey to Lerwick, both in terms of its convenience and cost. While the ferry is an inconvenience, it is also a relatively short journey and less of an obstacle than bus journeys to other rural parts of Shetland. One result of this has been that the attractions of Bressay for working families have reduced and vacant properties are increasingly liable to be taken by retired people, often with no ties to the island but happy to live in a rural location separated from, but close to, the amenities of Lerwick. Another result is that the need for Bressay to be a self sufficient community reduces.*

- *Bressay Development Association has recently been formed with the aim of regenerating the island. It is at an early stage and is working on its constitution and objectives. It will explore how the community can work together to improve services and make Bressay a more attractive place to live. Support for the Association's formal establishment and for subsequent local development initiatives will be important.*
- *The diminishing roll at the school has reduced the part it plays in bringing residents together and ensuring a sense of community on Bressay. Preserving this sense of community will require voluntary groups to provide a focus for community activity. Despite the success of the Sports Club, there is evidence that involvement in voluntary activity is decreasing – for example both the Under 5s Group and the Senior Citizens Club have ceased operating recently. Support for key groups in the community to continue or develop events that bring the different parts of Bressay and its generations together would help to compensate for this reduced provision.*
- *The school building is currently used to complement the community hall which is relatively inflexible. If it became vacant, the building could become a base for a new business or community venture. Given the size of the building it could potentially be used for both. Broadband capacity is limited, however. It is provided through an optical link, and is thus subject to interference from ships in Lerwick Harbour. Improvements in broadband capacity and reliability could be important in new business development. A small island way of life with ready access to Lerwick could be attractive to people wishing to start a business based on internet connectivity who might move to Bressay.*
- *A community asset transfer, with the Council agreeing to use its powers under the Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010 to transfer the property to a suitable community group, could provide a stimulus for the Development Association to promote local community development. The community would, however, need to have a clear plan for use of the building before this would be possible.*
- *One of the potential alternative uses of the school building suggested in the Council's Proposal Paper is as a base for remote working by SIC staff. Certainly this would be attractive if the Council adopted a policy of decentralising staffing to outlying communities, which could involve people working 2-3 days per week from Bressay rather than incurring the ferry crossing to Lerwick every day.*
- *Support for new business development or social enterprises could be provided by the Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and organisations such as HISEZ (Highlands and Islands Social Enterprise Zone).*

The socio-economic report also highlights that a Development Group has already been set up on the island. It is fair to say that the impetus to commence this work has been partly triggered by the situation the school finds itself in.

Work to set up a Bressay Community Development Group is being supported by Shetland Islands Council Development Directorate, through its Community Planning and Development Service. On 4 November 2013, an Interim Steering Group meeting was held in Bressay. This meeting was open to the public and was attended by 23 people. On 11 November 2013, a facilitated Community Workshop provided an opportunity for members of the community to consider the key issues facing the community. This included discussions on what Bressay has to offer, what the community can do to make a difference and what changes or developments would make the biggest positive impact to ensure Bressay has a vibrant and sustainable future. Thirty-seven people attended this workshop, and of those twelve agreed to join the interim Steering Group, which will in due course constitute as the Bressay Development Association. On 10 December 2013, the Steering Group met to consider the outputs of the workshop, and a draft constitution. Meetings scheduled in January 2014 will see the formation of the Bressay Development Association, the election of a committee, and work commence on the preparation of a development /action plan.

Children's Services envisages that no matter what decision is taken on the future of the Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class, that the socio-economic study will also be very helpful to informing the priorities for the Development Association.

The new Community Plan for Shetland 2013-2020 has also just been agreed in August 2013. This describes how the public sector will work together with the private and third sector to improve the communities in Shetland. There are commitments in the Plan that are important to securing a sustainable future for all areas of Shetland, and these will be important for the community of Bressay to consider if Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class close. Outcome 1 is: *"Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities"*; and Outcome 11 is: *"We have a strong voluntary sector and social enterprises, encouraging community enterprise and co-operatives, with increased capacity to deliver services based on needs and aspirations of local communities."* Within these there are clear objectives: to increase sustainable economic growth; increase the number of business start ups; secure population growth; increase the role of community enterprise; improve the sustainability of community groups; and involve communities in deciding what is needed to improve their area.

The Report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education, published in April 2013, makes the following statement about this aspect of rural schools: *"It is important to recognise that a school's primary function is to provide pupils with the best possible educational experience."* (Page 30).

**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**

The consequence of the Proposal to close Bressay Primary School on travel arrangements to get to school for children who live on Bressay is that children will require to make the short seven minute ferry journey across to Lerwick to access education at Bell's Brae Primary School. Concerns about these proposed arrangements from respondents relate to:

- arrangements for children in adverse weather;
- ensuring children are able to access the right ferry run and do not have to wait at the terminal;
- the travel time children will experience.

If any parent is unable to supply an emergency address for their child, then in the unlikely event that the need should arise, provision can be made in the Janet Courtney Hall of Residence for that child to be looked after until he or she can be transported home, or stay overnight, if required.

Should the ferry service be suspended for any reason, then any children will initially be looked after by a member of school staff in situ, or as above, by staff at the Janet Courtney Hall of Residence, in those exceptional circumstances. Should the children be stranded in Bressay due to any unforeseen stoppage, then parents would be advised by the bus operator of an alternative pick up time. Similarly, should any child fall ill at school, he or she would be looked after by a member of school staff until they could be collected by their parent or carer.

However, thus far, no Bressay primary children who currently attend school in Lerwick have been stranded. Strong communication links exist between transport, the ferry crew and the Head Teachers at both Bell's Brae Primary School and Sound Primary School, so that if bad weather is expected, then the children are always sent home. This happens very rarely, and not once in the past twelve months. Further, Short Messaging Service, Twitter and email notification systems currently exist and all partners in this proposed arrangement would have access to these systems – in fact, a good number of Bressay residents have already registered for one or other service, which gives early notification of any proposed changes to the ferry crossings.

The Ferry Service does have two standby vessels, which at any one time, one is available for service should the need arise.

In the event of high winds, the ferry Master's primary responsibility is the safety of

his passengers. There may be times when a different approach to the ferry terminal may be required, but the Master would assess any risk and only depart when confident of making a safe docking alongside. Parents can be assured that if the ferry is running then their children will be safely transported. With regards to the bus transport, all transport providers are contractually obliged to provide risk assessments around pick up points and the route(s) to be travelled. New risk assessments will be carried out for the required transport provision, should the decision be taken to close Bressay Primary School. The local authority will separately carry out Road Safety Audits if necessary, or if requested.

Travel time commences from the time that the child is met by the school transport at the designated pick up point. That may, or may not be the child's home. Shetland Islands Council Policy on daily travel for primary aged children is that primary-aged children should not travel for longer than 40 minutes in a single journey.

Concern has been raised about the capacity of the ferry to carry two taxis at peak times however, it has become clear that a number of the vehicles currently requiring passage at those times carry primary aged children to and from school in Lerwick. Were the school to close, it is to be expected that some of those parents would use the school transport which would be provided, thus reducing the overall number of vehicles. Flexibility does exist within the Ferry Service for priority to be given to those vehicles, and for them to be loaded five minutes before departure, should the Council determine that this should be the case.

The Children's Services Department is proposing that the following transport arrangements are put in place should the proposal to close Bressay Primary School be agreed:

- transport would be provided in two taxis;
- pick up point Number One would be Bressay Public Hall for one child, year round, and for one other who would be entitled to transport in the winter months only, under the terms of Shetland Islands Council's current policy;
- pick up point Number Two would be the Bressay Ferry Terminal for the remaining six children;
- pick up from Bressay Public Hall will be at 8.15am and then from Bressay Ferry Terminal at 8.20am. That would mean that the children would leave Bressay on the scheduled 8.30am crossing. Arrival at Lerwick is at 8.37am and arrival at Bell's Brae Primary School would be at 8.50am.

These timings are generous, meaning that for seven of the pupils the journey will be 30 minutes duration; for the one other, 35 minutes. This also allows for any slight delays to the loading or unloading of the ferry at either end of the crossing.

## **19. Review of the Proposal**

- 19.1 Following the period of statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class, Children's Services has reviewed the Proposal as follows.

Firstly, it has given due consideration to the oral representations made at the two public meetings, and to all the written representations received. These have been summarised and responded to in this Consultation Report.

Secondly, it has considered the points raised by children at both Bressay Primary School and Bell's Brae Primary School, and the comments made by the staff at Bell's Brae Primary School. These have been responded to in this Consultation Report and provide important feedback for the Transition Group to take on board, should there be a decision taken to close Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class.

Thirdly, Children's Services has carried out an Integrated Impact Assessment of the Proposal, NHS Shetland has carried out a Health Impact Assessment and an independent socio-economic study has been commissioned and received. All of this information helps Children's Services comply with its statutory obligation in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, but also provides significant detailed information which Children's Services and all other stakeholders must take account of if this Proposal is implemented.

Lastly, Children's Services has considered the content of the report by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the Proposal. We are heartened and reassured that Education Scotland, our national external scrutiny body also identify clear educational benefits in the Proposal, and that these concur in their entirety with those identified by Children's Services.

## **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 5 March 2014. The Scottish Ministers will have until 26 March 2014 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](mailto: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 etc:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/Buildings/changestoschoolestate](http://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 The Proposal to discontinue primary and nursery education at Bressay Primary School is not part of the primary closure proposals agreed in the Plan for Delivering Education in Shetland 2012-2017. This proposal to discontinue all education provision at Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class is being progressed due to:
- the considerable decline in the school roll;
  - the lack of uptake of the pre-school provision available at the school and;
  - as a result of discussions which have been ongoing with parents in Bressay and with the Bressay community during the Summer of 2013.
- 21.2 A report on the future of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class was presented at Education and Families Committee on 11 September 2013 and Shetland Islands Council on 11 September 2013. The recommendation was that Children's Services proceed to statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Bressay Primary School and Bressay Primary School Nursery Class. This was approved by both meetings.
- 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 Education Scotland also visited Bressay Primary School to speak to parents, children and staff. They had the opportunity to view the Proposal Paper and all written responses.

In summary, the report by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the proposal acknowledges that:

- *"Almost all stakeholders agree that the children who currently attend*

*Bressay Primary School would benefit educationally from the implementation of this proposal.” (Page 6).*

21.7 Their Report describes three educational benefits for the children who attend Bressay Primary School which Education Scotland believe will accrue from the implementation of this Proposal. In summary these are:

- that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
- that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have access to a wider range of teaching staff with a range of experiences;
- that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would then attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement.

21.8 In addition Education Scotland identifies benefits to Shetland Islands Council which would arise from the implementation of the proposal for the Council. This is that:

- the Council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area. Whether the current Bressay Primary School was to be mothballed or sold, there are significant resources within the building which could be redistributed across the remaining educational estate. This includes its library stock, basic classroom resources and 19 computers, each of which uses a current operating system.

21.9 All the benefits identified by Education Scotland concur with those identified by Children’s Services in the Proposal Paper (Appendix A). The educational benefits of the Proposal identified by Children’s Services are summarised on Page 19 of the Proposal Paper (Appendix A) as follows:

- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning, and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have access to a wide range of teaching staff with a range of experiences;
- that pupils from Bressay Primary School would attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement;
- that, as a result of this Proposal the Council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area.

21.10 We know excellent high-quality education is delivered in our small schools in Shetland, and although Curriculum for Excellence is entirely able to be delivered to an equally high standard in a small school, for some aspects of it, delivery can be more challenging.

21.11 Bressay Primary School and Bell’s Brae Primary School are only 2.5 miles apart, including the short seven-minute ferry crossing. The transfer of pupils from Bressay Primary School would not result in unacceptable travel time for pupils, however this does mean a different type of journey for these pupils.

- 21.12 Only four of the sixteen children who could attend Bressay Primary School currently do go there, and of the twelve placing requests there are out of the school, seven of these are to Bell's Brae Primary School. There are four children in Bressay who are currently eligible for pre-school education. Of these, none attend Bressay Primary School Nursery Class.
- 21.13 There is considerable spare capacity in Bressay Primary School and the children could be accommodated in Bell's Brae Primary School without the need for any additional staffing.
- 21.14 Of the twenty written responses received during the consultation, 70% disagreed with the proposal, 25% agreed with the proposal and 5% did not express an opinion.
- 21.15 This proposal, if implemented, has the potential to provide recurring savings to Shetland Islands Council of £74,693. This Proposal makes an ongoing contribution to Children's Services meeting its target budget agreed in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **22. Recommendation**

Therefore as a result of:

- the significant decline in the roll at Bressay Primary School;
- the lack of any uptake of pre-school education at Bressay Primary School Nursery Class;
- the impact the now tiny school roll is having on the educational experience for the children at Bressay Primary School;
- the educational benefits which will accrue from the Proposal to close Bressay Primary School and move the children to Bell's Brae Primary School, which have been identified by Children's Services and endorsed by Education Scotland.

Children's Services therefore recommends that:

- 22.1 Education provision at Bressay Primary School be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- 22.2 The pupils of Bressay Primary School continue their education at Bell's Brae Primary School from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- 22.3 The catchment area for Bell's Brae Primary School be altered to include the current catchment area for Bressay Primary School;
- 22.4 Pre-school education provision at Bressay Primary School Nursery Class be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- 22.5 Pre-school education provision for eligible children in Bressay continue in accordance with the Shetland Islands Council Admissions Policy.





**Shetland Islands Council  
Children's Services**

**Appendix A – Proposal Paper**





Shetland Islands Council

Children's Services

Proposal Paper

September 2013

**The following schools are affected by this Proposal:**

- **Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class**
- **Bell's Brae Primary 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 Children's Services in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (the Act).
- 1.2 The Act sets out a consultation procedure which a Local Authority must follow for certain proposals affecting schools in their area. The current Proposal is to discontinue a school and nursery class 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 Bressay Primary School be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
2. The pupils of Bressay Primary School continue their education at Bell's Brae Primary School from 18 August 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
3. The catchment area for Bell's Brae Primary School be altered to include the current catchment area for Bressay Primary School;
4. Pre-school education provision at Bressay Primary School Nursery Class be discontinued with effect from 04 July 2014, or as soon as possible thereafter;
5. Pre-school education provision for eligible children in Bressay continue in accordance with the Shetland Islands Council Admissions Policy.

### **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 Bressay Primary School, Bressay, Shetland, ZE2 9EL, Bell's Brae Primary School, Gilbertson Road, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0QJ, at the Shetland Library, Lower Hillhead, Lerwick and published on the Shetland Islands Council website: [www.shetland.gov.uk](http://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: [bressayconsultation@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:bressayconsultation@shetland.gov.uk)

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

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

## **Advertisement in Local Media**

- 2.5 An advertisement will be placed in the relevant local media on Friday 27 September 2013 giving the dates for the Consultation Period and public meetings.

## **Consultation Period**

- 2.6 The Consultation for this Proposal will run from Monday 30 September 2013 and will end on Tuesday 26 November 2013. This period allows for the statutory minimum of 30 school days.

## **Public Meetings**

- 2.7 Public meetings will be held on:

Wednesday 30 October 2013  
at  
Bressay Public Hall  
Bressay  
ZE2 9ER  
7.00pm to 9.00pm

and

Thursday 31 October 2013  
at  
Bell's Brae Primary School  
Gilbertson Road  
Lerwick  
ZE1 0QJ  
7.00pm to 9.00pm

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

## **Meetings with Pupils and Staff**

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

## RESPONDING TO THE PROPOSAL

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

Children's Services  
Bressay Primary School Consultation  
Hayfield House  
Hayfield Lane  
LERWICK  
ZE1 0QD

or

email: [bressayconsultation@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:bressayconsultation@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](http://www.shetland.gov.uk) for the convenience of those wishing to respond. Its use is not compulsory.

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

Those sending in a response, whether by letter or electronically, should know that their response will be open to public scrutiny and may have to be supplied to anyone making a reasonable request to see it. If they do not wish their response to be made publicly available, they should clearly write on the document: “I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Councillors and council officers of Shetland Islands Council.” Otherwise, it will be assumed that the person making the response agrees to it being made publicly available.

All written responses must be received by the last day of the consultation period, Tuesday 26 November 2013.

## INVOLVEMENT OF EDUCATION SCOTLAND (previously HMle)

- 2.11 When the Proposal Paper is published, a copy will also be sent to Education Scotland by Shetland Islands Council. Education Scotland will also receive a copy of written representations received by Shetland Islands Council from any person during the consultation period or, if Education Scotland agree, a summary of them. Education Scotland will be invited to the public meetings. Education Scotland will further receive a summary of any oral representation made to Shetland Islands Council at the public meetings that will be held and a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the Proposal not later than three weeks after Shetland Islands Council has sent them all representations and documents mentioned above or within such longer period as is agreed between them. Children's Services has agreed with Education Scotland that the three-week period will commence on Wednesday 27 November 2013.

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

## **FIRST REVIEW PERIOD**

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

## **CONSULTATION REPORT**

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

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

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

## **SECOND REVIEW PERIOD**

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

## **SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL DECISION**

- 2.15 The Consultation Report, together with any other relevant documentation, will then be considered by Education and Families Committee, who will make a recommendation. This recommendation is then subject to Shetland Islands Council approval.

## **SCOTTISH MINISTERS CALL IN**

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

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

## **NOTE ON CORRECTIONS**

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

## **3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Proposal to discontinue primary and nursery education at Bressay Primary School is not part of the Blueprint for Education in Shetland. However specific decisions have been taken by Shetland Islands Council in relation to the Blueprint for Education which have a direct bearing on this Proposal.

- 3.1 Children's Services reported to Councillors on 20 September 2012 and Shetland Islands Council 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.

- 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

The Plan contained a number of closure proposals, however consideration of the future of Bressay Primary School was not part of this Plan. This proposal to discontinue all education provision at Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class is being progressed due to:

- the continuing decline in the school roll;
- no uptake of the pre-school provision available at the school;

and as a result of discussions which have been ongoing with parents in Bressay and with the Bressay community during the summer of 2013.

A report on the future of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class was presented at Education and Families Committee on 11 September 2013 and Shetland Islands Council on 11 September 2013. The recommendation was that Children's Services proceed to statutory consultation on the proposed closure of Bressay Primary School and Bressay Primary School Nursery Class. This was approved by both meetings.

## 4. PRESENT POSITION

4.1 The Shetland Partnership Community Plan 2013 – 2020 has as its aim: “to make Shetland the best place to live and work by creating communities that are: Wealthier and Fairer; Learning and Supportive; Healthy and Caring; Safe; Vibrant and Sustainable.” The Community Plan also incorporates the priorities from the single Outcome Agreement 2012-2015.

4.2 The key priorities in the Plan are to ensure:

- Shetland is the best place for children and young people to grow up in;
- We live longer, healthier lives;
- People are supported to be active and independent throughout adulthood and in older age;
- Shetland stays a safe place to live, and we have strong, resilient and supportive communities;
- Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities and our people have the skills to match, good places to stay and the transport people and businesses need;
- We have tackled inequalities by ensuring the needs of the most vulnerable and hard to reach groups are identified and met, and that services are targeted at those most in need;
- We deliver all our services in an environmentally sustainable manner to safeguard and enhance our outstanding environment which underpins all our actions and our economic and social well-being;
- We have financial sustainability and balance within each partner; and a better balance between a dynamic private sector, a strong third sector and efficient and responsive public services.

4.3 Children’s Services is strongly committed to the Community Plan, and in particular, to the priorities which relate to ensuring that Shetland is the best place for children to grow up in.

The Community Plan also makes it clear that people and communities should be genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them.

4.4 Shetland Islands Council priorities were approved within the Medium Term Financial Plan on 28 August 2013 by Shetland Islands Council. The core themes set out as Council priorities were:

- Being a properly led and well managed council, dealing with the challenges of the present and the future, and doing that within our means;
- Providing critical services for children and adults and the transport services we all need;
- Mindful of how change could affect the vulnerable and disadvantaged;
- Helping build a healthy economy and strong communities;
- Working with all our partners to achieve the best results possible.

This Proposal supports these priorities, in particular the first two.

4.5 An updated Council Corporate Plan 2013-17 was also approved by Shetland Islands Council on 12 June 2013. It links back through to the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2012-15, and sets out the Council's priorities for the rest of this Council's term. The priorities in the Corporate Plan which are relevant to this proposal are:

- We must cost-effectively provide the essential services that people in Shetland really need. We will have to change how we do some things to make services more efficient and to make sure we can continue them in the long term, but we will do that with people, not to them;
- We are determined that our organisation will be run to the very highest standards. We will take difficult decisions when we have to and we will balance the books.

Within the action plan section of the Corporate Plan the parts set out below relate directly to the delivery of this proposal.

- We will ensure the best possible start for every child;
- All children and young people deserve the best chances in life;
- We are determined that our young people will have the best chance to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

The actions which then relate to this outcome are to:

- Carry out projects for change to achieve our targets within the Medium Term Financial Plan;
- Have enough appropriate school buildings to provide Curriculum for Excellence across Shetland to prepare young people for further education, employment or training.

In addition to these, the Corporate Plan also makes commitments to support communities in Shetland under challenging circumstances which will be important during the statutory consultation process required to consider the future of a school:

- We will listen to communities so we understand their needs, and we will talk and listen to them when we are making decisions;
- We must make sure we take the right actions now to protect the long-term well-being of Shetland;
- We will make spending decisions that realistically reflect the money we have.

4.6 Up until recently, Shetland Islands Council has been in a position to use reserves to support the school estate within this community in terms of the numbers of schools and the levels of staffing within them. As a result Shetland provides high quality education to all its pupils as evidenced in almost all reports by Education Scotland. However, due to the spare capacity and the high levels of staffing, this comes at a significantly higher cost per pupil than the Scottish average. The national figures on cost per pupil are no longer published; the latest published figures are for 2011/12 and show that the average cost per primary pupil in Shetland is £6,614 and in Scotland is £4,090.

- 4.7 Overall, across Shetland currently the primary school estate is only 48% occupied. There are 3763 pupil places available in primary schools in Shetland and in September 2013, only 1790 of those pupil places were occupied.
- 4.8 In 2009 the Scottish Government also articulated its vision for the future school estate in Scotland, in 'Building Better Schools: Investing in Scotland's Future'. Local Authorities are required to take account of these aspirations in planning changes to their school estate, namely:
- all children and young people will be educated in, and community users will use, schools that are 'fit for purpose' in terms of condition, suitability and sufficiency;
  - schools are well-designed, accessible, inclusive learning environments that inspire and drive new thinking and change and which support the delivery of high quality educational experiences through Curriculum for Excellence;
  - schools are integral parts of the communities they serve, with pupils making use of community facilities and communities accessing school facilities;
  - schools accommodate and provide a range of services, activities and facilities that make a difference to people's health and well-being, to sustaining economic growth and to the strength and vibrancy of communities;
  - a sustainable school estate whose design, construction and operation is environmentally and energy efficient; contributes directly to delivering the year-on-year reductions in greenhouse gas emissions introduced by The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, which is resilient to the impact of climate change and which leads by example in matters of environmental performance;
  - a school estate that is efficiently run and that maximises value for money;
  - a school estate which is flexible and responsive - both to changes in demand for school places and to learners' and teachers' requirements and wishes, and where the beneficial impact of change is maximised by thorough consultation and engagement with users and stakeholders.
- 4.9 Shetland Islands Council must take account of all of these aspirations in making changes to the school estate.
- 4.10 Education Scotland, an executive agency of the Scottish Government, continues to provide external evaluations of the quality of education in Scottish schools, through their regular cycle of school inspections. The last school inspection report for Bressay Primary School and nursery class was published on 8 January 2008. The key strengths identified were:
- Children's progress within the high quality nursery provision;
  - The quality of pastoral care and well behaved and courteous pupils throughout the school;
  - The welcoming and inclusive ethos;
  - Well maintained and quality accommodation.

In addition, the last Care Inspectorate report carried out on Bressay Primary School Nursery Class on 14 February 2012 evaluated all Quality Themes in the nursery class as Very Good.

4.11 The last inspection report for Bell's Brae Primary School was published on 24 June 2008. The key strengths identified were:

- Highly motivated and well behaved pupils;
- The quality of pupils' learning experiences in music, art and physical education;
- Attainment in English language;
- Effective contributions made by staff to the care and welfare of all pupils;
- The school's approaches to inclusion, particularly the teamwork with partner agencies.

In addition, the last Care Inspectorate report carried out on Bell's Brae Primary School Nursery on 21 February 2012 evaluated two Quality Themes in the nursery as Excellent and two as Very Good.

### **Bressay Primary School**

4.12 Bressay Primary School is a non-denominational primary school situated on the island of Bressay, Shetland. The school serves the whole island of Bressay as per the catchment area map attached as Appendix 1.

4.13 All pupils currently attending the Bressay Primary School are eligible for school transport. At present no children are attending Bressay Primary School Nursery Class.

4.14 As of September 2013 the roll of Bressay Primary School is four. Children in the Bressay catchment area can access pre-school education at the Bressay Nursery Class, although there are no children currently enrolled for 2013/14. Pupils from Bressay Primary School then transfer to Anderson High School for Secondary 1 to Secondary 6.

4.15 Bressay Primary School has three good-sized classrooms. The main building was constructed in 1900 and an extension was added in the 1970s. This was further extended in 2000 with the addition of the nursery class.

4.16 In terms of the Scottish Government Condition Assessment, the building is assessed as Condition B (Satisfactory).

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

4.17 Bressay Primary School is wheelchair accessible and has accessible toilet facilities.

4.18 Pupils take PE in the nearby Bressay Public Hall, using either indoor or outdoor facilities; they travel to the Clickimin Leisure Complex in Lerwick for swimming lessons.

Bressay Primary School keeps a small library and is also visited monthly by a mobile library van.

The school has access to a community multi-court play area.

4.19 Bressay Primary School is allocated staff as follows:

- 1.0 full-time equivalent teaching Head Teacher;
- 0.33 full-time equivalent class teacher;
- 0.26 full-time equivalent classroom assistant;
- 0.45 full-time equivalent clerical assistant;
- 0.29 full-time equivalent cleaner;
- 0.47 full-time equivalent cook.

4.20 If there were children in the nursery class then the staffing allocation would be: one part-time Nursery Teacher, a part-time Early Years Worker and a part-time Early Years Assistant.

4.21 However at present, in Bressay Primary School, the teaching Head Teacher is seconded to another post, and is continuing to provide the time allocated to the school for management duties. Additionally Children's Services are then providing a full-time teacher to teach the pupils.

4.22 The other staff in the school remain as they were previously and are: a part-time classroom assistant, a part-time clerical assistant, a part-time cleaner and a part-time cook.

All schools in Shetland are also resourced to meet the needs of pupils with additional support needs. Children's Services Managing Inclusion Guidelines ensures appropriate interventions and resources are in place in all our schools to support pupils with additional support needs. This includes Bressay Primary School.

There is currently no instrumental instruction provided at Bressay Primary School.

4.23 The capacity of Bressay Primary School is that it has physical space for 81 pupils. However, as there are three classrooms available for use by primary pupils, in line with national class size maximums, this means the school can have a maximum of three composite classes. Each composite class could have a maximum of 25 pupils in it. Therefore we consider the operating capacity of Bressay Primary School to be 75 pupils. With a current roll of four pupils, the school is therefore operating at 5.3% capacity. Apart from 2010/11, the primary school roll for Bressay Primary School has been in decline for the last ten years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Roll	32	31	29	24	20
<b>Year</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Roll	13	17	11	10	4

The projected roll for Bressay Primary School is three pupils in 2014/15, three pupils in 2015/16, and two pupils in 2016/17. This decline has been due in part to placing requests by parents.

There have been nineteen placing requests from parents of children who could attend Bressay Primary School in the last five years. There have been no placing requests into Bressay Primary School in this period.

Of the six placing requests from Bressay for 2013/14, three children have been placed at Bell's Brae Primary School and three at Sound Primary School.

<b>Placing Requests</b>	<b>Into Bressay Primary School</b>	<b>From Bressay Primary School</b>
2013/14 (to date)	0	6
2012/13	0	3
2011/12	0	1
2010/11	0	2
2009/10	0	7

The roll of Bressay Primary School Nursery Class has fluctuated in recent years but is currently zero. There are currently four children in Bressay who are eligible for nursery education, who are enrolled in other nurseries out of the island of Bressay.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Roll	6	6	2	3	5
<b>Year</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Roll	3	5	4	3	0

### **Bell's Brae Primary School**

4.24 Bell's Brae Primary School is a non-denominational primary school situated in Lerwick in the Central Mainland of the main island of Shetland. The school serves the community of Lerwick east of the Ayre of Clickimin and including Frakkafeld as per the catchment area map attached as Appendix 2. Pupils at Bell's Brae Primary School transfer to the Anderson High School for secondary education. One pupil in the Bell's Brae Primary School catchment area is currently eligible for school transport. The remainder of pupils can all walk or cycle to school.

4.25 As of September 2013 the Bell's Brae Primary School's roll was 295 pupils. The school has a nursery department which can accommodate 56 children; currently there are 34 children attending.

Bell's Brae Primary School also has a specialist department for nursery and primary-aged pupils with severe and complex additional support needs from across Shetland. This Department is an integral part of the Bell's Brae Primary School, however as Children's Services proposal concerns provision for pupils in mainstream classes, further references to Bell's Brae Primary School are to the mainstream provision, unless otherwise specified.

- 4.26 Bell's Brae Primary School is a well resourced and spacious building. The mainstream school consists of fourteen good-sized classrooms, a dedicated dining area, a gym hall and a number of communal and specialist areas.

The nursery department consists of two good-sized rooms, a shared indoor play space and an outdoor play area.

The main block of the original property was built circa 1957. In 1972 a three-storey extension block housing the classrooms was added, and this was refurbished in 2009.

The original block of the school was further extended in 1994 providing facilities for those with complex Additional Support Needs. There are four classrooms dedicated to Additional Support Needs teaching in this extension.

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

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

- 4.28 Bell's Brae Primary School is wheelchair accessible and has accessible toilet facilities. The nursery department is wheelchair accessible, however a wheelchair user cannot go directly from the nursery to other areas of the school.

- 4.29 Pupils take PE in the school, using either indoor or outdoor facilities; they also use the Clickimin Leisure Complex for swimming lessons. Bell's Brae Primary School has a library, an ICT room, and outdoor play areas.

- 4.30 Bell's Brae Primary School (mainstream) is staffed as follows:

- One full-time non-teaching head teacher (for the whole school including overall responsibility for the specialist Additional Support Needs Department);
- Three full-time non-teaching depute head teachers (one has direct responsibility for the specialist Additional Support Needs Department);
- 14.6 full-time equivalent class teachers;
- 1.6 full-time equivalent auxiliaries who support the whole school (this role is different from additional support needs auxiliaries);
- 1.64 full-time equivalent classroom assistant/crossing patrol assistants;
- 1.0 full-time equivalent clerical assistant;
- 1.0 full-time equivalent head janitor (who supports the whole school);
- 1.0 full-time equivalent janitor (who supports the whole school);
- 0.6 full-time equivalent supervisory assistants;
- 3.85 full-time equivalent catering staff (who support the whole school);
- 2.66 full-time equivalent cleaning staff (who support the whole school).

Bell's Brae Primary School also has visiting peripatetic teaching staff who support the specialist teaching of PE, music and art as follows:

- 0.75 full-time equivalent music teacher
- 0.7 full-time equivalent art teacher
- 0.8 full-time equivalent PE teacher

Pupils at Bell's Brae Primary School can access music instruction in piano, cello, woodwind and fiddle from Primary 5 and above.

Bell's Brae Primary School also has access to business management support from a Devolved School Management Officer who is based in the school.

All schools in Shetland are also resourced to meet the needs of pupils with additional support needs. Children's Services Managing Inclusion Guidelines ensures appropriate interventions and resources are in place in all our schools to support pupils with additional support needs. This includes those pupils in mainstream classes in Bell's Brae Primary School.

- 4.31 The physical capacity of Bell's Brae Primary School is that it has space for 531 pupils. The school currently has fourteen classes – two at each stage. This gives the school a potential operating capacity of 434 children. With a current roll of 295 pupils, the school is therefore operating at 68% capacity.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Roll	321	329	312	313	311
<b>Year</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Roll	305	308	302	308	295

The projected roll for Bell's Brae Primary School is that it will remain relatively stable at the level it is for the next two years.

## **5. EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS STATEMENT**

### **Introduction**

- 5.1 The Educational Benefits Statement has been prepared by Children's Services in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

- 5.2 In preparing an Educational Benefits Statement, The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, requires Local Authorities to take account of a number of factors, and evidence how it has done this. These are:

- current and future pupils of the affected schools;
- current and future users of the facilities of the affected schools;
- how the Local Authority will minimise any adverse impacts arising from the proposal;
- the likely effects on other pupils in the Local Authority.

- 5.3 The Act does not limit or list the matters which need to be included in an Educational Benefits Statement. However Statutory Guidance does highlight to Local Authorities that they must demonstrate in their Educational Benefits Statements how a proposal will:
- improve the quality of the curriculum and create positive environments for more effective learning and teaching better matched to the needs of learners;
  - improve the depth, breadth, coherence, relevance, challenge and enjoyment provided by the curriculum;
  - provide more opportunities for greater personalisation and choice in learning and improved progression which will enhance children's experiences; this will include the use of information and communications technology and arrangements for assessing and planning learners' progress;
  - impact on the overall ethos of the school, including the care and welfare of pupils and their personal and social development;
  - improve equality of opportunity for all within an inclusive educational experience, in the widest sense, for pupils and achievement, and for interdisciplinary learning and beyond.
- 5.4 The Statutory Guidance on the Act also provides Local Authorities with a number of other issues which may be relevant to the educational benefits of a proposal. These are:
- the condition and suitability of the school buildings and facilities (and where a proposal would involve pupils moving from one school to another, the relative condition of both);
  - changing patterns of demand for school places if there is a growing mismatch between supply and demand;
  - the travel and transport context and implications of a proposal if, for instance, they would impact differently on pupils' broader social experiences and opportunities to participate in and benefit from out-of-hours learning;
  - financial and budgetary considerations may also be relevant in situations where disparities in the costs of the delivery of education may have grown, to the detriment of the greater good, at least to the point where an authority considers that they require to be reviewed.
- 5.5 The Educational Benefits Statement is also the place for the Local Authority to set out the relationship between a proposed change and their education-related statutory duties, and how the proposal fits with the continued fulfilment of these other obligations.
- 5.6 The key statutory duties for a Local Authority in relation to the delivery of school education are:
- **The Education (Scotland) Act 1980**, which requires authorities to secure for their area adequate and efficient provision of school education; and the provision of sufficient school accommodation;
  - **The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000**, which requires Local Authorities to endeavour to raise standards and secure improvement

in the quality of school education provided in their schools; and to ensure that the education it provides is directed to the development of the personality, talents and the mental and physical abilities of the children or young people to their fullest potential;

- **The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland) Act 2009**, which requires authorities to identify and provide support for any children with additional support needs and prepare co-ordinated support plans for those with the most extensive needs.

## **Educational Benefits of the Proposal**

- 5.7 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, and which meets the agreed priorities in the Shetland Partnership Community Plan, the Single Outcome Agreement and Shetland Islands Council's Corporate Plan.
- 5.8 Children's Services is able to demonstrate that it delivers a good quality school education service overall, evidenced through good attainment and achievement results and the outcomes of Education Scotland inspections.
- 5.9 However, Shetland Islands Council's current model cannot demonstrate equality of opportunity or efficiency in delivery.
- 5.10 The Proposal to discontinue primary education in Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class addresses issues around equality of provision for all pupils in Shetland and seeks to achieve a more efficient, cost-effective and sustainable model of delivery in response to changing local circumstances in the community.
- 5.11 Children's Services considers that there would be educational benefits to the pupils currently attending Bressay Primary School should they attend Bell's Brae Primary School. These are:
- that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning, and for social interaction with others of similar ages;
  - that pupils in Bressay Primary School would have access to a wide range of teaching staff with a range of experiences;
  - that pupils from Bressay Primary School would attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement;
  - that, as a result of this Proposal the Council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area.
- 5.12 Children's Services recognises that Bressay Primary School offers a quality education to its pupils. This was confirmed by Education Scotland in the Report on the school published on 8 January 2008. Bell's Brae Primary School also offers a quality education to its pupils and this was confirmed in their report published on 24 June 2008.

- 5.13 Transferring pupils from Bressay Primary School will offer the opportunity for pupils to join more viable cohorts of pupils for taking part in group learning activities, team events and sporting competitions. It will mean there is access to a larger peer group of a similar age, stage and gender for learning and for social interaction.
- 5.14 Both schools affected by this Proposal are staffed by experienced teaching staff.
- 5.15 All the children currently attending Bressay Primary School could move to Bell's Brae Primary School without the need for any increase in staffing both teaching and non-teaching at Bell's Brae Primary School.
- 5.16 The Proposal therefore has the potential to save all of the staffing costs currently incurred at Bressay Primary School, and make a small reduction in the cost per pupil at the receiving school.
- 5.17 Bressay Primary School is operating at 5.3% capacity; Bell's Brae Primary School is operating at 68% capacity. The latest information on costs per pupil indicates that in this financial year, the estimated total cost per pupil at Bressay Primary School is £39,259; the total cost per pupil at Bell's Brae Primary School is £5,481. National figures for 2013/14 are not available, the latest published figures are for 2011/12 and show that the average cost per primary pupil in Shetland is £6,614 and in Scotland is £4,090.

## **Curriculum**

### **Bressay Primary School**

- 5.18 The curriculum, 5–15 Broad General Education, which is taught at early, first and second stage of Curriculum for Excellence, is taught to all pupils together in one multi-composite primary class. Bressay Primary School has developed strong links with other schools. This includes Bell's Brae Primary School, Sound Primary School and Anderson High School, to ensure pupils are well supported through their transition to secondary education.

The school also has a number of visiting teaching staff that support the teaching of PE, Music and Art.

Children's Services knows that the curriculum is delivered to a high standard in its small schools, however there are some aspects of the Curriculum for Excellence which make effective delivery of the curriculum more challenging when there are very small numbers of pupils.

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

- To learn independently and as part of a group;
- To relate to others and manage themselves;
- To communicate in different ways and in different settings;
- To work in partnership and in teams.

It is elements of these aspects of the requirements of the curriculum which, within a primary school where there are only a few children and perhaps only one at a particular stage, can be more challenging. We know that all our staff do their utmost to fulfil absolutely all the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence. However given the limitations on the numbers available in the school, it is more challenging to secure these outcomes in the absolute best way possible. In September 2013, Bressay Primary School only has four pupils: one Primary 7 pupil; one Primary 5 pupil; one Primary 2 pupil and one Primary 1 pupil.

### **Bell's Brae Primary School**

- 5.19 The curriculum, 5 – 15 Broad General Education, which is taught at early, first and second stage of Curriculum for Excellence, is taught to pupils in fourteen classes (two per primary year group). The curriculum is delivered by class teachers with the support of the Depute Head Teachers and other Children's Services staff. The school has excellent links with its cluster primary schools which helps with effective transition to secondary.

The school also has a number of visiting teaching staff who support the teaching of PE, Music and Art.

Curriculum for Excellence now recognises four contexts for learning through: the ethos and life of the school as a community, curriculum areas and subjects, interdisciplinary learning and opportunities for personal achievement. There is a need to make connections between these contexts, and the curriculum is delivered through a range of experiences and outcomes.

The increased number and range of staff at Bell's Brae Primary School will ensure the provision of broad and enriching learning experiences across all the four contexts for learning and taking account of the interests and aptitude of all learners.

All children and young people have an entitlement to a curriculum which they experience as a coherent whole, with smooth and well planned progression through the experiences and outcomes.

It is the responsibility of schools to bring the experiences and outcomes together and apply these entitlements to produce programmes for learning across a broad curriculum. There are features in each of the eight curricular areas which are enhanced by having a larger cohort of children than are currently in Bressay Primary School.

Effective learning and teaching in health and wellbeing uses a variety of approaches including active, co-operative and peer learning and effective use of technology.

The experiences and outcomes for literacy across learning include the need to develop and extend literacy skills when children have opportunities to communicate, collaborate and build relationships, reflect on and explain literacy and thinking skills, using feedback to help improve and sensitively provide useful feedback for others.

A rich and supportive learning environment will support a skilful mix of a variety of approaches of effective learning and teaching including active learning and planned, purposeful play, development of problem-solving capabilities and both collaborative and independent learning.

### **Learning Environment/Resources**

- 5.20 Pupils at Bressay Primary School would benefit from access to a wide range of facilities available at Bell's Brae Primary School. These include subject specialist teaching areas, a well-stocked library and social spaces where they can interact with peers.

Pupils would benefit from access to sporting facilities, a games hall and outdoor play areas including adventure trails.

### **Information Communication Technology (ICT)**

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

### **Bressay Primary School**

- 5.22 Bressay Primary School has 19 computers in total, comprising 4 desktop computers and 15 laptops. These devices all use the Windows 7 operating system.

The school has internet access through a wireless connection to the Shetland Islands Council's optical fibre connection.

Based on the last three years the average yearly ICT spend at Bressay Primary School is £1500.

### **Bell's Brae Primary School**

- 5.23 The school has 129 computers in total, comprising 54 desktop computers and 75 laptops. Nearly all of these devices use the Windows XP operating system and will require upgrading to Windows 7.

The school connects to the internet using the Shetland Island Council's optical fibre connection.

Based on the last three years the average yearly ICT spend at Bell's Brae Primary School is £25,000.

## **Additional Support Needs**

- 5.24 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.

### **Bressay Primary School**

- 5.25 Bressay Primary School, in line with all schools in Shetland, submits an annual audit which specifies how many children require additional support to meet their learning and pastoral care needs. This fluctuates, therefore, according to the requirements of the pupils. At present the head teacher is responsible for co-ordinating and supporting any pupils with additional support needs.

### **Bell's Brae Primary School**

- 5.26 Bell's Brae Primary School, in line with all schools in Shetland, submits an annual audit which specifies how many children require additional support to meet their learning and pastoral care needs. This fluctuates, therefore, according to the requirements of the pupils. As a result of the information submitted the school is appropriately resourced both in the mainstream and the specialist department for delivering to support to all its pupils.

Bell's Brae Primary 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 a specialist Additional Support Needs Department as an integral part of the school with teaching staff, auxiliary support and a wide range of resources to cater for nursery and primary-aged children with complex additional support needs from across Shetland. These facilities enhance the learning and teaching experiences of all young people attending Bell's Brae Primary School.

## **Capacity**

### **Bressay Primary School**

- 5.27 The operating capacity of Bressay Primary School is that it has space for 75 pupils. With a current roll of 4 pupils, the school is operating at 5.3% capacity.

### **Bell's Brae Primary School**

- 5.28 The operating capacity of Bell's Brae Primary School is that it has space for 434 pupils. With a current roll of 295 pupils, the school is operating at 68% capacity.

## **Extra Curricular Activities, School Trips and Exchanges**

- 5.29 A wide range of after school activities have been offered by both schools affected by the Proposal. These have, and will, change according to need and demand. They have recently included:

Bressay Primary School offers:

- After school activities such as dancing and crafts, depending on demand and the availability of volunteers;
- A breakfast club that has run for limited periods of time;
- Access to a garden where children can grow vegetables;
- Annual residential trips to Unst and Fair Isle, as well as a night spent camping on the island of Noss;
- The opportunity for Primary 7 pupils to join annual Sound Primary School trip to Edinburgh.

Bell's Brae Primary School offers:

- Regularly run after school clubs including football, netball, hockey, samba band and choir. Exact range varies year to year; previous clubs have included photography, dancing, golf and athletics;
- A club for pupils who require extra support at playtime;
- Visits to local sites relevant to teaching topics, such as Scatness Dig, Michael's Wood, and NorthLink;
- An annual residential trip within Shetland for primary seven pupils, to either Unst, Scatness or Voxter.

## **Staff Transfer**

- 5.30 Any staff transfers, and alternative arrangements for staff resulting from the closure of Bressay Primary School, will be conducted according to the appropriate Shetland Islands Council policies and agreements. Shetland Islands Council has recently approved new policies on:

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

- 5.31 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**

- 5.32 The closure of Bressay Primary School would have little resource effect in terms of the community's educational access to the school and its resources. Currently the school is used by the community for photocopying and to access a fax machine. The school is also used as a venue for Parent Council meetings and for the local choir group.

Other factors affecting the local community are looked at in more detail under Consideration of Factors Affecting Rural Schools.

### **Summary of Educational Benefits**

5.33 Closing Bressay Primary School and moving the pupils to Bell's Brae Primary School would provide the following benefits to Bressay Primary School pupils:

- daily access to a larger peer group of similar age, stage and gender;
- creating a more viable cohort of children for a variety of group and team activities;
- access to a larger teaching staff group who are able to work collaboratively to benefit each pupil's learning;
- larger staff provision which creates more collegiate time to commit to the school improvement agenda;
- more efficient use of financial resources.

5.34 Closing Bressay Primary School and moving the pupils to Bell's Brae Primary School would provide the following benefits to all pupils in Shetland:

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

## **6. CONSIDERATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING RURAL SCHOOLS**

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

### **Viable Alternatives to Closure**

6.2 The only viable alternative to closure of Bressay Primary School would be to maintain stages of education at Bressay Primary School and Bell's Brae Primary School.

Maintaining primary education in both locations does not offer best value in the use of public money. There are surplus primary places across these two schools which therefore means inefficiency in the use of revenue funds of Shetland Islands Council. Primary pupils at Bressay Primary School attend Bressay Nursery for pre-school education and Anderson High School for secondary education.

There are currently 509 primary places available across the two schools offering primary education. As of September 2013 the combined total primary roll of the two schools is 299 pupils. By placing all the primary pupils from the two schools into Bell's Brae Primary School it would still only be 69% occupied but would be operating more efficiently than at present.

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

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

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

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

6.4 The savings measures already implemented within Schools/Quality Assurance section of Children's Services, as detailed above, have resulted in a reduction in expenditure between 2009/10 and 2012/13 of over £5 million.

6.5 Children's Services has also in the past considered shared management for small primaries when it has proved difficult to recruit to a teaching Head Teacher post. This has been possible when an opportunity arises through a vacancy and through agreement with Parent Councils. However, the shared management model Children's Services operates does not save money, as by local agreement, each school in a shared management arrangement is allocated a principal teacher, and the principal teacher is allocated management time, which must be covered. Bressay Primary School has been involved in a shared management arrangement previously with Foula Primary School. The logistics of travel in this arrangement to enable the Head Teacher to support both schools meant that this became untenable.

6.6 Some parents of pupils who attend Bressay Primary School have asked Children's Services about how the roll could be increased through placing requests into Bressay Primary School. As Bressay Primary School is now a one-teacher primary school, in accordance with our Admissions Policy, Children's Services would not allow the roll to go up through placing requests

such that another teacher would be employed, therefore there is limited scope here to increase the roll. In addition, any placing requests into the school would be required make their own travel arrangements to the school, which would include paying ferry fares each day.

In addition, the information provided by parents of pupils who have requested places in other schools indicates that for a large majority it is their wish for their child(ren) to be educated in a larger school with access to a peer group.

Mothballing Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class was also discussed with parents and at a public meeting held in Bressay on 29 July 2013. However, Scottish Government guidance on mothballing assumes that a local authority opts for this when the roll of a school drops naturally to zero. Some parents were clear at the public meeting that they did not want the school to be mothballed.

During discussions with parents there was a view that there could be a number of further savings made by Bressay Primary School which would support its viability. These included: packed lunches or the children going home for lunch; limiting the use of the building by closing off unused spaces; links with another school for PE lessons; video links to another class in another school to cover periods of required teacher non-contact time, with only a classroom assistant supporting the pupils or bringing in parent helpers. These suggestions would further limit the educational opportunities available for the pupils of Bressay Primary School.

- 6.7 Bressay Primary School and Bell's Brae Primary School are 2.5 miles apart including the short seven-minute ferry crossing. The transfer of pupils from Bressay Primary School would not result in unacceptable travel time for pupils, however this does mean a different type of journey for these pupils.

## **Likely Effects on the Local Community**

- 6.8 In 2007, Shetland's Community Planning Partnership commissioned Hall Aiken to research historic, and future population trends and factors affecting this in Shetland. Their full report is: 'Shetland's Population and Migration Study'.

Hall Aiken noted that historically the population of Shetland has fluctuated significantly from a high point of over 30,000 to its lowest level of 17,000; and that population change has always closely mirrored economic opportunities and the population increased by around a third between 1971 and 1981 due to the major oil-related developments at Sullom Voe.

The conclusions of the study were that based on trends at the time, there would continue to be:

- a steep drop in the numbers of children under 16;
- a decline in the numbers of 16 to 24 year olds after 2010;
- a rapid and continuing increase in the elderly population.

The study also examined factors which influence population change in Shetland. In summary their conclusions were:

- economic development;
- infrastructure (including access to high quality, affordable housing) and
- social issues.

Hall Aiken did not identify the presence of a school as a critical factor in the economic sustainability of a community. In fact, to address the issues Shetland faces in terms of population decline, the report recognises the over-reliance of Shetland on jobs in the public sector, and promotes the importance, for sustainability, of:

- promoting enterprise;
- developing innovation or competitiveness;
- generating revenue streams (for example, through renewables); or
- developing business infrastructure (for example, broadband or incubator units).

However, taking on board the depth of previous community concerns about the impact a rural school closure might have in Shetland, Children's Services now commission a Socio-Economic Study to be carried out on every rural closure proposal.

Steve Westbrook, Economist, Nairn, in partnership with Sandy Anderson, has been commissioned by the Director of Children's Services to undertake a Socio-Economic Study on the potential impacts on the community of Bressay of the Proposal to close Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class should it be agreed. A summary of the findings of the study will form part of the Consultation Report, and the full text will form an appendix to the Report.

- 6.9 Bressay has one community hall (Bressay Public Hall) that is a well used resource by the community and may account for the limited use of the school building. Bressay has a local shop, who are general merchants with petrol pumps. After a huge community effort, the island now also has its own football pitch which opened in 2013.
- 6.10 The school provides a number of part-time employment opportunities for people in the community. It is likely that these posts would be lost should Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class close, although staff will be offered redeployment and transfer opportunities elsewhere in accordance with Shetland Islands Council policies.
- 6.11 Over the past five years, since 2008, there has been a 3% increase in the number of properties in the island of Bressay. This information is from Council Tax Administration records. There are currently 182 properties on the island. Of these fourteen are empty, which gives a current occupancy rate of 92.3%

Using census data, the average post Second World War population of the island has been 328. In 2011 census data reveals that the population of the island was 368, which is 12.2% higher than the long-term average. There was a 4% decrease in the population of Bressay between 2001 and 2011, according to census information, but this was after a 9% increase between 1991 and 2001. So despite a decrease in population between 2001 and 2011, the population of Bressay in 2011 was still 4.55% higher than it was in

1991. This period between 2001 and 2011 correlates with the period of decline in the pupil roll of Bressay Primary School. The drop in pupil roll does not correspond therefore, with a decrease in the number of people living in Bressay.

- 6.12 The school building in Bressay, if the school closed, has the potential to be used to support the sustainability of the island. It could be used as a base for remote working if it were to be retained by Shetland Islands Council. The building could also be let to businesses for office space or sold.

### **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 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 were required to be found between 2012/13 and 2016/17. Shetland Islands Council needs to achieve these savings to become sustainable. The approved budget for 2013/14 includes reductions of £12.557 million. By the end of 2013/14 the Council will be over 70% of the way there. The requirement for children's Services to meet its target budget is critical in the coming years to achieving the remaining 30% of savings required. The reductions in budgets for Children's Services over the next three financial years were agreed by Shetland Islands Council on 28 August 2013, in the updated Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-2018. Children's Services required savings total is £3.268 million. Almost all of these savings are to come from school education.
- 6.15 The Proposal to discontinue education in Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class addresses issues around equality of provision for all pupils in Shetland and generates a more efficient, cost-effective and sustainable model of delivery. This is a positive outcome for all pupils across Shetland as a whole.

### **Support which would be provided to the Community Should the School Close**

- 6.16 The new Community Plan for Shetland 2013-2020 has just been agreed in August 2013. This describes how the public sector will work together with the private and third sector to improve the communities in Shetland. There are commitments in the Plan that are important to securing a sustainable future for all areas of Shetland, and these will be important for the community of Bressay to consider if Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class closes. Outcome 1 is: *"Shetland has sustainable economic growth with good employment opportunities"*; and Outcome 11 is: *"We have a strong voluntary*

*sector and social enterprises, encouraging community enterprise and co-operatives, with increased capacity to deliver services based on needs and aspirations of local communities.”* Within these there are clear objectives: to increase sustainable economic growth; increase the number of business start-ups; secure population growth; increase the role of community enterprise; improve the sustainability of community groups; and involve communities in deciding what is needed to improve their area.

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

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

### **Likely Effect Caused by Different Travelling Arrangements that may be required in Consequence of the Proposal**

6.17 The travel implications for pupils currently attending Bressay Primary School, if they were transferred to Bell’s Brae Primary School would be as follows:

- Four pupils currently attending Bressay Primary School, and eight pupils currently attending Bell’s Brae Primary School through placing requests, would be eligible for school transport.
- Transport would consist of 2x8 seater vehicles travelling from Bressay Public Hall to Bressay Ferry, crossing on the ferry, and travelling to Bell’s Brae Primary School. The total distance travelled would be approximately 2.5 miles.
- The estimated additional cost of these transport routes is £38,000 per school year for the 8 seater vehicles plus £2,280 per school year in ferry fares. The total estimated additional cost would be £40,280 per school year (based on 190 days).

(The figures above are based on current contract prices.)

## 7. OTHER ISSUES

### Management of Proposal

- 7.1 It is intended that pupils from Bressay Primary School will be integrated within Bell's Brae Primary School, from the start of the first term of the 2014/15 school session, which commences on 18 August 2014. This will allow Children's Services time to conduct the necessary consultation in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 7.2 It is acknowledged that should the Proposal be approved and implemented, careful forward planning would be required from Children's Services to support the transition of the pupils. Existing transition arrangements are well established for pupils transferring at the end of Primary 7. These would be built upon and enhanced to allow the transition of all pupils.
- 7.3 A Transition Support Group would immediately be set up after a decision is made by Shetland Islands Council if it agrees to close Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class. This Group would be chaired by the Quality Improvement Officer for Bressay Primary School and Bell's Brae Primary School and would include relevant school staff, Parent Council representation and pupil representation from both establishments.
- 7.4 The role of this group would be to plan the effective transition of pupils. It will ensure pupils are supported in getting used to being in Bell's Brae Primary School for five days per week.
- 7.5 The Transition Support Group will focus on any issue of concern for pupils and parents, including ensuring specific arrangements are put in place and clearly communicated for adverse weather, and the safe travel of pupils to and from school.
- 7.6 The Proposal would also have implications for teaching and support staff. All staff will be properly consulted about their future, as will relevant trade unions. The individual wishes of each member of staff will be taken into consideration within the context of appropriate Shetland Islands Council policies and agreements.

### Legislation

- 7.7 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**

- 7.8 An initial integrated impact assessment has been carried out on this Proposal. This assessment will be reviewed as a result of the representations made during the statutory consultation period. The findings of the revised integrated impact assessment will be presented in the Consultation Report, including any mitigation proposed for any adverse impacts. A full copy of the revised integrated impact assessment will form an appendix to the Consultation Report.

## **Financial Considerations**

- 7.9 Shetland Islands Council's approved Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-2018 sets out the road map to achieve financial sustainability over the term of this Council and to align resources in accordance with the priorities of Members. In doing so, the Shetland Islands Council will safeguard future service provision, ensuring that there are reserves available to sustain an enhanced level of public services in Shetland.
- 7.10 Aligning resources to Councillors' priorities ensures that Shetland Islands Council maximises the use of resources at its disposal.
- 7.11 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.
- 7.12 Shetland Islands Council approved its budget for 2013/14, on 20 February 2013. The budget set adheres to the Medium Term Financial Plan, and therefore contributes to the strategic aim of realigning more available resources towards Children's Services, Community Care and Transport, so that a larger percentage of the Council's budget will be spent in those areas by the end of the Council term. In addition, it ensures that Shetland Islands Council continues to provide the best funded services in Scotland, whilst maintaining the fourth lowest Council Tax (which has been frozen for the sixth consecutive year).
- 7.13 In 2013/14, Children's Services budget was approved at £41.262 million, which equates to 37.8% of the total Shetland Islands Council General Fund budget. In 2014/15 the target budget for Children's Services is £40.429 million which represents 39.4% of the total.
- 7.14 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 Bressay Primary School will be £39,259, and the total cost per pupil at Bell's Brae Primary School will be £5,481. National figures are no longer published; the latest published figures are for 2011/12 and show that the average cost per primary pupil in Shetland is £6,614 and in Scotland is £4,090.

## Financial Implications

- 7.15 The current cost of Bressay Primary School and the financial impact of the preferred option as set out in this Proposal Paper is summarised below:

	<b>2013/14</b>
	<b>Budget</b>
	<b>£</b>
Bressay Primary School	157,036
Additional Costs at Bell's Brae Primary School	314
Costs Transferred Across the Estate:	20,655
Residual Property Costs	11,626
Additional Transport Costs	40,280
Impact on GAE (Grant Aided Expenditure)	9,468
<b>Total Saving</b>	<b>74,693</b>

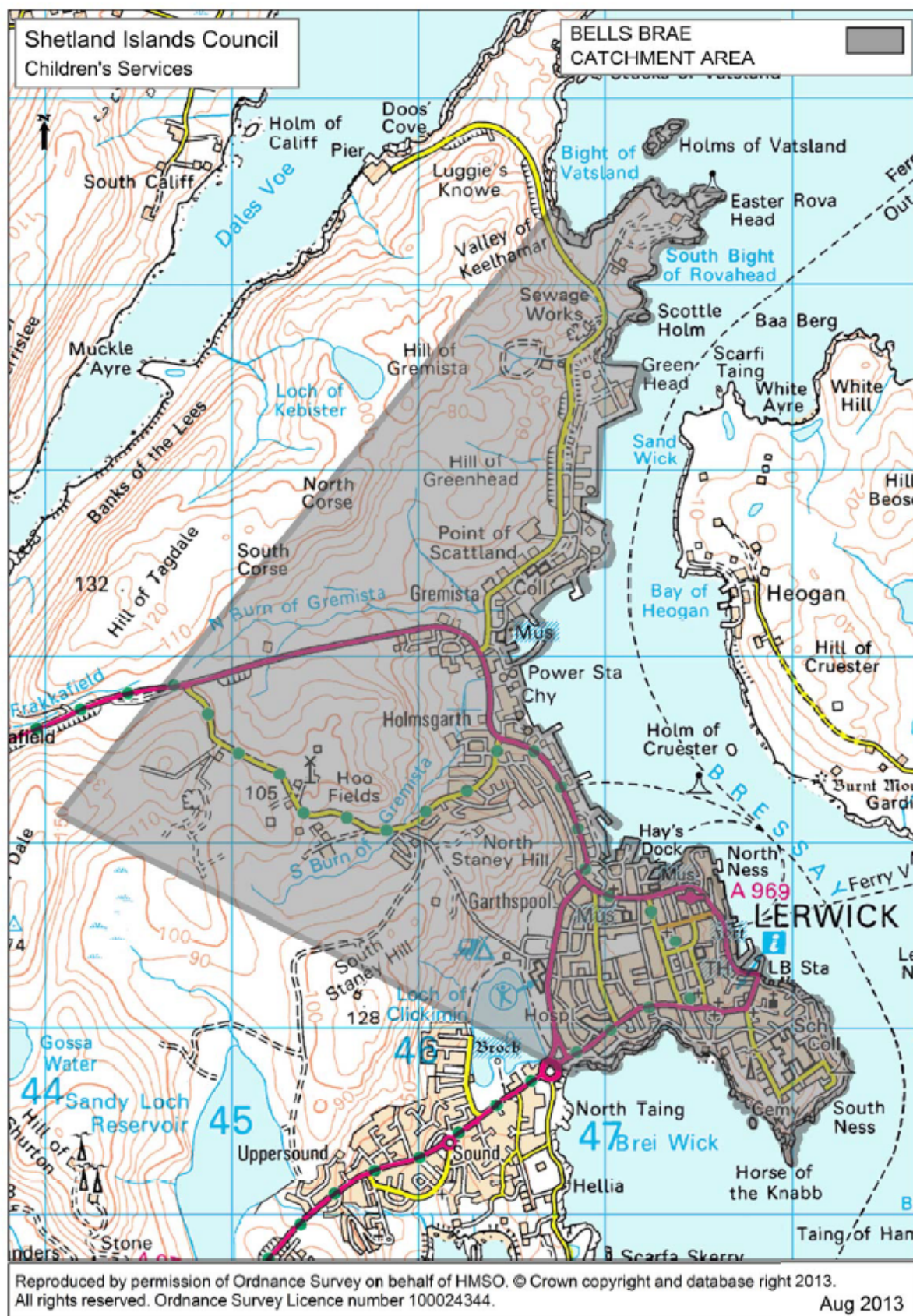
- 7.16 This information is based upon the budgeted School Estates Review for 2013/14. See Appendix 4 for a full financial breakdown.
- 7.17 The total estimated on-going annual savings made from the closure of Bressay Primary School is £74,693. These savings will go some way towards meeting the total savings which require to be delivered by Children's Services.
- 7.18 There will be no impact on teaching or non-teaching staff at Bell's Brae Primary School. Budget for learning materials, meal supplies and school meals income would transfer. Overall this would amount to a total of £314.
- 7.19 Recharges in to the Bressay Primary School for support provided by the Quality Assurance, Schools Executive Manager and Devolved School Management services would be transferred across the remaining schools within the estate. However, any savings found within these areas would result in an overall reduction in these recharges.
- 7.20 Property costs have been reduced to reflect that there may still be some requirement to pay for Rates, Repairs and Maintenance, Electricity and Insurance even if the building was not occupied. However, these costs would be removed altogether if the building was sold, and a capital receipt would be realised.

- 7.21 Additional transport costs of £40,280 have been allowed for in the estimated total savings of £74,693.
- 7.22 The closure proposal will impact on Grant Aided Expenditure. Currently we receive Grant Aided Expenditure in the region of £2,300 per pupil in a small primary school (with a roll of less than 70), this Grant Aided Expenditure would be lost if the proposal were implemented, as the 4 pupils at Bressay Primary School would be transferring to a primary department with a roll of over 70 pupils. This loss of Grant Aided Expenditure has been allowed for in the total savings of £74,693.
- 7.23 As there is currently no nursery provision required on Bressay, the saving that could be achieved by closing the nursery has not been included in the financial implications of this proposal. However, this would amount to an additional saving of £29,107.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 strengthens the statutory consultation practices and procedures that Local Authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools. It ensures that the consultation process is robust, open, transparent and fair.
- 8.2 The required Proposal Paper, of which this is one, forms the basis of any such statutory Consultation Process. Thereafter, during the statutory Consultation Period set out in this Proposal Paper, Children's Services invites responses to its Proposal to discontinue primary education at Bressay Primary School and pre-school education at Bressay Primary School Nursery Class.
- 8.3 The Proposal is that primary aged pupils transfer to Bell's Brae Primary School and that pre-school aged children continue to be provided with pre-school education in line with the responsibilities of Children's Services outlined in the approved Admissions Policy.
- 8.4 All views, comments and questions will be considered for the Consultation Report which will follow this consultation period.







## Appendix 4

<b>Bressay Primary School</b>	<b>2013/14 Budget £</b>	<b>Costs Transferred Across Estate £</b>	<b>Impact on Bells Brae Primary School £</b>	<b>Residual Property Costs £</b>	<b>Total Costs Transferred £</b>	<b>Annual Saving £</b>
Employee Costs (incl Visiting Staff)	90,494	0	0	0	0	90,494
Liability Insurance	422	0	0	0	0	422
General, Water & Sewerage Rates	347	0	0	174	174	174
Repair & Maintenance	9,354	0	0	4,677	4,677	4,677
Energy Costs	11,835	0	0	5,918	5,918	5,918
Cleaning Contractor	5,976	0	0	0	0	5,976
Property Insurance	858	0	0	858	858	0
Learning Materials	4,300	0	724	0	724	3,576
Catering Contract	15,895	0	760	0	760	15,135
<b>Direct School Costs</b>	<b>139,481</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>11,626</b>	<b>13,110</b>	<b>126,371</b>
Sale of Meals - Pupils	(3,000)	0	(1,170)	0	(1,170)	(1,830)
Sale of Meals - Staff	(100)	0	0	0	0	(100)
<b>Direct School Income</b>	<b>(3,100)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,170)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,170)</b>	<b>(1,930)</b>
<b>Controllable Costs</b>	<b>136,381</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>11,626</b>	<b>11,940</b>	<b>124,441</b>
Quality Assurance	19,673	19,673	0	0	19,673	0
DSMO	486	486	0	0	486	0
Schools Executive Manager	496	496	0	0	496	0
<b>Recharges</b>	<b>20,655</b>	<b>20,655</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20,655</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Non Controllable Costs</b>	<b>20,655</b>	<b>20,655</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20,655</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>157,036</b>	<b>20,655</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>11,626</b>	<b>32,595</b>	<b>124,441</b>
<b>Additional Transport Costs</b>						<b>40,280</b>
<b>Impact on Grant Aided Expenditure</b>						<b>9,468</b>
<b>Total Savings</b>						<b>74,693</b>



**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 pre-school and primary education at Bressay Primary School.**

#### **Context**

This report from Education Scotland is required under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act. The purpose of this report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of the council's consultation proposal. Section 2 of this report sets out the views expressed by consultees during the initial consultation process. Section 3 sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal and the views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' overall view of the proposal. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it and then prepare its final consultation report. The council's final consultation report should include a copy of this report and must contain an explanation of how it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its final consultation report three weeks before it takes its final decision. As the council is proposing to close a school, it will need to follow all legislative obligations set out in the 2010 Act, including notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining the opportunity for representations to be made to Ministers.

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Shetland Islands Council proposes to discontinue pre-school and primary education at Bressay Primary School.

1.2 The report from Education Scotland is required under the terms of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. It has been prepared by HM Inspectors in accordance with the terms of the Act.

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

- attendance at the public meeting held on 31 October 2013 in connection with the council's proposals;
- 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; and
- visits to the site of Bell's Brae Primary School and Bressay Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

#### 1.4 HM Inspectors considered:

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

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

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

## 2. Consultation process

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

2.2 The children who currently attend Bressay Primary School realise that there are a number of significant changes for them in the proposal. They will have to travel further to school and this will involve the use of a bus and ferry in each direction to get them from the island of Bressay to Bell's Brae Primary School in Lerwick. They will no longer be taught in the same group, and their classes will be significantly larger. Most of their concerns relate to the making of new friends at Bell's Brae Primary School and the daily travel arrangements. They realise that certain things, such as waiting for school lunches, will take longer than at present because of the greater number of children in the school. They hope that they will have at least as good an opportunity to go on school trips as they enjoy these.

2.3 The parents of children who currently attend Bressay Primary School have a number of concerns in relation to the proposal. Foremost of these is the issue of greater travel time, with the concern being expressed that this could add on an extra 1½ hours to a child's school day. They are also worried that the early morning ferry is already very busy and wonder what will happen if the school transport does not get on to the scheduled ferry to deliver children in good time. Further related

concerns include procedures when a child is unwell and needs to come home and the possibility of ferries being unable to make the crossing when the children are at school in Lerwick. They feel that, subject to the proposal being given approval, the Bressay Primary School building should be 'mothballed', rather than sold, as there may be future uses for it. Some of the respondents to the consultation who are resident on Bressay are also keen that this option should be kept open. The parents are aware that any transition to a new school will need to be carefully planned for the children.

2.4 Staff currently involved with Bressay Primary School are aware that the current position in the school is not an ideal situation for children's learning and limits the provision of appropriately challenging and motivating educational experiences which meet the children's individual needs. As the current roll is four pupils, there are limited opportunities to involve children in playing team sports or other games to help them with their learning. Staff have been making links with other schools and activities in Lerwick but feel that the proposal would result in a better educational experience for children, giving them wider opportunities to share ideas, become involved in cooperative learning activities and participate in musical and sporting activities.

2.5 Children who are pupils at Bell's Brae Primary School would welcome new pupils into the school and do not think that they should worry about coming to join them. They think that they will benefit from coming to a bigger primary school and that making friends there is good preparation for going to secondary school. They are involved in a wide range of school trips and other clubs and activities and feel that children from Bressay will benefit from these as well as having the opportunity to work in groups in classes. They all know children who have come to the school from Bressay and there have not been any problems with them fitting in at Bell's Brae Primary School. Some have become class representatives on the pupil council.

2.6 Parents of children who are pupils at Bell's Brae Primary School have no doubt that children from Bressay would benefit from coming to school in Lerwick. Some of them have daily experience of dealing with travel issues from Bressay to Bell's Brae Primary School and do not find that this is problematic, noting that the Bressay ferry will do 'double runs' rather than leave anyone stranded until the next timetabled ferry. Those who made placing requests from Bressay to Bell's Brae Primary School knew very quickly that they had made the correct decision and saw their children happier, growing in confidence and developing their social skills. They have seen friendships grow between Bressay and Lerwick children, including invitations to each other's birthday parties. They also feel that transport arrangements from Bressay could be merged with the provision already being made for secondary pupils, who could act as 'buddies' for younger children on the buses.

2.7 Staff of Bell's Brae Primary School welcome the proposal. They are confident that implementing the proposal would be beneficial for children currently attending Bressay Primary School as well as those who are pupils at Bell's Brae Primary School. They think that those who would come from Bressay will benefit from a bigger peer group to socialise and compete with, wider opportunities and other benefits such as clubs and after-school provision. Children who have come from Bressay previously have coped very well. Support is there for anyone who needs it,

but they think that children receive a more comprehensive and rounded education by coming to a larger school.

2.8 Senior managers at Bell's Brae Primary School agree that children coming from Bressay will benefit from development of their social skills and resilience and the range of opportunities and experiences that the school can offer them. They also note that travelling to school by public transport can also be an important social part of children's day which they sometimes prefer to travelling with their parents.

### **3. Educational aspects of the proposal**

3.1 The council considers that there are four main educational benefits to the pupils currently attending Bressay Primary School, should they attend Bell's Brae Primary School in Lerwick as outlined in its proposal.

3.2 The first reasonable benefit which will result from the implementation of the proposal is that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have better opportunities for learning together, for group work, for team games, for active learning and for social interaction with others of similar ages. At present there are four children attending Bressay Primary School at stages from P1 to P7. This makes learning together an essential aspect of what is done in lessons and much of their education takes place in this group in a project-based approach. However, the opportunity for children to work with a range of others is extremely limited, even if the adults leading the lessons participate as members of the group. There would be many more opportunities, even within a single class, for children to work with a range of other learners if they attended Bell's Brae Primary School. Children who currently attend this school speak very enthusiastically about the range of opportunities they get to learn together in different groups and to become involved in active learning opportunities. Similarly, children attending Bressay Primary School have extremely limited opportunity for social interaction with others of similar ages when they are at school. This would be significantly enhanced by attending a school such as Bell's Brae Primary School which has two classes at each stage and a current roll of 295 children. There are relatively few opportunities for the small number of children at Bressay Primary School to become involved with team games, despite the facilities which are available at the school, including an onsite all-weather court. By contrast, there are many opportunities to get involved in team sports at Bell's Brae Primary School, including successful netball, football and hockey teams. There are also opportunities for a variety of informal team games to be played at break times around the school.

3.3 The second benefit which will result from the implementation of the proposal is that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would have access to a wider range of teaching staff with a range of experiences. Bressay Primary School currently has access to a full-time teacher, a part-time acting headteacher, a part-time classroom assistant and visiting specialists in music, art and physical education. There is no instrumental tuition provided. There are no children in the nursery class and so staffing is not provided for this. Bell's Brae Primary School has a headteacher, three depute headteachers, 14.5 full-time equivalent teachers, 1.6 full-time equivalent auxiliaries and visiting specialists in music, art and physical education who are based in the school for at least three days per week. Children

can also access music instruction in piano, cello, woodwind and fiddle from P5 onwards. Additionally, there is a nursery department and a specialist department for children with severe and complex additional support needs. There are, therefore, many more members of staff in Bell's Brae Primary School than in Bressay Primary School and they use their wider range of talents and experiences within their classes, and also to run clubs and after school activities such as the various sports teams.

3.4 The third benefit which will result from the implementation of the proposal is that children currently attending Bressay Primary School would then attend a school which has more opportunities for staff to work collaboratively and collegiately to secure ongoing improvements in attainment and achievement. As outlined above, there is a single class teacher in Bressay Primary school, with occasional support from an acting headteacher and visiting specialists. This provides the teacher with limited opportunities to work collaboratively and collegiately, although links have been made with other provisions in Lerwick. In contrast there are many opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively and collegiately within Bell's Brae Primary School. Each teacher has at least one 'stage partner' with a class at the same level, with whom they can discuss their plans. They can also work with other teachers on interdisciplinary learning approaches and discuss how best to meet needs in the class with additional support needs staff.

3.5 The fourth benefit which will result from the implementation of the proposal is that the council may be able to make more efficient and equitable use of its resources to benefit children and young people throughout its area. Whether the current Bressay Primary School was to be mothballed or sold, there are significant resources within the building which could be redistributed across the remaining educational estate. This includes its library stock, basic classroom resources and 19 computers, each of which uses a current operating system.

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 also took account of the council's consideration of the factors to which it needed to take special regard. The council has fully investigated the viability of alternatives to the closure of the school, including the retention of Bressay Primary School. However, the roll has fallen dramatically over the past few years and shows no sign of increasing. Most parents on Bressay with children of primary school age opt to put in a placing request to either Bell's Brae Primary School or Sound Primary School in Lerwick. There have been 19 placing requests from parents of children who could attend Bressay Primary School in the last five years, including six in the current session. These have mostly been due to the wish to have their children educated in a larger school with a peer group. There have been no placing requests into Bressay Primary School in this period. Other options such as shared management with another school have been explored but these are no more efficient than the current model. Additionally, Bell's Brae Primary School has the capacity to include the remaining Bressay Primary School children next session without needing to increase its staffing as a result.

3.7 The council has looked at the likely effect on the local community with regard to sustainability, and on the community's access to the buildings, grounds and

facilities if Bressay Primary School were to close. The school buildings are not currently used by the local community as there is a well-used community hall nearby and also a local football pitch, so there are no community groups which would be inconvenienced by the proposed school closure. There is, however, a number of local people currently employed in the school on part-time placements and they would be offered redeployment and transfer opportunities elsewhere by the council. The council is willing to explore options for the school building subsequent to closure, including use as a base for remote working, letting to businesses or selling it.

3.8 The council has explored the travel implications for pupils attending Bressay Primary School if they were transferred to Bell's Brae Primary School. Transport would be provided for all children entitled to attend the new school, as the distance would be more than two miles. The group of children would include those currently attending on placing request as well as those attending for the first time. The council plans to provide two 8-seater vehicles at an annual cost of £40,280. There is also separate transport provided by the council for young people attending secondary school in Lerwick.

#### **4. Summary**

4.1 Almost all stakeholders agree that the children who currently attend Bressay Primary School would benefit educationally from the implementation of this proposal. They will have a peer group with whom they can make friends, they will have the option of learning in a variety of different groups, they will benefit from teachers who have a range of backgrounds and interests, they will have access to a wider range of musical experiences and they would be able to take part in a wide range of team sports. Their teachers would also be working collaboratively and collegiately with each other to enhance and improve their learning experiences.

4.2 Children who currently attend Bressay Primary School have some concerns about how easy it will be to make friends at the new school. However, children and parents at Bell's Brae Primary School, including those who have made placing requests from Bressay, are clear that this should not be a problem and that they will be made to feel very welcome when they arrive.

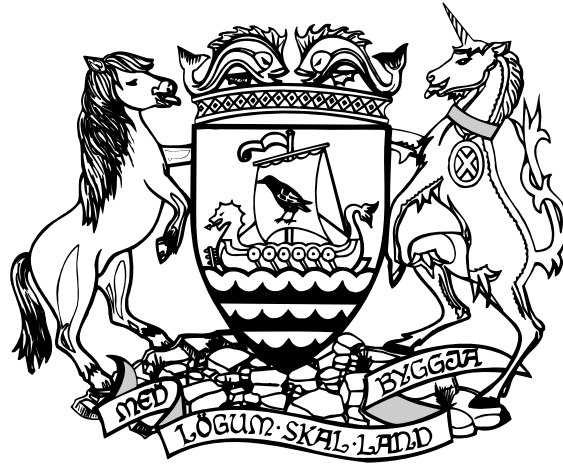
4.3 A major concern from the proposal for children who currently attend Bressay Primary School and their parents is the transport provision from Bressay to Bell's Brae Primary School. Whilst the council has indicated that two 8-seater vehicles will be provided for children going to Bell's Brae Primary School, this is being considered separately from the transport provision for young people being transported to secondary school, and it may be helpful to look at this jointly. There are also perceptions that this travel will add a significant amount of time on to a child's school day. The council needs to discuss these issues fully with parents and take their views into consideration when finalising transport arrangements.

4.4 Parents of children who currently attend Bressay Primary School realise that transition to the new school will need to be carefully planned. The council has indicated that it will set up a Transition Support Group to plan this and focus on any issues of concern for either parents or children.

4.5 Overall, the educational benefits outlined by the council demonstrate that the proposal is in the best interests of the children who currently attend Bressay Primary School and should broaden and enhance their learning experiences.

**HM Inspectors  
Education Scotland  
November 2013**





**Shetland Islands Council  
Children's Services**

**Appendix C – Transcript of the Public Meeting held at  
Bressay Public Hall on Wednesday 30 October 2013**



**Meeting Held on 30 October 2013 at 7:30 pm**  
**Bressay Public Hall**

- Chairperson – Councillor Vaila Wishart, Education and Families Committee Chair
- Councillors in attendance – Councillor Alan Wishart and Councillor Michael Stout
- Officers in attendance: Helen Budge, Director of Children's Services, Jerry Edwards, Quality Improvement Officer and Janice Thomason, Finance Manager.
- Public attendees – 19 + 1 Press Representative
- Apologies: Councillor Malcolm Bell and Elizabeth Robinson, NHS
- Note Taker – Katie Kent
- Roaming Mike – Heather Summers

Councillor Vaila Wishart opened the meeting:

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 Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class and transfer pupils to Bell's Brae Primary School.

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, Janice Thomason, Management Accountant Finance Services. Needs.

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 Bressay Primary School, for example, parent, pupil, grandparent, member of public, etc. Any questions on that?"

I will now ask Helen Budge to give the two short presentations.

Helen Budge corrected an error in the Proposal Paper. This is at the top of Page 17 and relates to specialist expressive arts provision in Bell's Brae Primary School. There are three bullet points and the third one should read 0.8 full-time equivalent PE teacher, not music teacher.

The copy of the proposal paper which is available on the website has been corrected and there is a note there explaining this.

Helen Budge noted a suspected past issue with the submission of electronic response forms. All successfully submitted responses would now receive an acknowledgement.

Unknown	<p>If you close a school on an island like this, is there any scope that it can opened it again in the future? While some parents might choose to send their children to schools in Lerwick or elsewhere, there are also people living in the island who would want to have their children educated on that land mass and it is a bit much to condemn all future pupils in Bressay to have to go to school elsewhere.</p>
Helen Budge	<p>That is why we had the conversation around mothballing the school. A school is mothballed as is the case on Papa Stour when there are no young people that could attend the school. Should we need to open that school again we can.</p> <p>The roll has to be at zero to enable us to mothball a school and the roll is not zero, so this is the process that we have to undertake.</p> <p>Asking whether the school could be reopened again, I do not have a crystal ball and I would not want to say what might happen in the future but currently this is the position we find ourselves in. Councillor Alan Wishart asked us at the public meeting to look at what we might do with the building in the future and if we could possibly look at retaining the building for a period of time until we see what might happen, rather than sell it off. We may be able to retain it for a period of time and see what happens with the roll and that might give us some flexibility for the future. If this point comes forward during this statutory process, then that is certainly something we will have to look into. I would just encourage you to take a response form and complete it. We are certainly looking at the possibility of that and the more we hear on this point, the more we would be able to action it.</p>
Unknown	<p>If there is no nursery here, bairns will have to go to Lerwick. Do parents have to find their own way back and fore for that journey?</p>
Helen Budge	<p>Yes that's right. There is no statutory obligation for the local authority to provide pre-school transport to wherever the parent chooses to go. The local authority does not provide any transport to any pre-school centre across the whole of Shetland.</p>
Unknown	<p>Have you looked into the transport?</p>
Helen Budge	<p>Really what this six week period is about is to gather feedback and comments from you. On page 30 of the Proposal Paper the travel implication for pupils currently attending Bressay, if they were to transfer to Bell's Brae Primary are detailed as follows. The four pupils currently attending Bressay Primary School and the eight pupils currently attending Bell's Brae Primary School through placing requests would be eligible for school transport. Transport would consist, and this is what we are saying at the moment, of two eight seater vehicles which would travel from Bressay Public Hall to the ferry, cross with the ferry, and travel to Bell's Brae Primary School. The total distance travelled would be approximately 2.5 miles, because we have to account for what I call nautical miles. We have to account somehow for the distance they travel across on the ferry. So we would look to pick them up from Bressay and take them right to</p>

	Bell's Brae Primary School.
Unknown	I don't understand this idea that they are going to be picked up from the hall. Some of the bairns live up to two miles from the hall, are they expected just to make their own way there?
Helen Budge	That is the kind of conversation that we would then enter into. What we have had to do is put something into the proposal paper around what we think is a start point for transport arrangements. If you feel that there are issues with the distance we would then have to look at this and discuss. It could be the case with your point that there is somebody living more than two miles from the hall, then we would have to take that into consideration. That would then be included in the consultation report. This is a proposal paper and we are here to hear your views on the paper and what you think of some of the suggestions in it.
Unknown	Can I make a point on the transport issues? Obviously it is necessary to transport children to the school, and that takes up further room on commuter ferries. So perhaps the ferry service would need to consider putting on extra runs so that commuters can still take their cars over at the requisite time to get into their work.
Helen Budge	That is a very good point and that is something that we would need to look at. As you know there have been changes to the ferry timetable recently and we would have to look at that and how it would then fit with what we are proposing. If we are looking at two mini buses coming on a particular ferry, which ferry would that be, what time that ferry would be, and how that would affect other things. We would look into all of this.
Unknown	About the distance from the school to Bell's Brae. As far as I understand, you are required to give transportation over two miles. If your school shifts to Bell's Brae then you will be picking up everybody to take them there.
Helen Budge	I have also had to factor in across the water as well. As I have said it does say in the proposal paper that it would be around 2.5 miles. We have put in some mileage for the nautical miles on the water. So probably all children would be picked up from their homes on Bressay and taken across to Bell's Brae.
Beatrice Lowe	I reckon that my ones are going to have to be travelling about 50 – 55 minutes each way with your proposal. That is quite a long travelling time for a peerie bairn.
Helen Budge	That is something that we would have to look at. We can look at how we can reduce the time. We will look at that as we progress through. If that is the time, you think it is, it does seem like a long time, and we would have to look into that.
Unknown	Following on from that there is a lot of talk in the consultation document about equality. How equal is it when one child is spending 1 ½ hours travelling to and from school, when another child at the next desk might only have 10 minutes journey to school. One child has time to play and

	<p>we are told play is really important, the other child is sitting on a bus maybe on a ferry, maybe waiting for a ferry.</p>
Helen Budge	<p>We tend to find that across Shetland there are examples where young children do have to travel on a bus and in this case on a ferry too. We do find that we have different distances folk do have to travel to school and we accept that. We feel the experience they get at school is a very good one, so in respect of the time for play, there is time for play throughout the school day as well as I think what you are talking about - in the morning before they come to the school, or after school.</p>
Unknown	<p>Are you looking into ways of using the school here in conjunction with the town schools? The town schools are very full and this school has excellent facilities and has given really good service. Would there be any way that some part of the children's education could take part here? It has very good resources for outdoor education, and at least then the children on Bressay would be able to have at least some of their education even sporadically near their home.</p>
Helen Budge	<p>I think that is something that we need to look at. If I can go back to the point about the capacity at Bell's Brae Primary. At the moment there are 295 children in the primary department. The department has capacity for 434 children and has enough space to hold these children and quite a number more. I know that it is quite often reported that the school is at capacity but that is actually not the case with the roll that is in the school at the moment.</p> <p>In respect of what we could use the school for. If this consultation highlights through responses that we should consider holding onto the building and consider what else it could be used for (leasing it to others or other departments within the council itself) there would be opportunities there. There are other ways in which young folk can come together on Bressay, which are still within council departments, for example, the youth club, active schools and the outdoor education. These are all ways within the council that young folk could come together at different times. Out with the council I think it is important that the community worker is working with the community council to look at what else can the young folk can do on Bressay, and how we can bring them together, like this lovely public hall. I am sure there are other events on Bressay that the young folk can come together. We need to explore that within the council, but also out with. There are the kinds of points that we want to hear tonight.</p>
Unknown	<p>You said in the presentation that some felt that there had not been enough time given to try to turn the situation around in terms of the roll but the roll has been in decline for the past ten years. I was wondering if any work had been done even in the last five years to try to turn it all around. What has been done?</p>
Helen Budge	<p>In respect of the community itself, there has certainly been an awareness that the roll has been falling. At the last public meeting folk did recognise that since 2006/07, the roll has continued to drop from 24 to the number that we have now - four. In 2010/11 there were 17 young folk, so it did go</p>

	<p>up slightly and came back again. We have seen the roll fall, but the placing requests we have received in the last couple of years has meant the roll has fallen more than just a kind of natural decline. The maximum roll that could be just now is 15. Going back to the public meeting some folk were going back maybe 20 years when the roll was around 50. The roll has been falling in that way which I think some people would say was a decline in the population of people but if you look at the household numbers these have not declined in the same way as the pupil roll. It does seem to suggest that there is a different socio-economic structure to Bressay than what used to be. That broadens the reasons out into the wider aspect and into some of the work the community council and community worker are very aware off. I cannot answer what work they have done over the past few years, but it is certainly something they are aware off now.</p>
Unknown	<p>If you look back not much more than 10 years the roll was over 50 for the combined primary and nursery. The decline has been greater from the 32, 36 figure, and over a much shorter period. Tied in with that is there any other area in Shetland where primary children are obliged to use a ferry or boat service to get to school?</p>
Helen Budge	<p>Currently for primary pupils, no.</p>
Unknown	<p>Would there be any change under some of the many interesting proposals that have been discussed through the Blueprint and succeeding process?</p>
Helen Budge	<p>The area we are looking at just now is the Strategy for Secondary Education applying more to the older pupils. The direction we have from council at the moment is to continue on with the proposals that we have for primary, so there is no change proposed for that. At the moment we have a large number of folk that are choosing to take their children across on the ferry, on a daily basis. About 68% of the young folk that could be here. We have to take into account what that means for all the young folk, at the moment and that is what we are looking at.</p>
Unknown	<p>Just broadening out a little bit further I realise there are various factors complex factors at work. You have just indicated the decrease in the number of children attending the school as opposed to how many could. This is also an idea that the falling school roll and the decline in the socio-economic structure of Bressay is partly symptomatic of the community and perhaps there is some kind of message to the general council that the community has been neglected since we did not get a fixed link in 2007 and some of the things which need to be addressed and should be addressed on a community wide basis and perhaps this should be some kind of wake up call.</p>
Cllr. M. Stout	<p>I think that is a fair point. A fledgling Bressay Development Group has been set up which I am personally very encouraged by. I think it is an opportunity for the wider community to start looking back over the last few years and actually work out why the school is in this state. It is not just about the fact that there are not enough numbers. We have got to understand why there are not enough people to make the school viable at the moment. It is my hope that there might be some positive things to</p>

	<p>come out of this. I mean to emphasise what Helen has been saying this is not something that the education department is deliberately doing. This is not another part of an attack on Bressay as such, and again the more people who respond to this consultation and make the points that they have been making already will strengthen the case for the development group and help find some other solutions. From the council perspective I think there is a sympathy within the council for Bressay. Obviously we are not allowed to officially mothball the school, but certainly a clear indication from the executive committee that they would be willing to at least not disposing of the building quickly so that we have an opportunity to find some of those possibilities.</p>
Unknown	<p>I think that is a good point but my feeling is that you will actually be loosing the school right when you are at a position where you are starting to accept there have been problems in the community which have led to the school not being very viable. If you are just getting to a point now where you are thinking about starting to address these problems and have a development group, it just seems like you might want to hang on to the school, small though it may be, but keep it because it can be a part of that wider discussion. But once it is gone, it probably is gone and you lose a lot of possibilities for the wider development of Bressay. I have lived here for seven years. I don't have children but I am involved with the children and events within the school. It has been really valuable. I think when we are trying to look at the community wide issues, this is a really important one and we are not just talking about moving the children down to the next community, we are talking about to a different island and loosing it all and I think that really needs to be thought about again.</p>
Helen Budge	<p>This is when it becomes very difficult to isolate what we have to look at within Children's Services - the best education that we can deliver to the young folk and the issues around the broader community. For each consultation report or process we enter into we conduct a socio-economic study. This is not part of the statutory process but we find it to be very helpful in pulling together further information on each of the areas. We get an independent group to carry out the study. It will be in touch with some of you around some of the points that you are making tonight regarding the socio-economic side of things. We do have to focus on the educational benefits for the young folk and we have to consider in this particular case what that means for the young folk here in Bressay and what educational benefits there would be in them going to a different school.</p>
Unknown	<p>My ones do still seem to be getting quite a good education at the moment Helen. I do agree with what has said. It does state here (in proposal) that you want a school estate which is flexible and responsive but if you close the school it is no longer either of those things. The Bressay population and the school roll have fluctuated considerably over a lot of years. The 50 number is a particularly high time. It has gone up and down considerably for a longer period than that. There is the position, particularly if we try and look at a better outlook for Bressay, that the school roll will raise again. I just wish you could get a more innovative way to keep both our bairns that are here at the moment content for the</p>

	time being whilst trying to build something a bit better for the next lot of bairns coming along.
Helen Budge	I am not suggesting that your bairns are neither content or getting a good education. What I am saying is that we need to consider that and I do accept the roll has fluctuated. From 2004 – 13/14 the roll has never been below 10 until now. The roll was 32, 31, 29, 24, 20, 13, 17, 11, and 10. This is a particularly low roll. During that time there were a number of placing requests but not to the extent that we have now. In response to the information we sought from parents, the types of reasons that they gave for actually having their children going to other schools is that they wanted to be with a larger peer group, they wanted more social interaction. A very mixed lot of responses. Sometimes it was the case that they attended nursery there and they wanted to continue through with the bairns they had become friendly with and had social interaction with. We have to take all that into consideration and I think that is why there is the process of mothballing - not in statute but in guidance. We are trying to be flexible in this particular situation and there is the possibility of not moving the building on to anybody else by selling it but to look at something that the building could then be opened again if there was a number of folk who want to return to the school. We are trying to be as flexible as we possibly can be and that is coming across clearly tonight that this is something you want to see and look into and propose through the consultation report as we progress through this.
June Porter	The Community Council convened their first meeting with a number of key individuals to look at setting up a Development Group. That first meeting took place before the October holidays. There was an interim steering group set up and I understand there is a follow up meeting with that group on 03 November with a community workshop planned for the 11 November. That will give an opportunity for the wider public to come with their ideas, and to get involved. From that point they will be looking to form a formal committee to take forward the development group with a set of aims and vision to meet the needs that are set by the workshop.
Cllr. M. Stout	Just to explore, Helen, you mentioned the reasons for why Bell's Brae is the receiving school as opposed to the option of having Sound.
Helen Budge	We found the majority of placing requests were going to Bell's Brae. Recently it is evened out so there are roughly half going to Bell's Brae and half going to Sound. Bell's Brae is the closer of the schools, so if we are speaking about travel distance for young folk, we want to have them travelling as short a distance as possible which is why we are proposing Bell's Brae as apposed to Sound.
Cllr. M Stout	For the sake of exploring it, is there an implication for bairns with a placing request for Sound they will not actually have travel provided to Sound.
Helen Budge	As we are altering the catchment area for Bell's Brae to encapsulate Bressay. For a normal placing request the parent has to find their own method of travel to that school. That is not something we would normally have with the ones that are travelling just now. As part of this proposal it would be we move the catchment area for Bressay so that is the young

	folk who would get transport.
Cllr. M Stout	It was raised earlier and at other meetings - has any consideration been given to when the ferry stops running due to bad weather and what will happen in that kind of a situation.
Helen Budge	That has certainly come up at previous meetings at the informal stage. Currently for those folk that are coming out of the isle and going to Bell's Brae, Sound or any of the other schools emergency contact details as a planned set up. It would be a case of using that same system which all our schools have to consider where would be an address or a contact that would be on the mainland side. What we tend to find is that if the ferries are going to stop running they tend to phone the schools very early to say that they are actually thinking they might stop, and could you please get the bairns to the ferry. That happens for the Anderson High School bairns as well as the other bairns currently. We would look to see that all the emergency arrangements we have in place currently. There may be an issue for some folk who may not have contacts on the mainland and that is something that we would have to explore with each individual to ensure that there were some kind of arrangements for them.

Meeting closed at 8.00pm



**Shetland Islands Council  
Children's Services**

**Appendix D – Transcript of the Public Meeting held at  
Bell's Brae Primary School on Thursday 31 October 2013**



## **Meeting Held on 31 October 2013 at 7:00 pm**

### **Bell's Brae Primary School**

- Chairperson – Councillor Vaila Wishart, Education and Families Committee Chair
- Councillors in attendance – Councillor Alan Wishart and Councillor Michael Stout
- Officers in attendance: Audrey Edwards, Executive Manager – Quality Improvement and Chris Horrix, Executive Manager – Early Years and ASN
- Public attendees – Two plus Stuart Maxwell, Education Scotland
- Apologies: Councillor Malcolm Bell
- Note Takers – Toby Sandison and Katie Kent

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 Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class and transfer pupils to Bell's Brae Primary School.

My name is Councillor Vaila Wishart and I will Chair tonight's meeting. The others on the Panel are: Audrey Edwards, Executive Manager, Quality Improvement and Chris Horrix, Executive Manager for Early Years and Additional Support Needs.

Also present tonight is Mr Stewart Maxwell, Inspector with Education Scotland. He is present as an observer and will take no part in the meeting. His observations will contribute to the report Education Scotland is required to prepare for the local authority on the proposal being discussed tonight.

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 Bell's Brae Primary School, for example, parent, pupil, grandparent, member of public, etc. Any questions on that?"

I will now ask Audrey Edwards to give the two short presentations.

Audrey Edwards corrected an error in the Proposal Paper. This is at the top of Page 17 and relates to specialist expressive arts provision in Bell's Brae Primary School. There are three bullet points and the third one should read 0.8 full-time equivalent PE teacher, not music teacher.

The copy of the proposal paper which is available on the website has been corrected and there is a note there explaining this.

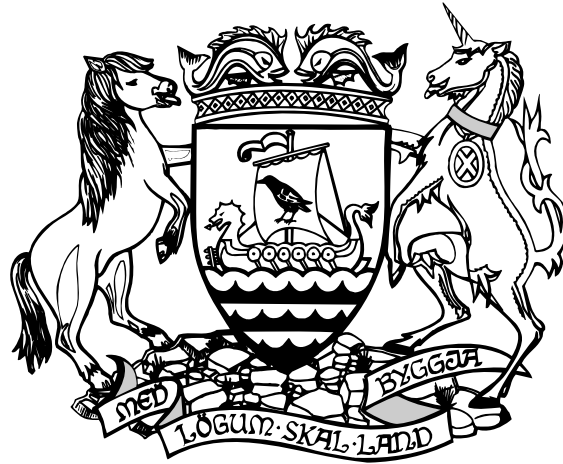
Audrey Edwards noted a suspected past issue with the submission of electronic response forms. All successfully submitted responses would now receive an acknowledgement.

Emma Williamson (Bell's Brae Parent)	What was the general mood / feeling from parents at the Bressay meeting last night?
Cllr. V. Wishart	There were only, I think, two sets of parents in attendance.
Cllr. M. Stout	I think it was three. There was a general sense of acceptance because of the public meetings and the amount of discussion which has taken place already a lot of the issues have been opened up. There is a sense of acceptance but wider concern for the community in Bressay and a recognition that the school closure is a symptom of other problems which the community might be more encouraged to look for answers to. There is also a hope that the Council will help to resolve those issues.
Emma Williamson	Are there any parents there who are adamantly against the closure?
Cllr. A. Wishart	Certainly adamant that they don't want it to close. I would agree with Michael that there is a general acceptance which is not as a result of anything the Council has done. It is really due to complex variety of issues within the community of Bressay. I had suggested at one meeting that the number of pupils coming out of Bressay to Lerwick was a result of convenience for parents. I was very firmly "shot down" for that. There are other issues like quality of education and peer integration.
Cllr. M. Stout	One additional comment I would make: whilst I understand the reason for not allowing mothballing in principle, this is a practical example of why that is a clumsy way of dealing with the situation. It has put a tremendous amount of pressure on certain individual parents who do not want the school to close. Because of the mothballing principle we have a situation where as a local authority we are open to the idea of retaining the school should there be a resurgence of need although this doesn't fit with the Scottish Government guidance.
Emma Williamson	I have a close friend who is a parent on Bressay and sends her children to Bell's Brae Primary School. She is very, very happy with the provision here.
Cllr. V. Wishart	There was some concern about transport and travel distance but on the whole most parents accept it.
Emma Williamson	That friend stays at the "back" of Bressay.
Jim Anderson	Will there be transport provided?
Audrey Edwards	Yes. Should the proposal be accepted. The details are in the paper. A minibus would pick them up and take them across on the ferry to the school.

Cllr. V. Wishart	The Bressay ferry cannot be pre-booked so some arrangement would need to be worked out regarding school transport.
Cllr. M. Stout	It's not an insurmountable problem but I should point out that currently, on the small ferry, it is not possible to have two minibuses aboard. There isn't room.
Emma Williamson	I don't think there's any question that Bell's Brae can easily absorb the Bressay pupils and they could flourish here. I don't have an issue with it. In my year at school during the eighties there were three pupils from Bressay and they've all done well for themselves. It's not like this is a new thing, and in those days there wasn't even a bus for them.
Cllr. M. Stout	I don't think there are many severe problems, but I think there is a sense of the difference between choosing to move and being forced. I'm not making any judgement on that but it's only fair to mention.
Cllr. A. Wishart	The question arose last night – about Bell's Brae's ability to absorb the pupils.
Cllr. V. Wishart	Yes, there's a perception that Bell's Brae is "bursting at the seams".
Audrey Edwards	Bell's Brae currently has a roll of 295 pupils, and there is capacity for 434. This is taking two classes at each stage. There is space and staff for that.
Cllr. A. Wishart	Surprising contradiction as it goes against the general perception that Bell's Brae is "bursting at the seams". . I'm not sure where that view has come from.
Emma Williamson	Could it be due to the number of placing requests [into Bell's Brae]?
Audrey Edwards	Possibly, and that is just something the school has to cope with. I have discussed this with the Head Teacher in the past. There is a lot of movement in and out during the year.
Cllr. V. Wishart	Are there any more questions?
Cllr. A. Wishart	I think a lot of the questions last night were quite sensible and practical or of a technical nature. There was a sense of, "yes, this is very likely going to happen".
Audrey Edwards	Yes and it's important all of that is fully addressed in the Consultation Report.

Meeting closed at 7.30pm





**Shetland Islands Council  
Children's Services**

**Appendix E – Health Impact Assessment**



# **Health Impact Assessment**

## **Proposed closure Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class**

## **Proposed transfer of children affected to Bell's Brae Primary School**

**Health Improvement Department**

**NHS Shetland**

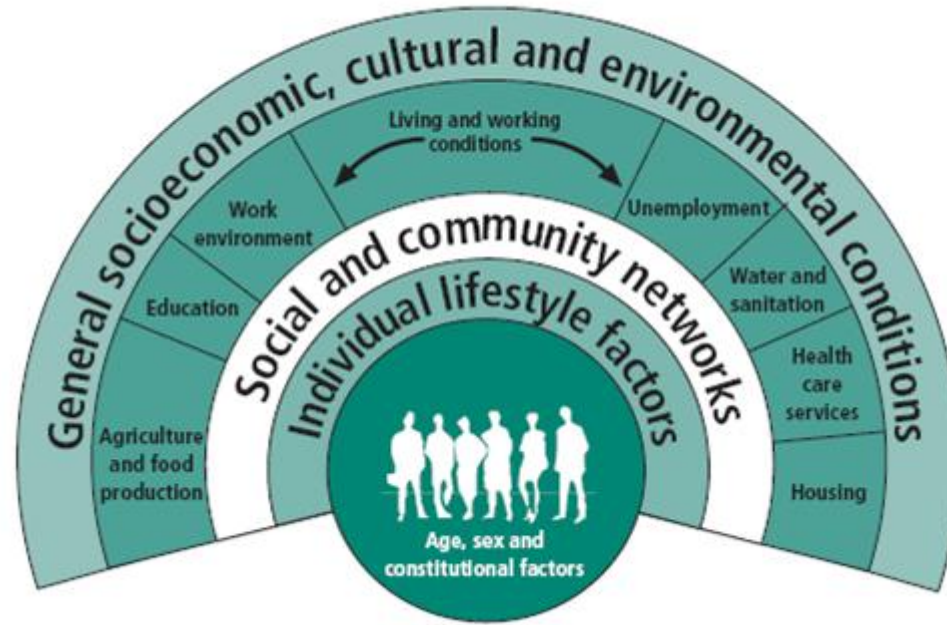
**20<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

## 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 Bressay Primary School and nursery class. 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)



## **Bressay - a brief outline**

The island of Bressay is 7 miles (11 km) long by 3 miles (5 km) wide with a current population of approximately 368 (2011 Census), down from 384 in 2001. There are 174 households, up from 161 in 2001<sup>1</sup>. The island lies off the east coast of the Shetland mainland, separated from Lerwick by Bressay Sound, a sheltered shipping channel that has provided safe anchorage for vessels for centuries. Bressay is reached from the Shetland mainland by a five-minute ferry crossing that runs at hourly intervals during the day and on a more frequent basis at peak times.

The Bressay fish-meal factory at Heogan is the main private employer on the island. There is a primary school, community hall, shop, Post Office, marina, church and burial ground at Mel. There is a Heritage Centre at Leiraness and a hotel/bar at Maryfield. There are also public toilets at Maryfield ferry terminal and the Mail pier. A play-park in Fullaburn was completed in 2000.

The 2003 Employers Survey found there to be 54 Full time jobs and 26 part time jobs, equalling a total of 80 jobs and a total of 63 FTE jobs in Bressay. Males occupy the majority of full time employment, (with 85.2% of fulltime jobs occupied by males) while females occupy the majority of part time employment (with 69.2% of part-time jobs occupied by females). The 2001 census found full time employment made up the highest proportion of economic activity, with 41.2% of the working age population in fulltime employment, 11.4% part time employed, and 9.6% self employed.

The combined total of employed/self employed 16 to 74 year olds was 62.2%, which is lower than the Shetland average of 70.8%.

The rate of early retirement is higher in Bressay than Shetland as a whole, with 15.4% in retirement compared to the average of 11.1%.

There have been limited employment opportunities in Bressay over recent years. Agriculture/crofting remains an important sector, and tourism is important particularly in the summer. The natural scenery and bird life is a main attraction to visitors, as well as the lighthouse and the Heritage centre. The Maryfield hotel/bar and the Northern Lights Holistic Spa offer accommodation on the isle.

## **How the HIA has been conducted**

The HIA has been conducted using the following methods:

- Review of Community Development data
- Survey with local community
- General internet based literature research in line with concerns raised
- Completion of Health Impact Assessment Tool and presentation of recommendations

## Health Impact Assessment

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

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.
<b>Will the proposal have a direct impact on health, mental health and wellbeing?</b>		<p>Parents/carers who felt that there would be a negative impact were concerned about peer pressure and the potential for children being picked on for coming from a smaller school. They were concerned about bullying and about sex, drugs and smoking, about access to healthy eating and healthy snacks. They were concerned about long travel times (almost 2 hours per day) and a perceived need to conform to fit in a large school while small groups accept individuals more easily. Some parents/carers felt that there had been or would be a positive impact on health, in terms of mental and emotional health, in confidence and in ability to interact with other children and general happiness. They felt there would be bigger classes to interact with, more friends, team games (PE), and more social interaction</p>
<b>Will the policy have an impact on social, economic and environmental living conditions that would indirectly affect health?</b> <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><b>Housing</b> It may be that new families move to Bressay who may have been put off by the thought of putting their children to a very small school. On the other hand, parents of young children may be put off from moving into Bressay because of the lack of a primary school.</p> <p><b>Transport</b> There was a concern raised that travel arrangements can be difficult for arranging for children on and off the island to play with each other, or for fitting in with clubs and groups on the mainland. Other parents didn't believe that the proposal would have an impact on transport.</p>

		<p>Child Development – it is likely that increased interaction with other children will lead to more opportunities for child development. If the closure goes ahead, it will be important to continue to capitalise on opportunities within Bressay as well and not to assume that just because a school no longer exists, activities for children and associated adults can no longer exist either.</p> <p>Social isolation It appears that the move to a bigger school may provide greater opportunities for social interaction. Some parents are concerned that Bressay bairns will lose contact with each other, while others feel that the move to a larger school will help to reunite them.</p> <p>Economic – potential for both positive and negative impacts; minimal impact on local shop</p>
<p><b>Will the proposal affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?</b></p> <p>For example will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?</p> <p>You should consider whether any socioeconomic or equalities groups* will be particularly affected</p>		<p>Potential for increase in physical activity opportunities. Some parents are concerned that their children will no longer be able to cycle to school; others that there will be no impact. The proposal states that transport will be provided to enable children to travel from Bressay to Bell's Brae. Unfortunately this may decrease opportunities for walking/active transport to school.</p>
<p><b>Will there be a change in demand for or access to health and social care services?</b></p> <p>For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community services, Mental Health and Social Services?</p> <p>You should consider whether any socioeconomic</p>	<p>It is unlikely that there will be an impact on demand for or access to health and social care services.</p>	

or equalities groups* will be particularly affected		
<b>Will the proposal have an impact on global health?</b>	No impact identified	
<b>Any other issues?</b>	None identified	Family; Less time together Local Community; The Bressay
*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

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

1. Mental and emotional effect of primary pupils leaving home.	Bressay primary children	Potentially	Unlikely to be long term effect	Yes, on behalf of parents/members of the community who object to the proposal.	No	There is potential for both positive and negative impacts. Experiences of children who have already moved suggest a positive rather than a negative impact.
2. Concern that there is a likelihood of bullying in larger school	Bressay Primary School 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	<p>Evidence is that there is no greater probability of bullying in a smaller school rather than a larger school. The receiving school has robust anti-bullying policies and processes in place. In larger schools there is more choice of friends and therefore can be less socially isolating. 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.</p> <p>Positive impact – may enhance coping mechanisms</p>
3. Social Isolation	Not clear			No	No	Concern that the primary age children will spend less time on the island with the community and their families
4. Increase in less healthy individual lifestyle	Bressay Primary School children	Yes	Yes	No	No	Currently physical activity levels among children in Bressay vary, with some meeting the national recommendations and others falling significantly short. Moving to A primary school on the mainland will provide opportunities for increasing

						<p>or maintaining physical activity levels, but it should be ensured that this happens.</p> <p>Negative impact for some children perception that there will be less physical activity available Positive impact – access to sports centres, swimming pools and other alternative leisure activities</p> <p>All schools in Scotland are required to deliver minimum standards of nutrition to their children. No evidence that there will be any significant impact – either positive or negative.</p>
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Table 3. Stage 4 Analysis: quantify or describe important health impacts

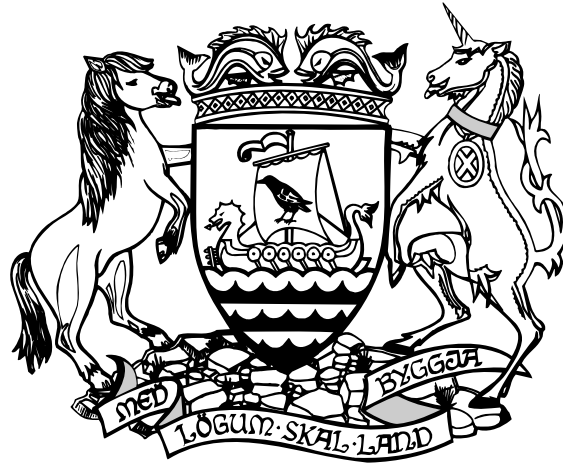
There are no significant health impacts from the proposed closure.
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Table 4. Stage 5: Recommendations to improve policy

<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>It would be helpful if Community Development workers could offer some support (if required) in developing opportunities for the community to come together in different ways that don't rely on a school building, to ensure/encourage community cohesiveness/intergenerational contact.</p>
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<sup>i</sup> Census: Population and Household Estimates for Scotland – Release 1C (Part Two) | 15 August 2013





**Shetland Islands Council  
Children's Services**

**Appendix F – Integrated Impact Assessment**



<b>INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	<p><b>How to answer the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) questions:</b></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 <b>Positive, Neutral or Negative. If there are both Positive and Negative outcomes then answer Neutral and give an explanation.</b>	You must write a note for each question explaining why you have answered Positive, Neutral or Negative	Reducing Negative Impacts
<b>INTENDED OUTCOME:</b>	The closure of Bressay Primary School and Nursery Class (Draft IIA for the Proposal)			
<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES</b>			
<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>Culture</b>	<b>Positive, Neutral, Negative</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.C01 Does the intended outcome impact on participation, among locals and visitors, in Shetland's culture and heritage?	Neutral	n/a	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.C02 Does the intended outcome impact on access to local cultural activities?	Neutral	n/a	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.C03 Does the intended outcome impact on diversity in local cultural activities?	Neutral	n/a	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.C04 Does the intended outcome impact on preservation and/or conservation of local cultural heritage?	Neutral	n/a	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.C05 Does the intended outcome impact on interpretation and promotion of Shetland's culture?	Neutral	n/a	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.C06 Does the intended outcome impact on promotion of Shetland's cultural heritage outside the islands?	Neutral	n/a	
<b>Question</b>	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	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.C08 Does the intended outcome impact on development of promotional and commercial opportunities for cultural heritage practitioners?	Neutral	n/a	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.C09 Does the intended outcome impact on professional and artistic development of local practitioners?	Neutral	n/a	
<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Positive, Neutral, Negative</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>

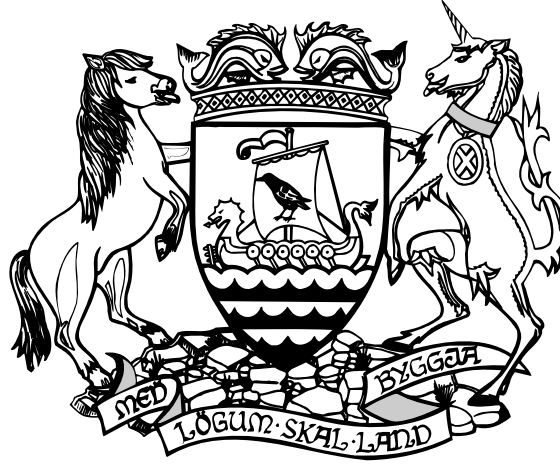
Question	IIA.PC.EC01 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on achievement of sustainable economic growth throughout Shetland?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC02 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on access to a stable and sustainable employment market?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC03 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on development and retention of a skilled workforce of relevance to Shetland's needs?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC04 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on opportunities for and access to education, training and lifelong learning to retain educational achievement?	Positive	The intended outcome has educational benefits of access to larger numbers of children who they can develop active learning opportunities with, work and play in teams and can socialise with.	
Question	IIA.PC.EC05 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on development of Shetland's reputation as a high-quality visitor destination?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC06 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on development of Shetland's reputation as a producer of high-quality products?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC07 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on access to air and sea transportation links?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC08 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on adding value in all areas of local manufacturing and food production?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC09 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on production of hydrocarbons and diversification of activity at Sullom Voe Oil Terminal?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC10 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on establishment of robust broadband services to homes, businesses and organisations in Shetland?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EC11 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on research and development of renewable energy infrastructure for commercial, domestic, public and community use?	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	In previous consultations in small primary schools, consultees have felt there would be a negative effect on the community.	

<b>Question</b>	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	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.EC15 Is the intended outcome likely to have any impacts on development of the local creative and heritage sector?	Neutral	n/a	
<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>Positive, Neutral, Negative</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.EN01 Does the intended outcome promote / integrate environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development?	Neutral	Both. Positive in that there will be less energy consumption, however it is negative as there will be more transport. Two taxis will be needed to transport children to Bell's Brae Primary School	
<b>Question</b>	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	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.EN03 Are there any environmental problems in the area which the intended outcome could effect?	Neutral	n/a	
<b>Question</b>	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	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.EN05 Will the intended outcome lead to cumulative effects?	Neutral	Both. Positive in that there will be less energy consumption, however it is negative as there will be more transport. Two taxis will be needed to transport children to Bell's Brae Primary School.	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.EN06 Will the intended outcome result in health risks, such as smells, pollution, noise and accidents?	Neutral	n/a	
<b>Question</b>	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	
<b>Question</b>	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	
<b>Question</b>	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	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.PC.EN10 Will there be an impact on nationally or international protected landscapes?	Neutral	n/a	

SECTION:	Equality: Will any of the following protected characteristics experience change as a result of the intended outcome?	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.EQ01 Ethnic minority communities – consider different ethnic groups, nationalities, language barriers.	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ02 Gender	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ03 Gender reassignment – consider transgender and transsexual people. This can include issues such as privacy of data and harassment.	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ04 Religion or belief – consider people with different religions, beliefs or no belief.	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ05 Disability – consider attitudinal, physical and social barriers.	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ06 Age – consider across age ranges. This can include safeguarding, consent and child welfare.	Positive	Bressay Primary School children will have access to a wider peer group and a larger number of children to socialise with and make friendships with.	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ07 Sexual orientation	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.EQ08 Pregnancy and maternity – consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities	Neutral	n/a	
SECTION:	Health	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.H01 Will the intended outcome have an impact on diet and nutrition?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.H02 Will the intended outcome have an impact on exercise and physical activity?	Negative	Children will no longer be able to walk or cycle to school	Curriculum for Excellence requires all schools to provide primary children with two hours of physical activity each week.
Question	IIA.PC.H03 Will the intended outcome have an impact on substance use: tobacco, alcohol or drugs?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.H04 Will the intended outcome have an impact on sexual health?	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.H05 Will the intended outcome have an impact on learning and skills?	Positive	The intended outcome has educational benefits of access to larger numbers of children who they can develop active learning opportunities with, work and play in teams and can socialise with.	
SECTION:	Poverty: will people with different economic circumstances experience different levels of change as a result of the intended outcome?	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.P01 Young people whose parents are not able to ensure they are able to access opportunities and grow up feeling a part of the community within which they live	Neutral	n/a	

Question	IIA.PC.P02 Those who are physically disabled or with a long-term illness and their carers, when they do not receive adequate support and understanding	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P03 Those looking after a young family without access to their own transport, particularly those living in remote areas of Shetland	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P04 Older people unable to access opportunities that would enable them to feel a part of the community	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P05 Those who are of no fixed address, homeless or residing in temporary accommodation	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P06 Ethnic minority individuals in Shetland, whether cultural or as a result of employer barriers, and of degrees of social exclusion for white incomers to Shetland	Neutral	n/a	
Question	IIA.PC.P07 Adults of any age who have low self-esteem and/or poor mental health, often due to situations which have developed as a result of negative experiences in the past and can result in homelessness and substance misuse.	Neutral	n/a	
SECTION:	Stakeholders	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.PC.S01 What will the impacts be for wider social support, social networks and neighbourliness?	Negative	Currently there are events held in the school which community members attend. There are 16 children who could attend Bressay Primary School; only 4 actually attend.	There will be similar opportunities at the receiving school as a number of the local children already attend Bell's Brae Primary School.
Question	IIA.PC.S02 What will the impacts be for citizen power and influence?	Negative	If Bressay Primary School closes, Bressay 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	Bressay children will not be in their communities for as long as they are now.	Bressay children will have a short journey time home, and can still access community facilities like the playpark and shop every day.
SECTION:	RESOURCES			
SECTION:	Assets and Property	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.R.A01 Will there be an impact on Shetland's assets? such as land, buildings or equipment, including ICT	Neutral	This may change depending on what future use is agreed for the Bressay Primary School building.	
SECTION:	Finance	Positive, Neutral, Negative	Note	Mitigation
Question	IIA.R.F01 Will there be an impact on Capital Spend?	Positive	Capital spend would be required in future years to maintain the school.	

<b>Question</b>	IIA.R.F02 Will there be an impact on Operational Budgets / year?	<b>Positive</b>	None of the operating costs required to run a school will be required if the school closes.	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.R.F03 Will there be an impact on Shetland's Finances?	<b>Positive</b>	Closure will make an ongoing saving in the Council's revenue budgets.	
<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>Legal</b>	<b>Positive, Neutral, Negative</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Question</b>	IIA.R.L01 Does the intended outcome have any legal implications?	Neutral	n/a	
<b>Question</b>	IIA.R.L02 Does the intended outcome have any reputational impacts on the organisation?	<b>Neutral</b>	Both. Failure of the Council to reduce budgets will cause reputational damage, however closing schools is not popular in affected communities.	
<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Positive, Neutral, Negative</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Question</b>	IIA.R.S01 Decide whether there is an impact on staff, in particular in relation to those with protected characteristics	<b>Negative</b>	The closure of the Bressay will result in the loss of some part-time public sector jobs in the area.	The council's relevant policies for redundancy, redeployment, transfer and retirement will be used to support affected staff into positive futures.



**Shetland Islands Council  
Children's Services**

**Appendix G – Bressay Primary School Socio-Economic Study**



**BRESSAY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Socio-Economic Study**

**A Report**

**for**

**SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL**

**by**

**Steve Westbrook, Economist**

***in partnership with***

**Sandy Anderson**

**9 January 2014**

***(Version 2)***

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**Bressay Primary School - Socio-Economic Study**  
**A Report for Shetland Islands Council**

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<b>Appendix 1 : Bressay Postal Code Areas</b>	

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report was commissioned by Shetland Islands Council (SIC) to inform its consideration of the future of Bressay Primary School. The review of Bressay Primary School is not one of the proposals agreed as part of the Council's Blueprint for Education, which aims to set the shape of the Education Service across Shetland. Rather the review is being undertaken because of:
- The continuing decline in the school roll;
  - No uptake of the pre-school provision available in the school; and
  - Discussions held with parents and the community.
- 1.2 Although not part of the Blueprint, consideration of the future of the primary school fits within that overall context. It is also informed by the report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education and the changes to the law on school closure consultations which the Scottish Government intends to take forward in 2014.
- 1.3 The context also includes a need for Shetland Islands Council to achieve cost savings. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan includes a saving of £3.248 million from Children's Services, including schools. This is in addition to cost savings made in previous years.
- 1.4 Bressay Primary School has been listed by the Scottish Government as a very remote rural school, and it is therefore subject to special provisions under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Local authorities are required to consider three factors which acknowledge and reflect the particular importance of a school to the more fragile and vulnerable rural and remote communities of Scotland:
- any viable alternative to closure;
  - the likely effect on the local community if the school were to close (with particular reference to the sustainability of the community);
  - the likely effect of different travelling arrangements occasioned by the closure.
- 1.5 The terms of reference for this study were to:
- provide information on the economy of Bressay Primary School's catchment area (i.e. employment, business output, etc);
  - identify the workforce requirements of businesses based in the Bressay Primary School catchment area;
  - identify the direct and other impacts of closing Bressay Primary School;

- identify the potential impacts relating to families leaving Bressay as a result of the school's closure;
  - investigate possible mitigating factors should the school close, such as the prospect for additional private and public sector employment.
- 1.6 In compiling the report we have drawn upon previous research by SIC and other organisations. We have also used national and local information sources and have received helpful input from a wide range of consultees. In particular, we are grateful to local people and Council staff. We visited Bressay as part of our review, met with a number of interested parties and followed this up with extensive telephone contacts.
- 1.7 Data from the 2011 Census of Population is being published, and the most recent releases give detailed information at small area level. To complement this we have also compiled our own database from a variety of sources, including the Council Tax register, the electoral roll and information provided to us by the community through a series of discussions with local contacts and others with knowledge of the area's population and businesses.

### **The Council's Anticipated Cost Savings**

- 1.8 According to the Council's Proposal Paper (September 2013), the net annual cost saving to the Education budget through closing Bressay Primary School would be £74,693.
- 1.9 This saving takes into account additional costs that will be incurred at Bell's Brae Primary School in Lerwick, the cost of school transport and a loss of Grant Aided Expenditure to the Council. It also allows for the transfer of budgets related to central support services and for residual property costs.
- 1.10 The direct staffing reductions and savings in other expenditures by the school in the local economy would generate the negative economic impacts that are assessed in Section 4 of this report.

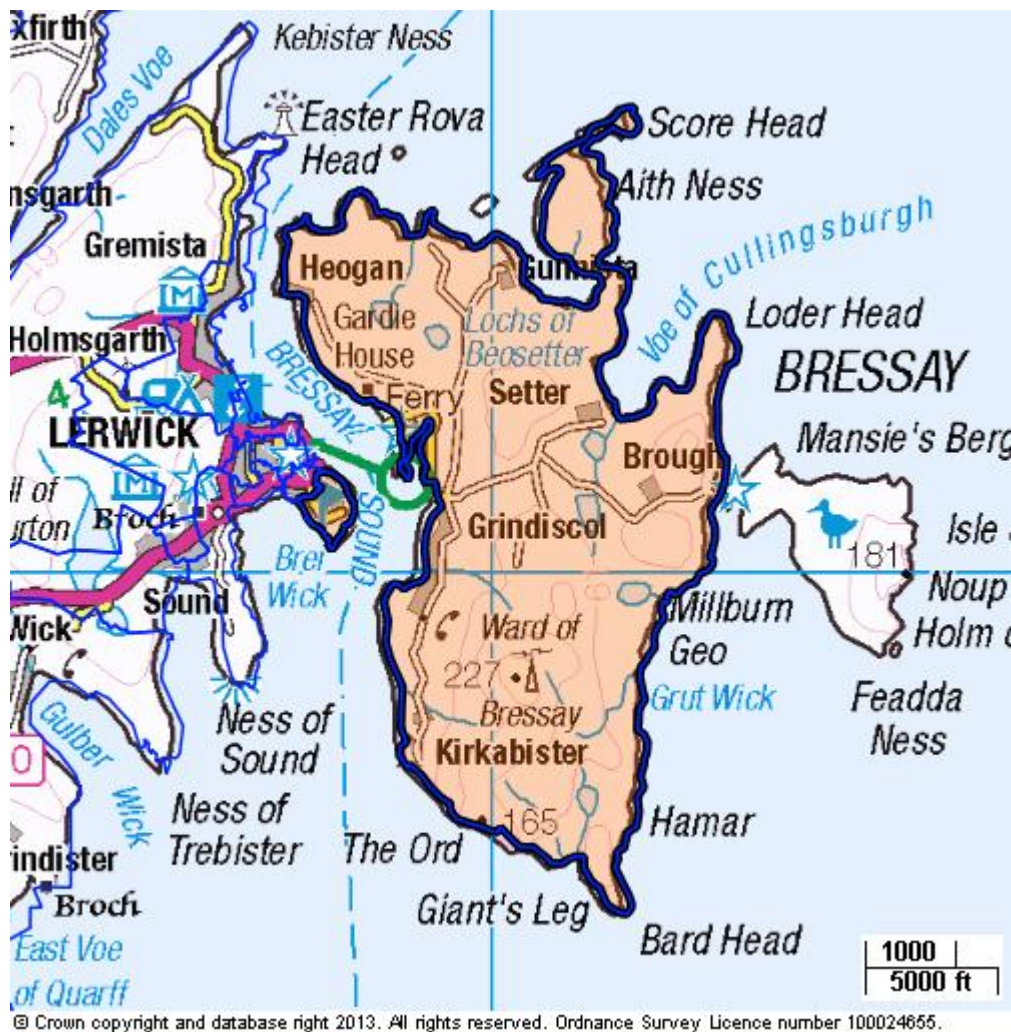
## 2. BACKGROUND

### Location

- 2.1 Bressay is an island to the east of the Shetland mainland, separated from Lerwick by Bressay Sound. The short ferry crossing runs at hourly intervals through the day and more frequently at peak periods. Bressay is 7 miles long and 3 miles wide, with most of the population living on the west side. The Bressay Primary School catchment area takes in the whole island.

### Population

- 2.2 Data zones are the smallest geographical unit normally used by the Scottish Government in compiling and publishing statistical information, including Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, and in compiling the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The data zone which covers Bressay also takes in the South Ness area of Lerwick. The data zone has a population of 866<sup>1</sup>, much larger than Bressay itself and this restricts the value of information based on analysis of that population grouping.



Source: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics

<sup>1</sup> Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, at [www.sns.gov.uk](http://www.sns.gov.uk)

- 2.3 However, data releases from the 2011 Census<sup>2</sup> have included population and household figures for inhabited islands and other small areas, including postcode areas (see below). This shows the island of Bressay as having had a population of 368 people in 2011. This was a reduction of 16 (4.1%) since the 2001 Census compared with a rise of 5.4% in the overall Shetland population. This is a reversal of the previous trend of population growth, with numbers rising between each successive Census since 1971, when the population was 251<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.4 Dividing the Census total into postcode areas (as shown on the maps attached as Appendix 1) shows how the population is spread across the island. There are population clusters centred on the ferry terminal, but the largest grouping of households - around a third of the total - is at the south end of the island.

Postcode	Usually resident population	Households with usual residents
ZE2 9DH	22	12
ZE2 9EL	59	30
ZE2 9EN	25	12
ZE2 9EP	32	16
ZE2 9ER	127	57
ZE2 9ES	48	20
ZE2 9ET	28	13
ZE2 9EU	8	6
ZE2 9EW	19	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>174</b>

- 2.5 Analysis of the latest release from the 2011 Census allows a more detailed comparison of the age structure of Bressay compared with Shetland and Scotland.

	Bressay no	Bressay %	Shetland %	Scotland %
Total population	368		23,167	5,295,403
aged 0-4	15	4.1	6.0	5.5
aged 5-15	42	11.4	13.3	11.8
aged 16-29	55	15.0	15.9	18.5
aged 30-44	68	18.5	19.9	20.0
aged 45-59	79	21.5	21.9	21.1
aged 60-74	75	20.4	16.0	15.5
aged 75 and over	34	9.3	7.1	7.7

- 2.6 Bressay has a lower proportion of the younger age groups (up to 44) than Shetland or Scotland, and a higher percentage of people aged 60 or over (109 people, or 30% of the total). At the time of the Census there were 3 people aged 90 or older, with the oldest being 94. At the other end of the age scale there were 39 children aged 11 or under (10.6% of the population).

<sup>2</sup> 2011 Census data is available at [www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Shetland in Statistics

- 2.7 In compiling our own database for this study, we tried to count everyone who now lives on Bressay, and 343 current residents were identified. Although this does not have the accuracy of the Census it suggests that the population may have fallen further since 2011 – by up to 25 people, or over 7%. The number of younger children would appear to have fallen – with 27 children of primary school or pre-school age (7.9% of the population).

## Housing

- 2.8 The Census identified 174 households with residents in Bressay. Council records list 182 properties, of which 4 are classed as second homes and 12 as empty – a total of 166 resident households. Our database identifies 20 residential properties as currently being empty or second homes. This would reduce the number of active households to 162, 12 fewer than the Census figure, which supports the possibility that the population may have declined since 2011.
- 2.9 Household size is also analysed in the Census. This shows Bressay with a relatively high proportion of smaller households, with one or two residents, and fewer with three people or more.

	<b>Bressay no</b>	<b>Bressay %</b>	<b>Shetland %</b>	<b>Scotland %</b>
Total households	174			
1 person households	60	34.5	32.1	34.7
2 person households	73	42.0	34.5	34
3 person households	17	9.8	13.9	15.1
4 person households	13	7.5	12.4	11.5
5 person households	10	5.8	5.2	3.7
6 or more person households	1	0.6	1.9	1.1

- 2.10 Current Council records show that 68 properties receive single adult discount for Council Tax purposes – almost all of these are occupied by people living alone.
- 2.11 The Census provides information on the tenure of the housing stock, and in 2011 slightly fewer Bressay homes were owned than in Shetland, with private renting more common.

	<b>Bressay no</b>	<b>Bressay %</b>	<b>Shetland %</b>	<b>Scotland %</b>
Total households	174			
Owned	111	63.8	65.4	62.0
Social rented	41	23.6	23.7	24.3
Private rented	21	12.1	8.6	12.4
Other	1	0.6	2.4	1.3

- 2.12 There are 26 general needs houses in the social rented sector on Bressay – 10 properties with 3 bedrooms, 10 with 2 bedrooms, and 6 with 1 bedroom (or bedsits). There were 50 active applications for social housing in Bressay in March 2013 – 37 of which were for 1 bedroom/bedsit properties. Turnover of

this stock is low, with only 8 properties having been re-let over the last 5 years.

- 2.13 Zoopla<sup>4</sup> lists 19 property sales in Bressay in the last 5 years, with an average price of £81,795. This compares with an average price across Shetland in those 5 years of £114,163 and in Lerwick of £126,563 (50% higher than in Bressay). A search of Shetland solicitors and estate agents shows 2 properties currently advertised for sale but it is understood that a number of other properties would be available to buy or rent.
- 2.14 The 2012 draft Local Development Plan identifies 2 sites on Bressay with potential for residential or mixed use development. There have been 6 planning applications for new houses on Bressay since 2010. Sewage capacity restricts development.

### **Transport**

- 2.15 The return fare on the ferry across Bressay Sound is £5 for an adult foot passenger, with various concessions available. For a car (including driver) the return fare is £12.50. Multi journey tickets are available as well as season tickets paid by direct debit. For example, a monthly payment of £127 (with the 12th month free) gives unlimited foot travel and 20 return car journeys. This means an annual ticket for regular journeys to work on mainland Shetland might cost some £1,400. If a car is not always necessary unlimited foot travel only would cost around £500, with each car journey charged at £8.
- 2.16 The Bressay ferry carries around 200,000 passengers and 70,000 vehicles each year. The normal vessel's carrying load is 125 passengers and around 16 vehicles, but with the recent reduction to 4 crew members the maximum passenger load is now 80. Figures from SIC's recent ferry review suggest that, before the reduction in the crew, this number was exceeded only on occasional sailings, although at peak times – especially 8.30 am – there were often around 70 passengers. Figures for 2013 show that the weekday 8.30 sailing to Lerwick generally operates at or close to maximum vehicle capacity, and occasionally not all vehicles waiting for the ferry can be carried.
- 2.17 A bus service operates in Bressay on 3 mornings each week, and provides a single journey between the different areas of the island and the ferry terminal. Return journeys are on a pre-booked dial a ride basis. This means that the bus service, while useful for shopping or social trips, is unlikely to fit with work routines or specific appointments off Bressay (eg with the doctor).
- 2.18 As most people living on Bressay are not within walking distance of the ferry terminal, car ownership rates are relatively high. To allow for the cost of taking cars on the ferry, some Bressay residents keep one car on the island and another in Lerwick.

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<sup>4</sup> www.zoopla.co.uk

## **Fixed Link**

- 2.19 The possibility of a fixed link – a bridge or tunnel – linking Bressay to the Shetland mainland has been the subject of a number of studies and investigations. A fixed link would make Bressay a more attractive location for residential, commercial and industrial development. Although there is a commitment to take work on the link forward it is unclear how viable it would be in the current economic climate.

## **Services and Facilities**

- 2.20 There is a shop and post office (with petrol pumps) in Bressay, a community hall and a recently opened sports pitch. The hotel operates a bar and restaurant. Other than the school there are no facilities or local services except those which are provided through a home visit. Access to, for example, health services and additional leisure facilities require residents to travel across to Lerwick by ferry.

## **Bressay Primary School**

- 2.21 The school roll at Bressay Primary has steadily fallen over the last 10 years from 40 in 2003/04 to the current 4 in 2013/14, with further projected reductions to 3 pupils in 2014/15 and 2 in 2016/17. 12 other children of primary school age in Bressay are attending schools outwith Bressay (7 attend Bell's Brae Primary School, 4 Sound Primary School, and one Scalloway Primary School), which means that the potential current roll is 16. In the last 5 years there have been 19 placing requests from parents on Bressay for their children to attend an alternative school in Shetland.
- 2.22 Classes start at 9.30am, and finish at 3.30pm. There is no breakfast or after school club, which makes it difficult for working parents with no local support network. There is no private childcare provision on Bressay, and parents must therefore depend on family or other networks for pre-school or after school care.
- 2.23 Although there is space for nursery provision in Bressay Primary School, no parents have taken this up. 4 children from Bressay are attending nursery school away from the island.

## **The School and the Community**

- 2.24 Bressay Primary School is well located in Bressay, close to the Village Hall, the village shop and the ferry terminal. Adjacent to the school, and accessed through the playground, is a multi sports area which is used by the school and by children in the community.
- 2.25 The school is used by the community as a venue for occasional meetings and activities. It can be used as an overspill area if more than one group wishes to use the community hall. Community groups can also use the school's resources, such as the photocopier and fax machine.

- 2.26 In the past the school has been a focus for community cohesion, bringing people together for activities organised through the Parent Council and for events such as school plays and open days. These events draw in all generations from the island and, as has been described to us, are the glue which makes Bressay a community rather than a suburb of Lerwick. As the school roll has declined, however, this relationship between the school and the community has diminished.

### **Voluntary Activity**

- 2.27 5 groups in Bressay are registered as charities with the Office of the Scottish Charity Register. These are:
- Bressay Public Hall Committee
  - Bressay Under 5s Group
  - Lerwick and Bressay Parish Church
  - Bressay History Group
  - Bressay Outreach (a charity supporting causes in Africa).
- 2.28 Bressay History Group owns and operates the Bressay Heritage Centre. The centre is open through the summer with an annual exhibition promoting the island's heritage to visitors. The Group has also reconstructed, next to the Heritage Centre, the central core of a Bronze Age Burnt Mound.
- 2.29 The Under 5s group used to meet weekly in the public hall, but it is not currently in operation.
- 2.30 A number of other community groups are listed on the Shetland Communities website. These are:
- Bressay Boating Club
  - Bressay Model Yacht Club (currently in abeyance)
  - Bressay Senior Citizens Club & Over 60s Group
  - Bressay Sports Club.
- 2.31 The Sports Club has recently opened a new football pitch, raising £290,000 to fund the project.
- 2.32 The Senior Citizen's Club has also gone into abeyance recently. The group's main event was a Christmas lunch and associated fundraising events. Because of the club's difficulties, the hall committee organised a Christmas lunch in 2013, with around 60 people attending.

### 3. THE ISLAND'S ECONOMY

- 3.1 The 2011 Census provides a picture of the economic activity of Bressay residents compared with Shetland and Scotland. It analyses the activity of the 277 Bressay residents aged 16-74.

	<b>Bressay</b>	<b>Bressay %</b>	<b>Shetland %</b>	<b>Scotland %</b>
<i>aged 16-74</i>	277	75.3	73.6	75.0
economically active	214	77.2	78.1	69.0
full time employees	125	45.1	47.6	39.6
part time employees	48	17.3	17.4	13.3
self employed	29	10.5	9.0	7.5
f/t student - employed	4	1.4	1.9	2.9
f/t student - unemployed	0	0.0	0.1	0.8
unemployed	8	2.9	2.0	4.8
retired	44	15.8	12.8	14.9
student	14	5.0	2.5	5.5
other	5	1.9	6.6	10.6

- 3.2 As can be seen, the economic profile of this age group in Bressay is similar to Shetland as a whole. A higher percentage is economically active (in work, self employed or actively looking for work) than in Scotland generally. Bressay has higher levels of self employment and of retired people and students than Shetland as a whole. Relatively few people are economically inactive because of long term illness.
- 3.3 Adding the 34 people in Bressay over the age of 74 to the 44 retired people identified in the table above would give a total of 78 retired people living in Bressay at the time of the Census. This does not include those over retirement age who are still economically active.
- 3.4 Our own analysis of all Bressay residents has allowed us to produce the following estimate of economic activity. This is unlikely to be completely accurate, but it does give the best available quantification of the current situation.

<b>Bressay</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>
<b><i>Population</i></b>		343
Male	52.5%	
Female	47.5%	
<b><i>Economic Activity</i></b>		
Retired	27.4%	94
Otherwise not working	3.5%	12
In education <sup>5</sup> or preschool	18.1%	62
In work <sup>6</sup>	51.0%	175
<b><i>Distribution of jobs</i></b>		
Full time work - local	20.6%	36
Part time work - local	6.9%	12
Full time work - Lerwick	42.3%	74

<sup>5</sup> includes school, college and university students

<sup>6</sup> includes self employed

Part time work - Lerwick	16.6%	29
Full time work – elsewhere in Shetland	7.4%	13
Part time work – elsewhere in Shetland	1.7%	3
Work - elsewhere	4.6%	8

- 3.5 We found 131 people in full time employment and 44 in part time – a total of 175 people in work. This includes self employment so that it compares with 206 identified in the Census, a reduction of 26. We estimate that the number of retired people has grown from 78 to 94 – an increase of 16.
- 3.6 Almost 75% of the Bressay residents who work travel off the island using the ferry to reach Lerwick or other parts of mainland Shetland. Lerwick provides employment for almost 60% of the Bressay workforce.
- 3.7 The main employment sectors are similar to those in Shetland. Bressay has a higher percentage of people employed in public sector jobs, including education and social care, and significantly more in transport, reflecting the importance of work related to the ferry service.

	<b>Bressay %</b>	<b>Shetland %</b>
Agriculture	5.8	6.4
Manufacturing	3.9	5.9
Construction	9.2	11.0
Wholesale and retail trade	11.7	12.1
Transport and storage	15.5	10.1
Accommodation and food	4.8	5.5
Public administration	8.3	6.6
Education	12.6	9.6
Health and social work	16.5	15.9

- 3.8 The figures above show the spread of the Bressay workforce across employment sectors, but do not relate to employment opportunities in Bressay itself. Local employment or self employment provides 27% of the employment of residents that our study has identified. There are relatively few employers in Bressay, with the Council (through the ferry, the school and social care), the hotel and the Shetland Fish Products factory at Heogan being the main employers. While these offer work to local people, employees travel from Lerwick or other parts of Shetland to work in Bressay. For example, the fish products factory employs people from a wide area, with only 4 of its 13 employees (including full and part time workers) Bressay residents.
- 3.9 Other local services, such as the local shop and guest house & spa, provide work for the owners and their family. Similarly there are a number of self employed people based in Bressay, such as tradesmen who can work across Shetland and people working from a home base, but these are generally one person businesses.
- 3.10 Bressay is a crofting community with much of the land held under crofting tenure. Crofting is not included in our local employment data where it is a part time activity which supplements income from other sources. Many people living on crofts do not work their own land and some crofters on

Bressay are working multiple crofts. People often continue in crofting after retirement. It is difficult to put a value on crofting activity – although there will be an overall economic benefit through the output of the crofts, the sale of surplus stock and produce, and land subsidies.

- 3.11 On a larger scale there are 3 farms in Bressay. These are generally family concerns and do not provide wider employment opportunities.
- 3.12 Some Bressay residents travel further than Lerwick to work in other parts of Shetland, including a few working at Sullom Voe and as teachers. Those working outside Shetland are mostly employed as seamen.

### **Bressay Primary School**

- 3.13 The Council's Proposal paper lists the following jobs at the primary school:

- Full time teaching Head Teacher
  - Part time Class Teacher (0.33 FTE)
  - Part time Classroom Assistant (0.26 FTE)
  - Part time Clerical Assistant (0.45 FTE)
  - Part time Cleaner (0.29 FTE)
  - Part time Cook (0.47 FTE)

- 3.14 The current total staffing budget is £90,494, and this would represent the total staff cost saving. Currently the Head Teacher is seconded to another post and a full time teacher has been appointed to provide teaching cover. Because of that, the majority of this saving would impact on Bressay residents.

### **Tourism**

- 3.15 There is a hotel and a guest house & spa on Bressay. Three properties are listed in the Scottish Assessors database as self catering accommodation, including 2 operated by Shetland Amenities Trust. Berths are available for visiting yachts at Bressay Marina, close to the shop and hotel.
- 3.16 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.
- 3.17 13% of the visitors surveyed said they had visited Bressay – around 7,800 people. Many of these visits would have been day trips, and the Visitor Survey suggests that the annual number of bednights in the area was modest, at around 550. With an average spend per night of around £44, this suggests that overnight tourism generated only around £25,000 annually for Bressay. However, this would be an under-estimate of the current situation. The guest house and spa (with 4 rooms) has opened since the Visitor Survey was held and the hotel (with 6 rooms) has new owners. With both offering (and developing) niche products – the spa, restaurants and bar – and benefitting from the tight accommodation market in Lerwick itself, the contribution of overnight tourism to the economy is likely to have grown

strongly. Information from a new Visitor Survey will be available in 2014 and we would expect it to reflect this increase.

- 3.18 There is a limited amount of business tourism in Bressay. This includes some visits by people coming to Shetland for work related to the oil terminal at Sullom Voe as well as occasional visits by those with business or carrying out work on Bressay, for example at the factory at Heogan.
- 3.19 Noss, a small island off the coast of Bressay, is a National Nature Reserve operated by Scottish Natural Heritage. Two wardens are employed from April to September, living in the visitor centre on Noss. They operate a ferry service between Noss and Bressay, using a small inflatable. Noss had 1,659 visitors in 2013.

### **Workforce Requirements**

- 3.20 As there are few employers in Bressay, their workforce requirements are limited. Although there is little local unemployment, employers can access the wider Shetland labour market and attract staff from outside the island if necessary – although those travelling to work in Bressay will have to pay to cross on the ferry. If the employer can provide transport on Bressay, to and from the ferry, this eliminates the need for cars to be taken across and the associated cost.

### **Household Incomes**

- 3.21 Shetland Islands Council subscribes to CACI Paycheck data which gives average household income levels for each of Shetland's postcodes. For the Bressay postcodes the average income in 2011 was calculated at £35,247, which is close to the Shetland average of £35,108. Within that average, the range of average household incomes between the postcode areas on Bressay was quite marked, with the lowest at £22,300 and the highest at £55,500.
- 3.22 These figures would suggest a total household income on Bressay of around £6.13 million (based on 174 resident households).

### **Summary of Employment and Earnings**

- 3.23 We estimate that there are around 40 full time equivalent jobs based in Bressay, including self employment. Private sector employment includes local employers and self employment, while the public sector relates largely to the school, ferries and social care. Estimated earnings from this employment might total some £1 million (excluding income from crofting).
- 3.24 Economic output in Bressay is broadly estimated at £4.0 million, and this contributes to the economy of Shetland as a whole. This relates to production by businesses based in Bressay, whilst for public sector and other employment on Bressay, output broadly equates to earnings plus employment costs.

- 3.25 It is not necessary to apply a “multiplier” to assess Bressay’s supply chain and “induced” employment through the local spending of employees as these impacts are captured by our comprehensive assessment, but the relative lack of local services mean that there is little such added value. Local businesses do access some supplies locally, from the shop or local produce for the restaurant, but there is a limited supply of appropriate goods or services.
- 3.26 Based on approximate assumptions on the levels of earnings, the 202 jobs identified in the Census as held by people living in Bressay might provide total earnings of around £5.05 million. Adding to this the incomes of the estimated 100 retired people and any benefits received might give a total income of around £6.25 million for people living in Bressay (plus any income from crofting). This compares to the CACI-derived figure of £6.13 million given in paragraph 3.20 above.

#### **4. THE IMPACTS OF CLOSING BRESSAY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

##### **Direct Impacts**

- 4.1 The direct impact of closing Bressay Primary School would relate to the jobs at the school, with a saving to the Council in staff costs estimated at £90,494, of which some £75,000 might represent gross earnings. The savings would comprise one full time professional teacher post and a number of part time posts.
- 4.2 This negative employment impact would be partially offset in the Shetland economy by employment associated with transporting pupils to Lerwick. Additional transport costs, net of the saving in transport costs currently incurred, are estimated at £40,280. If the school transport contract were to be let in Bressay, this would offset to an extent the reduction in earnings in the local economy.
- 4.3 In the current situation, with the Head Teacher on secondment, all school jobs would be lost by residents of Bressay – a total of 1 full time and 5 part time posts. These reductions would be a real loss to the individuals involved. Redeployment might be possible should there be suitable Council vacancies, although for comparable work it would be necessary to travel to Lerwick.
- 4.4 Little of the school's non-staff related operating costs is spent in Bressay.
- 4.5 Other impacts on local employers are likely to be limited. It is possible that there will be an impact on the shop from losing the spending of the pupils. Potentially, if parents are more likely to be in Lerwick to take their children to school, they might also transfer some of their shopping spend there. Conversely, as most children in Bressay are already taken to Lerwick to attend primary school, the provision of formal school transport would reduce the need for individual parents to visit Lerwick for this purpose, which could increase their likelihood of using the shop on the island.

##### **Other Impacts**

- 4.6 Most of the children on Bressay are attending primary school outwith Bressay, and those eligible for nursery school are also attending in Lerwick rather than Bressay. The 4 children attending Bressay Primary School are from 2 families. This suggests that the immediate impacts of closing the primary school will be limited, although the effects on the individual families concerned should not be underestimated. It seems unlikely that either will leave Bressay, but there are concerns about sending younger children across to school on the ferry when parents could not easily collect them if necessary (eg due to illness).
- 4.7 Despite its proximity to Lerwick, Bressay is a rural community with a deep crofting tradition. Over the years some of that tradition has been lost as people are attracted to the island by the convenience of commuting to Lerwick.

- 4.8 Some of the parents we have spoken to are supportive of the local school, but have felt that the very low numbers make it less able to build their children's confidence and social skills. The decisions by parents to move children to schools in Lerwick have often been made reluctantly, and there is a feeling that community cohesion and confidence will be dented through loss of the school.
- 4.9 Closure of the school would make Bressay a less attractive place to live for certain potential future residents. Limited local employment means that Bressay is, to some extent, a dormitory island. This is the case in other parts of Shetland, but a disadvantage for Bressay is that it can only be reached by ferry. This puts an additional cost, inconvenience and uncertainty on those who choose to live there. Many of the residents have a family connection to Bressay, but loss of the primary school and the social cohesion it brings would reduce the appeal of the island to families with young children.
- 4.10 Retired people now make up a large and increasing part of the community. Since the 2011 Census we estimate that the number of retired people has grown while the overall population has decreased. This trend seems likely to continue, potentially with implications for social care in the future. Currently there are only 7 Care at Home clients in Bressay, and wherever possible local staff are used to meet their needs. As the number of older people grows, the pressure on the service is likely to increase.
- 4.11 A quarter of Bressay residents who work have a job on the island, many being self employed. If the school were to close, it is possible that fewer families would locate there and as a result employers in Bressay would have to look outside the island for staff. Although this already happens, if no local workforce is available the case for basing an enterprise on Bressay reduces.

### **School Transport**

- 4.12 The Proposal Paper indicates that if Bressay Primary School were to close the 4 pupils currently attending the school and those attending Bell's Brae Primary would be eligible for school transport. Two 8 seater vehicles would collect the children from Bressay Public Hall and cross on the ferry to Lerwick.
- 4.13 As the school day at Bell's Brae Primary runs from 9.00am this will mean an earlier start for the pupils currently attending Bressay Primary. It will also mean that the school vehicles will be travelling on the ferry at a peak time, potentially putting pressure on the ferry service. As mentioned in para 2.16, the weekday 8.30 sailing from Bressay to Lerwick generally operates at close to vehicle capacity. The provision of school transport might reduce the number of parents crossing to take their children to school, but it could increase the number of occasions when all vehicles cannot be carried.

## **5. POTENTIAL MITIGATING ACTIONS**

- 5.1 We were asked to consider action that might be taken to mitigate the closure of the school, eg. to generate additional public and private sector employment. In addition, mitigating action could help to restore a sense of community.
- 5.2 Bressay's proximity to Lerwick has meant that most services and facilities required by residents are not located on the island and to access them residents must travel across the Bressay Sound on the ferry. This has also applied to work and leisure opportunities, and moving all education provision would be a further step towards dependence on Lerwick, reducing the identity of Bressay as a separate community. Friends made through work, education and leisure activities are from the wider area, including Lerwick, and people's lives become less focussed on their local community.
- 5.3 For Bressay residents, there is the added factor of the ferry journey to Lerwick, both in terms of its convenience and cost. While the ferry is an inconvenience, it is also a relatively short journey and less of an obstacle than bus journeys to other rural parts of Shetland. One result of this has been that the attractions of Bressay for working families have reduced and vacant properties are increasingly liable to be taken by retired people, often with no ties to the island but happy to live in a rural location separated from, but close to, the amenities of Lerwick. Another result is that the need for Bressay to be a self sufficient community reduces.
- 5.4 Bressay Development Association has recently been formed with the aim of regenerating the island. It is at an early stage and is working on its constitution and objectives. It will explore how the community can work together to improve services and make Bressay a more attractive place to live. Support for the Association's formal establishment and for subsequent local development initiatives will be important.
- 5.5 The diminishing roll at the school has reduced the part it plays in bringing residents together and ensuring a sense of community on Bressay. Preserving this sense of community will require voluntary groups to provide a focus for community activity. Despite the success of the Sports Club, there is evidence that involvement in voluntary activity is decreasing – for example both the Under 5s Group and the Senior Citizens Club have ceased operating recently. Support for key groups in the community to continue or develop events that bring the different parts of Bressay and its generations together would help to compensate for this reduced provision.
- 5.6 The school building is currently used to complement the community hall which is relatively inflexible. If it became vacant, the building could become a base for a new business or community venture. Given the size of the building it could potentially be used for both. Broadband capacity is limited, however. It is provided through an optical link, and is thus subject to interference from ships in Lerwick Harbour. Improvements in broadband capacity and reliability could be important in new business development. A small island way of life with ready access to Lerwick could be attractive to people wishing to start a business based on internet connectivity who might move to Bressay.

- 5.7 A community asset transfer, with the Council agreeing to use its powers under the Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010 to transfer the property to a suitable community group, could provide a stimulus for the Development Association to promote local community development. The community would, however, need to have a clear plan for use of the building before this would be possible.
- 5.8 One of the potential alternative uses of the school building suggested in the Council's Proposal Paper is as a base for remote working by SIC staff. Certainly this would be attractive if the Council adopted a policy of decentralising staffing to outlying communities, which could involve people working 2-3 days per week from Bressay rather than incurring the ferry crossing to Lerwick every day.
- 5.9 Support for new business development or social enterprises could be provided by the Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and organisations such as HISEZ (Highlands and Islands Social Enterprise Zone).

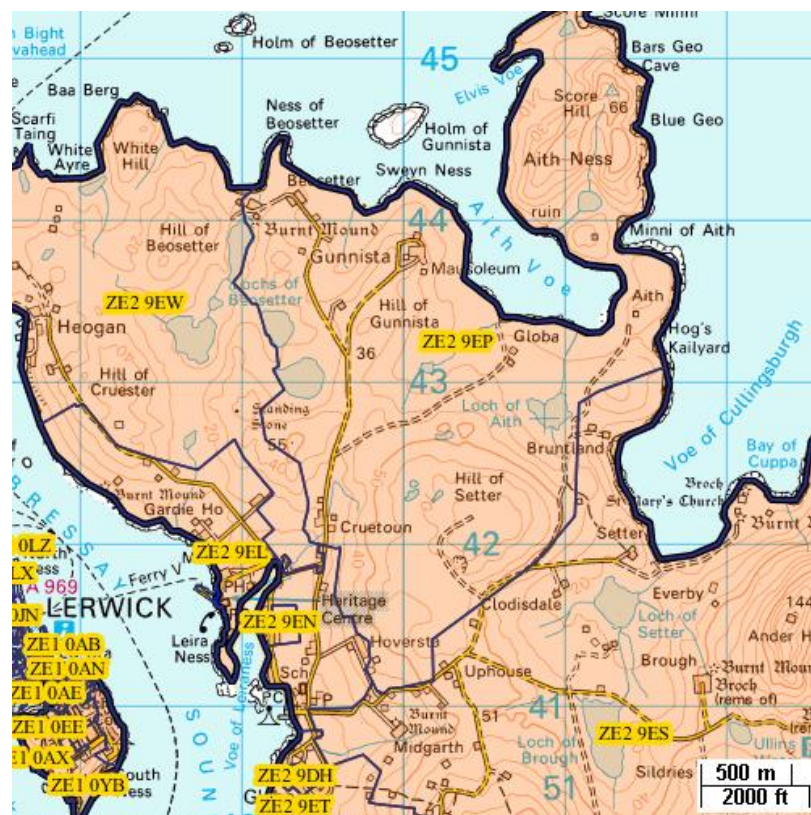
## 6. CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1 The main conclusions from this report are that:

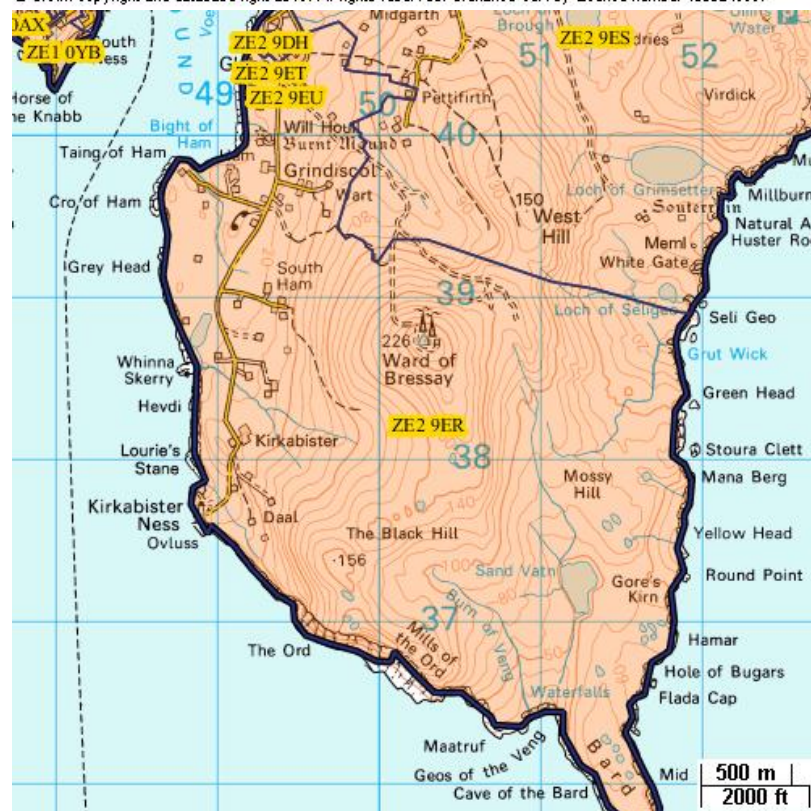
- The net annual savings to Shetland Islands Council from closing Bressay Primary School are estimated by the Council at around £75,000;
- Bressay's population declined between 2001 and 2011, and indications are that it is declining further. This contrasts with a trend of population increase between 1971 and 2001;
- The number of retired people living in Bressay has increased, while the number of young children has fallen. There were 109 people (30% of the population) aged 60 or over in 2011;
- Bressay has few local services and facilities, with almost all service provision and leisure opportunities in Lerwick;
- Average house prices in Bressay are well below those for Lerwick and Shetland as a whole;
- People living in Bressay have access to the employment market throughout much of Shetland. 60% of residents in employment or self-employment work in Lerwick and 27.5% on Bressay;
- There are few employers on Bressay, and they recruit from the wider Shetland area. Much of the work carried out by local people on Bressay is through self employment;
- Bressay contributes some £4 million per annum to the Shetland economy;
- The average household income on Bressay was estimated at £35,247 in 2011, with the range across postcode areas varying widely from £22,300 to £55,500;
- Total household income in Bressay is estimated at some £6.13 million;
- There are currently 16 primary school age children living in Bressay, of whom 12 are attending primary schools outwith Bressay. None of the children eligible for nursery provision attend in Bressay;
- Classes at Bressay Primary School start at 9.30am, which makes it difficult for working parents. With no formal provision and no private childcare on Bressay, parents must depend on family or other networks for pre-school or after school care;
- The direct impact of closing the school would be the loss of 1 full time and 5 part time jobs. In partial compensation, additional work would be created in transporting pupils from Bressay to Lerwick, with the increase in school transport costs estimated at around £40,000. If the school transport contract were to be let in Bressay, the loss to the local economy would be offset by this additional income;

- Some parents are clearly concerned at the possibility of the school closing, and while we found no evidence that any would immediately leave the island, the lack of a primary school would make it less attractive for families moving to or within Shetland;
  - Closing Bressay Primary School could reduce the number of potential in-migrants with families coming to live on the island. This would be likely to accelerate the trend towards an ageing population;
  - The school has been a focus for social cohesion in the past, bringing the community together. Its loss will put pressure on other voluntary activity to fill that gap and this will need support;
  - The newly formed Bressay Development Association will need support to address the challenges faced by the community;
  - Employment could be generated on the island through decentralisation of Council staff and/or small business development. Improved broadband provision would facilitate this, and the school building (if primary education ceases) could be converted for office/workshop uses;
  - Support for new business development or social enterprises could be provided by the Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and other organisations.
- 6.2 Should a fixed link be provided in the future between Bressay and Shetland mainland, this would have major implications for Bressay's economic development, housing development, and (possibly) demographic structure.

Bressay: Postcode areas



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