



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

**9 June 2014  
9 June 2014**

## **Proposed Discontinuation of Secondary Three and Secondary Four Education at Sandwick Junior High School - Decision**

**CS-12-14-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 discontinuation of Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School. An Executive Summary of the Consultation Report is attached as Appendix 1, and the full Consultation Report is available on the Shetland Islands Council website. Links to this can be found at the end of this report.
- 1.2 Statutory Consultation was carried out on the proposal to discontinue Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School between 13 February 2014 and 28 March 2014 in line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. The Consultation Report recommends approval to discontinue Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School with effect from 1 July 2016. The affected pupils would transfer to the Anderson from 15 August 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter when the new Anderson High School has opened. If approval is given to discontinue Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School, there is a duty on Children's Services to inform the Scottish Ministers of the decision immediately. 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) stages of education at Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department, namely Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 be discontinued with effect from 01 July 2016, or as soon as possible thereafter, when the new Anderson High School building is open for pupils;
  - b) the Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils of Sandwick Junior High School continue their education at the Anderson High School when the new

Anderson High School building is open for pupils; at present this is still anticipated to be from 15 August 2016 but may be later;

- c) the catchment area for Anderson High School for Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils be altered to include the current catchment area for Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils.

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 Sandwick Junior High School and the Anderson High School to develop a transition plan that would ensure an effective transition for pupils to the new Anderson High School;
- c) the Director of Children's Services will ensure that any staffing implications arising from the implementation of this Proposal will be properly addressed through application of all relevant Shetland Islands Council policies and appropriate involvement of trade unions.

### **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 On 13 November 2013 Shetland Islands Council approved a Strategy for Secondary Education in Shetland (Min Ref: SIC 100/13). The recommendations in the Strategy included the proposed closure of Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department. A successful amendment to the recommendations on 13 November 2013, instructed Children's Services to proceed to statutory consultation only on the discontinuation of Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School.
- 3.2 Statutory consultation commenced on 13 February 2014. In line with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a public meeting was held in Sandwick Junior High School on 04 March 2014, where seventy-six people attended. An additional public meeting was held in Anderson High School, the proposed receiving school, on 05 March 2014 where six people attended. Transcripts of these meetings are published on Shetland Islands Council's website and are appended to the Consultation Report
- 3.3 In addition, three hundred and sixteen written responses were received on the Proposal.
- 3.4 Following the end of the statutory consultation period, in line with legislation, the Proposal Paper, all written responses and transcripts of the public meetings were then sent to Education Scotland who published a formal report on the educational aspects of the Proposal on 19 May 2014.
- 3.5 Children's Services published their response to the consultation, in the form of a Consultation Report on 19 May 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.

3.6 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, Sandwick Junior High School and Anderson High School. An Executive Summary of the Consultation Report is also published on Shetland Islands Council's website and is Appendix 1 to this report.

3.7 The Consultation Report contains a full analysis of all the issues raised through the Consultation Process. The summary of the written responses indicates that 78.16% of respondents disagreed with the Proposal and would like Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department to remain as a Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 school. 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>316</b>	<b>%</b>
Number of responses that:		
agreed with the Proposal	5	1.58%
disagreed with the Proposal in favour of no change to provision at Sandwick Junior High School	247	78.16%
disagreed with the Proposal in favour of closure of Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department	12	3.80%
did not indicate an opinion or request further information	52	16.46%

Of the <b>5</b> who agreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:		
Quality of Education	3	60.0%
Transition Issues	3	60.0%
Travelling Distance/Time	2	40.0%
Out of School Activities	2	40.0%

Of the <b>247</b> who disagreed with the Proposal in favour of no change to provision at Sandwick Junior High School, the most often stated reasons were:		
Quality of Education	184	77.6%
Community Concerns	134	56.5%
Financial Considerations	118	49.8%

Travelling Distance/time	109	46.0%
Transition Issues	106	44.7%

Of the <b>12</b> who disagreed with the Proposal in favour of closure of Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department, the most often stated reasons were:		
Quality of Education	6	54.6%
Financial Considerations	5	45.6%
Staffing Implications	5	45.6%
Transition Issues	4	36.4%
School Capacity	3	27.3%

3.8 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:

- Travelling Distance / Time
- Quality of Education
- Child Safety
- Out of School Activities
- Class Sizes
- Community Concerns
- Transition Issues
- Relationships / Friends and Family Life
- School Capacity
- Condition of Building
- Staffing Implications / Employment Issues
- Timescale of the Programme
- Democratic / Decision Making Process
- Centralisation
- Financial
- Untested Model of Provision
- Environmental Issues
- Equality of Provision
- Removal of Choice
- Learning Resources

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

- Throughout this statutory consultation process Children's Services has given special regard to the provision for rural schools within Section 12 of The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 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.
- To ensure the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 were fulfilled in their fullest regard, a Socio-Economic Study was commissioned on this proposal and a Health Impact Assessment. Children's Services also carried out an Integrated Impact Assessment.
- Clear proposals for the future of the secondary school estate in Shetland were agreed on 20 September 2012 as part of the Plan for Education

2012-17. However, as a result of a great deal of community concerns about the impact of these proposals; and as a result of the rolling out of the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Education, the future direction of the secondary school estate was the subject of further consideration by Shetland Islands Council during 2013.

- The culmination of this work was the Strategy for Secondary Education Report which was presented to Education and Families Committee and Shetland Islands Council on 13 November 2013. The Strategy for Secondary Education Report was prepared following a further period of informal consultation across Shetland and the involvement of an independent educational expert, Professor Don Ledingham.

3.10 Taking account of the informal consultation feedback from October 2013, a different raft of proposals, was proposed for the rationalisation of the secondary school estate as follows:

- the proposed closure of Aith Junior High School Secondary Department and Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department;
- the discontinuation of Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education in Whalsay School Secondary Department, Mid Yell Junior High School Secondary Department and Baltasound Junior High School Secondary Department.

3.11 The rationale for the transition point at the end of Secondary 2 from the junior highs of Whalsay School, Mid Yell Junior High School and Baltasound Junior High School was put forward as follows by Professor Don Ledingham:

*“There was very little support for an end of Secondary 3 transfer from any of the consultation respondent groups and I would concur with that conclusion. For that reason I would recommend a transfer to the Anderson High School from Junior High Schools at the end of Secondary 2. The logic and advantages of such a transition are set out in the aforementioned section but the prime factor would be to enable young people to settle into the new learning environment prior to commencing the most important two years of their education in terms of high stakes qualifications.”*

3.12 Professor Don Ledingham concurred with Children’s Services rationale that wherever possible children should receive their secondary education in a Secondary 1 to Secondary 6 school. However, he also agreed that, due to Shetland’s geography that this was not feasible for all children.

3.13 In addition, as previously noted, Professor Ledingham also made it clear that the current provision of education in junior highs in Shetland for Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 was not a tenable position in moving forward to secure children’s full entitlements to Curriculum for Excellence are met. As transfer at the end of Secondary 3 was met with such concern, an earlier proposed transfer point, at the end of Secondary 2, had to be recommended.

3.14 Children’s Services has further made the case, in this Consultation Report, that the current system of junior highs in Shetland delivering Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 cannot continue if children in Shetland are to receive their full entitlements to Curriculum for Excellence.

3.15 This is because transfer at the end of Secondary 4:

- prevents the planning of the Senior Phase as a coherent two or three year experience which it should be for learners in order for them to study for different levels of qualifications over variable timeframes;
  - prevents children from bypassing lower level qualifications;
  - inhibits seamless progression through from the Broad General Education right through to the end of the Senior Phase;
  - inhibits the development of the level of partnership working with employers and local colleges and other learning partners which would meet the needs of all learners for the duration of the Senior Phase.
- 3.16 The Anderson High School is also quite clear that it cannot progress to fully develop the requirements of the Senior Phase whilst it continues to have children coming in at the end of Secondary 4. This creates a barrier to Secondary 4 to Secondary 6 being developed as a coherent Senior Phase experience. The consequence of this then, is that it limits the opportunity of **all** children who attend the Anderson High School, including those who have been there from Secondary 1, to access their full entitlement to a Senior Phase.
- 3.17 In recommending the end of Secondary 2 as a transition point and **not** the end of Secondary 3, which is the end of the Broad General Education of Curriculum for Excellence, this was in response to community concerns as part of the informal consultation exercise carried out in October 2013.
- 3.18 These concerns were principally that:
- transfer at the end of Secondary 3 was too close for children, to the commencement of their first formal exams, when they would also be expected to settle into a new environment as well as study;
  - it was important for children's wellbeing to be educated for as long as possible in their own communities; and
  - due to increased travel times, and different travel arrangements, that having some secondary education in children's own communities would enable them to participate for longer in local social and community activities.
- 3.19 Secondary 1 and Secondary 2 education was **not** recommended for Sandwick Junior High School due to:
- the potential for daily travel for all secondary-aged children from the Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department catchment area to be feasible within the agreed 65 minute limit for a single journey for a secondary aged child; and
  - the potential for savings from the closure of Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department to secure significant progress towards target savings for Children's Services as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan; thereby helping protect educational benefits for all children in school education in Shetland.
- 3.20 However, Children's Services were instructed to progress a proposal to discontinue Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School following a successful amendment made at Shetland Islands Council on 13 November 2013. In taking forward this proposal, the following educational benefits were identified:

- access to a common curriculum to ensure smooth transition to Secondary 3 at the Anderson High School;
- the opportunity to access, in a seamless manner, the right personalisation of the curriculum in Secondary 3 to prepare children for their subject choices at the end of Secondary 3 for the Senior Phase;
- a smooth and seamless transition at the end of Secondary 3 through to a full Senior Phase at the Anderson High School with the widest variety of learning opportunities available over Secondary 4, Secondary 5 and Secondary 6;
- teaching staff who would be working across schools sharing good practice, particularly in teaching and learning and assessment;
- as most teachers would also be involved in presenting for qualifications in another settings, children would benefit from their knowledge of the progression to the qualifications framework;
- being educated in their own community for the early years of their secondary education;
- as teachers will be working across settings, they may already know the children when they transfer to the Anderson High School for Secondary 3;
- access to a wide range of opportunities for wider achievement.

3.21 The report by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the Proposal for Sandwick Junior High School also recognises that Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 provision in junior highs is no longer a tenable position for Children's Services in Shetland. There are clear and strong messages on this matter which agree with the rationale put forward by Children's Services in this Consultation Report. Education Scotland makes the following points:

*"3.2 It is clear from the financial situation and, in order to continue the principles and vision of Curriculum for Excellence, that there is a need for change in the way that education is organised in the Shetland Islands. The council reports that the way that their secondary high schools and junior high schools are arranged is not financially sustainable. Young people are entitled to experience a coherent curriculum from 3 to 18. Anderson High School is currently developing the senior phase further. It is continually developing positive partnerships with a range of businesses, organisations and further and higher educational establishments which is enabling them to provide a more innovative curriculum to meet diverse needs. Young people would benefit from the range of flexible learning pathways better if they had continuous experience of their senior phase from S4 to S6." (Page 7)*

3.22 And again, in the Summary section at the end of their Report:

*"4.1 The council has made a clear case that for, reasons of financial sustainability and the need to develop a coherent senior phase for young people which meets their diverse needs and aspirations, the current arrangement of providing education for the S1 to S4 stages at Sandwick Junior High School is neither viable nor in the best interests of children and young people." (Page 9)*

3.23 However Education Scotland also feel that a clear case for Secondary 1 to Secondary 2 education only, in Sandwick Junior High School being the most appropriate way forward has not been made:

*“However, in the consultation proposal, the council has not set out a convincing case that the discontinuation of S3 and S4 at Sandwick Junior High School is the most reasonable and viable option and will deliver clear educational benefits for the children and young people directly affected by it.”*  
(Page 9)

- 3.24 The key issues identified in Education Scotland's report to support this conclusion are:
- the timing of the proposal, with particular reference to the current Secondary 2 group at Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department, and the building of the new Anderson High School;
  - the lack of informal consultation on this particular option;
  - that the educational benefits of this proposal for Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department are not clear;
  - the impact of different travel arrangements on children with children travelling for longer each day on packed buses with no supervision;
  - the potential impact of increased shared staffing arrangements on staff and children in Sandwick Junior High School and at the Anderson High School, for what is a relatively small amount of savings;
  - that transition arrangements for a move at the end of Secondary 2 in the future are not clear, particularly if secondary departments and schools bring forward the change of timetable into Secondary 3 to the start of the formal exam period in April and May, instead of at the end of it.
- 3.25 The issues identified by Education Scotland reflect key issues raised by respondents during the statutory consultation period. The proposal to discontinue Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School was almost universally disliked.
- 3.26 Of the three hundred and sixteen written responses received during the consultation 78.16% disagreed with the proposal in favour of no change to secondary provision at Sandwick Junior High School; 3.80% disagreed with the proposal in favour of the closure of Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department; 1.58% agreed with the proposal and 16.46 % did not express an opinion.
- 3.27 Those opposed to the proposal were concerned about the impact the discontinuation of Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School would have on the fabric of the community of the South Mainland, its economic viability and its attractiveness as a place to live. There was a huge amount of acknowledgement of the quality of education delivered in Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department by dedicated and committed staff who provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment. There were also a great deal of concerns about the increase in the numbers of teaching staff who would be shared between schools to make this Proposal work, and the impact this would have on staff and the education provided.
- 3.28 All the issues raised by respondents and Education Scotland have been addressed in this Consultation Report. Children's Services has been clear all along that the educational case for Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department becoming a Secondary 1 to Secondary 2 school is **not as strong** as it is for the smaller secondary departments in Whalsay School, Mid Yell Junior High School and Baltasound Junior High School.



- 3.29 However, it is also clear, as a result of the outcomes of the statutory consultation period on the proposal to discontinue Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department, that there is a community imperative to retain some secondary education at Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department.
- 3.30 Children's Services also believe that it will be feasible to create the climate for a successful transition for children from Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department to the Anderson High School at the end of Secondary 2. As the implementation date for this proposal is now recommended to coincide with the opening of the new Anderson High School in August 2016, aspects of the Shetland learning Partnership, principally the common curriculum and the alignment of the school day will be in place to facilitate this.
- 3.31 In recommending the implementation of this Proposal, Children's Services is clear that it does so on the **relative** educational benefits to secondary aged children in the Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department catchment area which can accrue from this Proposal, as set against the current arrangements. The continuation of Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 education in a junior high school is not a viable option moving forward.
- 3.32 Transfer at the end of Secondary 2 will enable children to access a seamless uninterrupted Senior Phase where they can maximise all the learning opportunities which will be created through the development of the Shetland Learning Partnership. It will also enable children to be educated in their own communities for as long as is feasible. In addition, for children from the Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department catchment area it does not generate unacceptable daily travel times.
- 3.33 This proposal, if implemented will provide recurring savings to Shetland Islands Council of £223,530. 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

Within the Key Actions section of the updated Corporate Plan 2014/2017 the actions set out in Section 2 – The Best Possible Start for Every Child, relate directly to the delivery of this Proposal to discontinue Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School:

- we will implement Curriculum for Excellence in accordance with national timescales and milestones;
- we will undertake a number of statutory consultations under the auspices of the Schools Reconfiguration Project.
- by the end of this Plan we will have reconfigured the school estate to provide the best possible service within the resources available.

In addition, the updated Corporate Plan 2014/17 also makes a number of important commitments to the Shetland community as follows. By the end of the term of the updated Corporate Plan 2014/17 we shall have:

- more resilient and long-lasting communities and community enterprises across Shetland;
- made the decisions we were required to make, and we will have done that properly, on time and with a proper assessment of risk;
- made many, and sometimes radical, changes in how we provide services, and we will have done that through proper consultation with communities and staff;
- demonstrated that we are providing Best Value in all our services, after having had a successful cross-council review from Audit Scotland;
- made sure that in making any changes we have considered and dealt with equalities, health and human rights issues;
- stuck to the Medium Term Financial Plan and be financially strong;
- made further significant savings by reducing the number of buildings we have.

#### 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 has the following relevant priorities:

- to get it right for every child;
- to demonstrate effective leadership and clear direction for staff and services;
- to achieve improvement within reduced budgets.

In addition Children's Services Directorate Plan set outs the key aims for all its services in 2014-15. The aims relevant to this Proposal are:

- we will deliver our objectives to ensure Shetland Islands Council's Corporate Plan commitments are met;
- we will deliver the best possible service we can which balances access, opportunities and resources;
- we will provide clear and consistent communication to all staff, customers and partners in order to achieve the Directorate's priorities;
- we will ensure staff feel valued and supported particularly through periods of challenge and change;

- we will deliver our budget requirements within Shetland Islands Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Schools/Quality Improvement Service Plan for 2014-15 in turn has the following priority.

"The following statutory consultations will be undertaken in 2014-15: change of stage from Secondary 1-Secondary 4 to Secondary 1–Secondary 2 at Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department, Mid Yell Junior High School Secondary Department, Baltasound Junior High School Secondary Department, Whalsay School Secondary Department; closure of three Primary Schools i.e. two of the three in Northmavine and commence the statutory consultation on Sandness Primary School. Further consultations will be undertaken in 2015-16 as set out in the Schools Reconfiguration Project Plan."

- 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 which is available on the Shetland Islands Council website. A link to the Consultation Report can be found at the end of this report.
- 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 Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014 will amend aspects of the procedures for statutory consultation. These will not come into effect in time to impact on the statutory consultation process for the Proposal to discontinue Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School. The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) act 2010 remains 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 Proposal to discontinue Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School. A summary of the impacts forms part of the Consultation Report at Section 14 including how adverse impacts can be mitigated against. The full Integrated Impact Assessment is an Appendix G to the Consultation Report.
- 4.6 Environmental – None

#### Resources

- 4.7 Financial – Shetland Islands Council priorities were approved within the updated Medium Term Financial Plan (Budget Book 2014/15) and include a savings target of £3.268m from Children's Services. The identified savings of £223,530 from this Proposal make an important and ongoing contribution to achieving this target.

Failure to agree to the discontinuation of Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School would result in an additional cost pressure of £18,627 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 – The Director of Children’s Services will ensure that any staffing implications arising from the implementation of this Proposal will be properly addressed through application of all relevant Shetland Islands Council policies and appropriate involvement of trade unions.
- 4.10 Assets And Property – None. If Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education is discontinued at Sandwick Junior High School, the whole school building will still be required to deliver the remaining nursery, primary and Secondary 1 and Secondary 2 education.

## **5.0 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The Consultation Report on the Proposal to discontinue Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High school recommends the following:
- a) stages of education at Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department, namely Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 be discontinued with effect from 01 July 2016, or as soon as possible thereafter, when the new Anderson High School building is open for pupils;
  - b) the Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils of Sandwick Junior High School continue their education at the Anderson High School when the new Anderson High School building is open for pupils; at present this is still anticipated to be from 15 August 2016 but may be later;
  - c) the catchment area for Anderson High School for Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils be altered to include the current catchment area for Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils.

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For further information please contact:

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*Report Finalised: 28 May 2014*

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## List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Executive Summary of the Consultation Report

[Links to Consultation Report on the proposed discontinuation of Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School](#)

Consultation Report:

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/education/documents/SANDWICKCRFINAL.pdf>

Appendices and responses:

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/education/SandwickJHSStatutoryConsultation.asp>

Executive Summary:

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/education/documents/ExecutivesummarySandwickfinal.pdf>

### Background Documents

CS-19-12-F

Blueprint for Education 2012-2017

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

CS-43-13-F

Blueprint for Education: The Next Steps – A Strategy for Secondary Education in Shetland

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=14897>

CS-44-13-F

Blueprint for Education: The Next Steps – Financial Aspects

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=14898>

CS-55-13-F2

A Strategy for Secondary Education in Shetland

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=15233>

END





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

### **Executive Summary**

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

- **Sandwick Junior High School**
- **Anderson High School**

This Consultation Report has been issued by Shetland Islands Council Schools Service in accordance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

## Executive Summary

This is an Executive Summary of the Consultation Report prepared in compliance with The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the following Proposal:

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

- stages of education at Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department, namely Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 be discontinued with effect from 03 July 2015, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- the Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils of Sandwick Junior High School continue their education at Anderson High School from 17 August 2015, or as soon as possible thereafter; and
- the catchment area for Anderson High School for Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils be altered to include the current catchment area for Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils.

On 13 November 2013 Shetland Islands Council agreed a Strategy for Secondary Education. Further information on the Strategy for Secondary Education can be found at [www.shetland.gov.uk](http://www.shetland.gov.uk).

Children's Services has now undertaken statutory consultation on the first of the agreed closure proposals in the Strategy for Secondary Education, namely the proposed discontinuation of Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School.

The proposed discontinuation of Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education will be considered at Education and Families Committee and a special meeting of Shetland Islands Council, on 9 June 2014.

## Representations

Seventy-six people attended the Public Meeting held in Sandwick Junior High School on 04 March 2014. Six people attended the additional Public Meeting held at the Anderson High School on 05 March 2014. The total number of written representations received during the Consultation Period was 316.

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

Shetland Resident	78
Parent / Carer	141
School Staff	22
Young Person	19
Parent Councils	4
Former Pupil	19
Other / not stated	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>316</b>



## Summary of the Written Responses

Number of written consultation responses received	<b>316</b>	<b>%</b>
Number of responses that:		
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Of the <b>5</b> who agreed with the Proposal, the most often stated reasons were:		
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Transition Issues	3	60.0%
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Of the <b>247</b> who disagreed with the Proposal in favour of no change to provision at Sandwich Junior High School, the most often stated reasons were:		
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Community Concerns	134	56.5%
Financial Considerations	118	49.8%
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Transition Issues	106	44.7%

Of the <b>12</b> who disagreed with the Proposal in favour of closure of Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department, the most often stated reasons were:		
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Financial Considerations	5	45.6%
Staffing Implications	5	45.6%
Transition Issues	4	36.4%
School Capacity	3	27.3%

## **Recommendation**

Children's Services recommends that:

- stages of education at Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department, namely Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 be discontinued with effect from 01 July 2016, or as soon as possible thereafter, when the new Anderson High School building is open for pupils;
- the Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils of Sandwick Junior High School continue their education at the Anderson High School when the new Anderson High School building is open for pupils; at present this is still anticipated to be from 15 August 2016 but may be later;
- the catchment area for Anderson High School for Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils be altered to include the current catchment area for Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils.

## **Children's Services Response**

Children's Services has provided a response to all the points raised by respondents with regard to the Proposal. A summary of the key points is outlined below in this Executive Summary.

## **Travelling Distance/Travelling Time**

The maximum travelling time for a secondary child of 65 minutes for a single journey was agreed at Shetland Islands Council on 20 September 2012. This figure was put forward as it reflects some existing journey times for secondary aged children travelling to school in Shetland.

Children's Services do acknowledge the concerns which have been raised by parents in relation to the increased travel times incurred by their children, particularly in relation to healthy lifestyles. However those young people may benefit from having a greater range of opportunities available to them in regards to social groups, clubs and teams.

The South Mainland enjoys a very good public bus service which should help facilitate children affected by this Proposal continuing their involvement in after school activities. Similarly, this should assist any children currently undertaking volunteering in their communities. Community Development staff will be keen to engage with the community as a whole to ensure as far as possible that steps are taken to maintain groups/activities/events which currently run in Sandwick.

There is no evidence to suggest that children are disadvantaged educationally by travelling on school transport.

The bus routes proposed are the most direct, economic routes:

- Bus 1: Quendale – Scousburgh – Bigton – Quarff;
- Bus 2: Dunrossness – Levenwick – Gulberwick;
- Bus 3: Sandwick – Cunningsburgh.

Providing the transport in this configuration reduces the number of stops required. Children with additional support needs have their needs regularly assessed and where dedicated transport is required, we try to ensure that it is as flexible as possible in its delivery.

## **Transport Cost**

The Proposal Paper clearly states the amount we estimate will be required to provide the additional transport; notwithstanding, the savings arising from the Proposal are significant at £223,530.

The costs stated in respect of the additional transport required reflect the current cost of transport provision, aligned with the individual locations of each child affected by the proposal. Although routes have not been tendered until very recently, a financial uplift has been applied to each contract year on year, to include Retail Price Index (RPI) and local fuel price fluctuations.

Competitive prices have been achieved for all school transport routes, as evidenced by the recent tendering exercise – awarding contracts for five years, as opposed to three, has made these contracts more attractive to the local bus operators.

The recent tender exercise in respect of school and public transport routes did not include the extra journeys required under this Proposal; however, separate contracts will be tendered and awarded if necessary once a decision is made.

It is standard practice across Scotland for authorities to make maximum use of public bus services to convey children between home and school where it is cost effective to do so. There is nothing to suggest that the approach adopted by Shetland Islands Council is unreasonable or unsafe.

There would be no impact on the public transport network as this proposal factors in a similar number of children who already access public transport. In fact, the number would reduce slightly from 20 to 18. All children will have bus passes for the start of the new academic year so those not in receipt of passes will not be entitled to use the designated transport. The Council will ensure capacity exists for all those children who have been issued with bus passes.

If, as a result of a placing request, any child is attending a school other than their catchment area school, then there is no entitlement to free school transport. Those children may take up any vacant seats on existing school transport, with the agreement of the Executive Manager, Schools, or avail themselves of seats on public transport routes.

## Quality of Education / Staffing Implications

Attainment statistics in the Proposal Paper are based on analysing the percentage attainment of Secondary 4 candidates in terms of the various levels of Standard Grade or equivalent. Under Curriculum for Excellence, however, achievement from August 2014 will be analysed in terms of four indicators which cover a wider picture than this.

The analysis tool being developed by the Scottish Government for this work has been released to local authorities and contains data covering the years 2010 to 2013. Analysis of the data for Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department and Anderson High School shows a strong performance in all four indicators for the Anderson High School which is matched in three of the four indicators by Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department. This indicates that the Anderson High School will be able to provide a high-quality education for the children transitioning from Sandwich Junior High School.

Education Scotland, in their report on the Anderson High School published on 28 February 2012, made the following statement in relation to attainment at the Anderson High School:

*“At S4 to S6, young people’s results in national examinations have been consistently above national averages over a number of years. Results are in line with or above those in schools which serve young people with similar needs and backgrounds.”*

Sandwich Junior High School’s results are excellent at Secondary 4, but so are the Anderson High School’s.

There are two sets of educational benefits to consider in this Proposal:

1. The educational benefits for children who would attend Sandwich Junior High School as a Secondary 1 to Secondary 2 Department;
2. The educational benefits for children of Sandwich Junior High School of a transition to the Anderson High School at the end of Secondary 2.

Firstly, the educational benefits to Secondary 1 and Secondary 2 children at Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department are as follows:

- Children who attend Sandwich Junior High School, Primary Department, would be able to continue to be educated in their local community up to the end of Secondary 2;
- Children who attend Dunrossness Primary School, Sandwich Junior High School Primary Department and Cunningsburgh Primary School would have no change to their associated secondary department up to the end of Secondary 2. These children would feel that their family home continued to be relatively near to the school, helping them to feel secure, which in turn, helps them to be ready to learn;

- Those children who live in Sandwich will have the benefit of using the opportunities of their local environment and local community to support skills development and to make learning relevant;
- Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department provides a very good physical environment for learning, with spacious classrooms, including a suitable range of specialist rooms. These very good facilities would continue to provide educational benefit to Secondary 1 and Secondary 2 children.

Secondly, the educational benefits for children of Sandwich Junior High School of a transition to the Anderson High School at the start of Secondary 3 are as follows:

- In line with the expectations of Curriculum for Excellence, secondary education is delivered in two phases, the Broad General Education from Secondary 1 to Secondary 3, and the Senior Phase from Secondary 4 to Secondary 6. In most secondary schools in Scotland children progress seamlessly through these phases, with their learning progressing in the same setting. In this Proposal the benefit to children is that, if children must make a transition during their secondary education, the transfer point at the end of Secondary 2 allows them to develop their Secondary 3 Profile, and personalise their learning in Secondary 3 in a way that enables them to undertake some prior learning in Secondary 3 in preparation for their National Qualification courses that will be undertaken in Secondary 4 in the same school;
- A transition at the end of Secondary 2 also benefits those children who choose to undertake qualifications over different timeframes;
- Children will be able to experience the whole of their Senior Phase education in one location, and so have access to wider opportunities offered;
- Altering the transition point from Secondary 4 to Secondary 2 has the potential to encourage more children to stay at school beyond Secondary 4, as they will already be familiar with the Anderson High School and its range of qualifications and opportunities on offer throughout the Senior Phase.

Many respondents, including a number of staff, were concerned that this Proposal would lead to an increase in the sharing of teaching staff. This was not desirable as the recent increase in shared staff had, in their view, created a number of issues.

The claim that sharing staff between Sandwich Junior High School and Anderson High School, if Sandwich Junior High Secondary Department were a Secondary 1 to Secondary 2 School, would make the sharing of staff worse is not true.

If this proposal was agreed, a planned coherent timetable would be agreed which married up the two schools' requirements. Classes would then not be split. A teacher might have the Secondary 1 class on their timetable in Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department and their Secondary 3 class might be at the Anderson High School. The drawback with this however, is that inevitably to achieve this, staff will have to travel between the two schools on a daily basis. However, this does not come close to the inefficiencies we still currently have in staffing in our secondary provision, where we have

staff who cannot be fully utilised due to the logistics of where our schools are, and where the classes they do teach are still very small.

Planned staffing arrangements for a Secondary 1 to Secondary 2 school will include a non-teaching head teacher and at least one principal teacher with 0.5 full-time equivalent management time. Sandwich Junior High School would have two. These would be fixed permanent members of staff who are in Sandwich Junior High School all of the week.

Shared staff will not affect subject choice. This will remain in place in all our schools in line with the principles and entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence. There has been a recent difficult debate locally about the number of Nationals which most children will study for in Secondary 4 in Shetland. Up until 2013, our children studied for eight Standard Grades. However, the challenge in discussing the change to National Qualifications locally, lies in the change from two-year Standard Grade courses to one year National Qualification courses. Studying for eight Nationals is not a sustainable position and at present Children's Services has agreed seven with its secondary head teachers. This position will be kept under review as we continue to work with other local authorities to see how the Senior Phase develops. For example, some local authorities have most young people studying for a maximum of six National Qualifications in Secondary 4.

There are no plans to reduce the number of classes taught by specialist teachers in Sandwich Junior High School if it were to become a Secondary 1 to Secondary 2 school.

A number of respondents are concerned that the case for a Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 school not be viable any longer with the inception of Curriculum for Excellence has not been made.

In 2011 the Management Board of Curriculum for Excellence issued a statement of its vision for the future of the Senior Phase of Curriculum for Excellence. The full statement is published on the Education Scotland website. The following extract is the relevant part:

*“One of the key aims of Curriculum for Excellence is to reduce the quantity of assessment which pupils undertake, particularly in the senior phase. Many schools are planning for the senior phase as a 2 or 3 year experience. **The majority of pupils are staying on to at least S5, so it is no longer appropriate to view S4 in isolation or to see presentation for qualifications in S4 as a “given” for each learner in each subject. Schools may well take the opportunity this provides to offer National Courses over 2 years.** Bypassing qualifications at National 4 and moving straight to National 5 or Higher is likely to become increasingly common, although this may be a gradual process. It will also be important to ensure that those young people who choose to leave school at the end of S4 or at Christmas of S5 are appropriately catered for in terms of qualifications.”*

The key current messages from Education Scotland to secondary schools are currently:

- Secondary 4 to Secondary 6 planned together as one coherent programme;
- to encourage the bypassing of lower level qualifications as an option for some children;
- consider how progression in the Broad General Education is being secured;

- increase work with partners to deliver a Senior Phase which meets the needs of all learners.

A number of respondents expressed concern about the level of support children would receive in a large school like the Anderson High School, and that they felt Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department provided excellent levels of support to their children due to friendly environment and small class sizes. In 2013/14 the average class size in Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department for a non-practical subject is 15 children and for a practical subject it is 13. Comparable numbers for the Anderson High School are 19 for a non-practical subject and 16 for a practical subject. Class sizes overall are not significantly bigger.

With respect to support available for children, all aspects of the Anderson High School's care and support of all its children were praised in their Education Scotland report which was published on 28 February 2012 as follows:

As verified by external scrutiny, the Anderson High School delivers very high quality education, additional support and pastoral care to all children who attend school there.

Some respondents were concerned that children from Sandwich Junior High School, and its feeder primaries would find a move to the Anderson High School daunting as they will have come from a smaller setting and be moving into a large secondary school with a roll of almost 900. Children's Services would like to allay fears of any parent or child about this issue by pointing out that the Anderson High School High School staff are very experienced in managing transitions.

Lastly some respondents raised the issue of proving that the Scalloway children who transferred to the Anderson High School were not affected by the move. There is clear evidence in Education Scotland's report on the Anderson High School which was published on 28 February 2012, that they felt that the children who had transferred from Scalloway Junior High School Secondary Department were happy and settled. They made the following comment in the Report: *"Young people from Scalloway Junior High School feel included and able to progress their learning in their new school."*

Children's Services also examined closely the attainment of the young people who had transferred from Scalloway Junior High School in 2012, when they first cohort of children from that move sat their Standard Grades at the Anderson High School. In all the measures the ex-Scalloway Junior High School children did better than the Secondary 4 group they were part of at the Anderson High School, overall. In the measure of 5 or more Credit grade passes (SCQF Level 5), they performed almost 10% better.

## **Out of School Activities**

Sandwich Junior High School provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The Anderson High School also provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include a large number of opportunities offered at lunchtimes and after-school, which range from music activities, to sporting activities, to craft clubs, and revision and study opportunities. Some activities are provided by Active Schools.

## Class Sizes

In 2013-14 the average class size in Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department for a non-practical subject is 15 children and for a practical subject it is 13. Comparable numbers for the Anderson High School are 19 for a non-practical subject and 16 for a practical subject. If the proposal is implemented it is estimated that an additional 2.5 full-time equivalent staff would be deployed to the Anderson High School. There may be some small increase in class sizes, but all would of course remain within the nationally agreed maximum class sizes.

In 2013/14 in the Anderson High School the maximum class size of a practical class is, in some cases, at the national maximum of 20. In Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department in 2013/14 the largest practical class has 19 children in it. For non practical subjects the largest class size at the Anderson High School is currently 31 and in Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department it is 25.

## Community Concerns / Centralisation

Children's Services commissioned a socio-economic study to be carried out on this Proposal. The main conclusions in the study are:

- *The net annual savings from discontinuing the S3 and S4 stages of education at Sandwick Junior High School are estimated by Shetland Islands Council to be £223,530;*
- *There are 1,407 resident households in the secondary department's catchment area - 638 in the Dunrossness area, 388 in Sandwick and 388 in Cunningsburgh;*
- *The catchment area includes areas that have had the strongest population growth in Shetland over the last 10 years, but it also includes areas around Dunrossness with modest population growth or decline;*
- *The availability of social housing is below the Shetland average in the catchment area, especially around Dunrossness and Cunningsburgh;*
- *Growth in housing availability has centred on the communities to the north of the catchment area, especially Sandwick;*
- *Sandwick is identified in SIC's Local Plan as the "area of best fit", where any significant housing development should take place;*
- *The majority of the population of the South Mainland who are in employment travel outside the area for work (principally Lerwick);*
- *The major employers in the catchment area are the Council (mainly in education at the Sandwick Junior High School and its feeder primary schools and in social care at Overtonlea Care Centre), at Sumburgh Airport (HIAL and other companies based there), and in tourism at Sumburgh Hotel. There are also a number of employers in retail, knitwear and other sectors;*



- *Employment opportunities at Sumburgh Airport are expanding and this could put some pressure on housing in the Dunrossness area. Companies would be keen to recruit locally (subject to skills being available), but some will employ weekly commuters if necessary;*
- *Self-employment is an important feature of the local economy – through agriculture, crofting, tourism and other home based businesses;*
- *Total annual household income in the catchment area is estimated at some £54 million;*
- *The direct impact of discontinuing the S3 and S4 stages of education at Sandwick Junior High School would be the loss of teaching and support staff at the school. These employment reductions would be offset within Shetland to an extent by additional posts at Anderson High School in Lerwick and through the additional costs of school transport;*
- *There is also likely to be an impact on retail turnover, especially in the shop and bakery at Sandwick, from reduced spending by pupils and their parents;*
- *Whilst we found little evidence that families would leave the area in the short term if the proposed changes to secondary education at Sandwick are implemented, there is some concern that the loss of S3 and S4 education at Sandwick would make the area less attractive for families moving to or within Shetland and promote a drift towards Lerwick;*
- *It is possible that homes, especially in the Dunrossness area, will increasingly be occupied by older people and by workers at Sumburgh Airport who rent while maintaining a family home elsewhere rather than relocating their families;*
- *There is wide concern about young people becoming disengaged from their local community at a younger age and the effects this would have on community cohesion;*
- *The school building will still be heavily used for educational provision and there appears to be limited scope to extend its use for community benefit;*
- *Overall, the proposal to discontinue stages S3 and S4 of secondary education at Sandwick Junior High School is likely to make the South Mainland a less attractive place to live for some families, but the other factors which will continue to attract people to live there may, on balance, outweigh the impetus to move away.*

## **Transition Issues**

Upon publication of the Proposal, Children's Services quickly had concerns raised with them about the implications of this proposal on the current Secondary 2 group at Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department. Their main concerns were that the

implementation date for this Proposal would mean that their children would have to make a transition at the end of Secondary 3, a time which had been deemed unsuitable through the informal consultation in October 2013. In addition, the date of the publication of the proposal paper meant that the timeline for a decision on the proposal would be after the timetable change at the Anderson High School for the session 2014/15, so parents were faced with having to make a decision as to whether to put in a placing request for their child to attend the Anderson High after the end of Secondary 2, without knowing the future of Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department.

Children's Services is sympathetic with parents concerns on this matter, but is unclear why parents were quite so anxious about the implementation date. Their children would have a whole year to be prepared to make the change. This timescale is similar to that in the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004, for any child with additional support needs to make a transition to a new setting. A number of these parents wished their child to be able to remain in Sandwich Junior High School until the end of Secondary 4 and transfer then. As Children's Services has previously outlined in this Report, the end of Secondary 4 is not a suitable time for transfer either, but we accept that it is the point of transfer that our current parents of children in junior highs are comfortable with.

A number of parents of children in Secondary 2 at Sandwich Junior High School have as a result of this concern, put in placing requests for their children to attend the Anderson High School. These have all been agreed in line with our existing processes and a transition morning was organised for this group of children by the Anderson High School senior management.

## **School Capacity / Condition of the Building /Timescale of the Programme**

In response to concerns about adding a further additional 80 children into the existing Anderson High School building, and to ensure children do not have to make two transitions: one to the existing Anderson High School in 2015, and then a further one to the new Anderson High School in August 2016, Children's Services will be recommending for this Proposal that the implementation date is moved to August 2016 or as soon as possible thereafter, when the new Anderson High School has been opened. This would also allow the existing Secondary 2 children at Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department to complete Secondary 4 at Sandwich Junior High School before transferring to the Anderson High School. This would ensure children making the transition to the Anderson High School do not have to make two transitions, and this would also alleviate concerns about the social space, dining facilities and circulation space at the existing Anderson High School, if an additional estimated 80 children were added.

## **Democratic / Decision-making Process**

The decision to move from a proposal to close Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department to a proposal to discontinue Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education was a political decision taken on 13 November 2013. Children's Services have been consistent in recommending the closure of Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department.

Children's Services would also like to see stability in its school estate and is working hard to achieve this. It has to marry up the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence, Shetland's geography and the budget available to use for school education, to secure a long-term sustainable provision which best serves all our young people.

These proposals are not to justify the new Anderson High School. The provision of a new Anderson High School has been an aspiration of Shetland Islands Council for over twenty years, and pre-dates any proposals to change secondary provision in other schools.

Children's Services cannot predict the decisions of future councils. We work with the policy which is agreed and we have to implement. Currently there is no policy which would mean a further proposal in the future for the closure of Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department, and there are no proposals to close Dunrossness Primary School and Cunningsburgh Primary School.

## **Financial**

Within the Council's approved Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-2018, Children's Services is required to find ongoing revenue savings of £3.268m over the next three financial years. This Proposal is part of a package of savings that will go some way towards meeting the total savings required to be delivered. Savings need to be achieved in order to restrict the draw on reserves and enable the Council to become financially sustainable.

Children's Services continues to review its budgets in order to identify other areas where financial savings can be made to meet any savings shortfall, including across the remaining school estate.

Work is ongoing across the Council to achieve savings, including the deletion of posts, in order to ensure the targets within the Medium Term Financial Plan are met.

Estimated income streams from for example, the gas plant, have been built into projections of self-sustainability within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Provisional outturn figures indicate that Children's Services is £1.3 million underspent in 2013/14.

It is acknowledged that money has been spent in the past which has not had the intended benefit to Shetland or its residents. However, these have been one-off items of expenditure. The main issue is the level of overspending on day-to-day services, which run down the reserves year-in year-out.

Shetland Islands Council cannot afford to maintain the existing junior high school model, or enhance it within the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence. This is now being addressed within the Strategy for Secondary Education.

The estimated savings of £223,530 which could be achieved from this Proposal have been calculated taking account of the proposed staffing of the Secondary 1 to Secondary 2 model at Sandwick Junior High School along with costs transferring to the

Anderson High School, additional teacher travel time and mileage costs, and school transport costs.

## **Education Scotland's Report**

Education Scotland visited Sandwick Junior High School and the Anderson High School to speak to parents, pupils and staff. They attended the public meetings on 04 and 05 March 2014 and had the opportunity to review in detail the Proposal Paper and all written responses.

The report by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the Proposal for Sandwick Junior High School also recognises that Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 provision in junior highs is no longer a tenable position for Children's Services in Shetland. There are clear and strong messages on this matter which agree with the rationale put forward by Children's Services in this Consultation Report. Education Scotland makes the following points:

*"3.2 It is clear from the financial situation and, in order to continue the principles and vision of Curriculum for Excellence, that there is a need for change in the way that education is organised in the Shetland Islands. The council reports that the way that their secondary high schools and junior high schools are arranged is not financially sustainable. Young people are entitled to experience a coherent curriculum from 3 to 18. Anderson High School is currently developing the senior phase further. It is continually developing positive partnerships with a range of businesses, organisations and further and higher educational establishments which is enabling them to provide a more innovative curriculum to meet diverse needs. Young people would benefit from the range of flexible learning pathways better if they had continuous experience of their senior phase from S4 to S6." (Page 7)*

And again, in the Summary section at the end of their Report:

*"4.1 The council has made a clear case that for, reasons of financial sustainability and the need to develop a coherent senior phase for young people which meets their diverse needs and aspirations, the current arrangement of providing education for the S1 to S4 stages at Sandwick Junior High School is neither viable nor in the best interests of children and young people." (Page 9)*

However Education Scotland also feel that a clear case for Secondary 1 to Secondary 2 education only, in Sandwick Junior High School being the most appropriate way forward has not been made:

*"However, in the consultation proposal, the council has not set out a convincing case that the discontinuation of S3 and S4 at Sandwick Junior High School is the most reasonable and viable option and will deliver clear educational benefits for the children and young people directly affected by it." (Page 9)*

The key issues identified in Education Scotland's report to support this conclusion are:

- the timing of the proposal, with particular reference to the current Secondary 2 group at Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department, and the building of the new Anderson High School;
- the lack of informal consultation on this particular option;
- that the educational benefits of this proposal for Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department are not clear;
- the impact of different travel arrangements on children with children travelling for longer each day on packed buses with no supervision;
- the potential impact of increased shared staffing arrangements on staff and children in Sandwich Junior High School and at the Anderson High School, for what is a relatively small amount of savings;
- that transition arrangements for a move at the end of Secondary 2 in the future are not clear, particularly if secondary departments and schools bring forward the change of timetable into Secondary 3 to the start of the formal exam period in April and May, instead of at the end of it.

## Conclusion

Of the three hundred and sixteen written responses received during the consultation, 78.16% disagreed with the proposal in favour of no change to secondary provision at Sandwich Junior High School; 3.80% disagreed with the proposal in favour of the closure of Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department; 1.58% agreed with the proposal and 16.46 % did not express an opinion.

Those opposed to the proposal were concerned about the impact the discontinuation of Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwich Junior High School would have on the fabric of the community of the South Mainland, its economic viability and its attractiveness as a place to live. There was a huge amount of acknowledgement of the quality of education delivered in Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department by dedicated and committed staff who provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment. There were also a great deal of concerns about the increase in the numbers of teaching staff who would be shared between schools to make this Proposal work, and the impact this would have on staff and the education provided.

All the issues raised by respondents and Education Scotland have been addressed in this Consultation Report. Children's Services has been clear all along that the educational case for Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department becoming a Secondary 1 to Secondary 2 school is **not as strong** as it is for the smaller secondary

departments in Whalsay School, Mid Yell Junior High School and Baltasound Junior High School.

However, it is also clear, as a result of the outcomes of the statutory consultation period on the proposal to discontinue Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 education at Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department, that there is a community imperative to retain some secondary education at Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department.

Children's Services also believe that it will be feasible to create the climate for a successful transition for children from Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department to the Anderson High School at the end of Secondary 2. As the implementation date for this proposal is now recommended to coincide with the opening of the new Anderson High School in August 2016, aspects of the Shetland Learning Partnership, principally the common curriculum and the alignment of the school day will be in place to facilitate this.

In recommending the implementation of this Proposal, Children's Services is clear that it does so on the **relative** educational benefits to secondary aged children in the Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department catchment area which can accrue from this Proposal, as set against the current arrangements. The continuation of Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 education in a junior high school is not a viable option moving forward.

Transfer at the end of Secondary 2 will enable children to access a seamless uninterrupted Senior Phase where they can maximise all the learning opportunities which will be created through the development of the Shetland Learning Partnership. It will also enable children to be educated in their own communities for as long as is feasible. In addition, for children from the Sandwick Junior High School Secondary Department catchment area it does not generate unacceptable daily travel times.

This proposal, if implemented will provide recurring savings to Shetland Islands Council of £223,530. This proposal makes an ongoing contribution to Children's Services meeting its target budget agreed in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **Recommendation**

Children's Services recommends that:

- stages of education at Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department, namely Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 be discontinued with effect from 01 July 2016, or as soon as possible thereafter, when the new Anderson High School building is open for pupils;
- the Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils of Sandwich Junior High School continue their education at the Anderson High School when the new Anderson High School building is open for pupils; at present this is still anticipated to be from 15 August 2016 but may be later;
- the catchment area for Anderson High School for Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils be altered to include the current catchment area for Sandwich Junior High School Secondary Department Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 pupils.