

Briefing Note Template

Elected Member Briefing – Revised Publication of BSL Progress Report

Elected Member Briefing Note Ref. No. 2026-15

About this Briefing Note

Briefing by: Hannah Chapman, Partnership Officer – Diversity & Inclusion

Date: 3rd March 2026

Subject: Revised Publication of BSL Progress Report

Public / ~~Exempt~~ / Confidential

if exempt or confidential explain risks and consequences.

Purpose

This briefing note informs Elected Members of a change to the publication cycle for Shetland's BSL Progress Report under the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. Although the Local BSL Plan commits to publishing the Progress Report every two years, the Scottish Government has recently confirmed that all Local Authorities must use a National Progress Report Template, which will be issued later this year. As a result, Shetland's next BSL Progress Report will move to a three-year cycle to comply with this updated requirement.

Background

Under the Act, Local Authorities must publish a Local BSL Plan and accompanying Progress Report detailing how they will promote and support BSL use in their functions, with all Plans aligned to the National Plan. Shetland's current BSL Plan states that we will publish an updated Progress Report every two years.

However, the Scottish Government has advised that a standardised Progress Report Template will be provided for use by all Local Authorities, but only after the National Progress Report is published later this year. To remain compliant with the statutory six-year National cycle set out in the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015, Shetland's BSL Progress Report will therefore be published, next year, aligning mid-cycle with the National schedule.

Key points

- A new National BSL Progress Report Template will be issued after publication of the Scottish Government's National Progress Report later this year.
- Shetland Islands Council will use this National template for its own BSL Progress Report to ensure consistency across all Local Authorities.
- Shetland's BSL Progress Report will move to a three-year publication cycle to align with national timescales and reporting requirements.
- This approach ensures compliance with Scottish Government direction, consistency across all Local Authorities, and clarity for future reporting.

Overview

Although Shetland's next Progress Report was originally intended for publication this year, we must await the Scottish Government's National Progress Report and the accompanying template. This timing means our own Progress Report must shift to a three-year cycle.

This ensures alignment with national expectations, compliance with the BSL Act, and consistency with the standardised reporting format. Shetland's BSL Progress Report will be prepared using the national template once it becomes available later this year.

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