

## **Briefing Note Template**

**Elected Member Briefing** – Additional Information, Synthetic Pitch Options Appraisal, Brae Campus Project

**Elected Member Briefing Note Ref. No. 2026-30**

### **About this Briefing Note**

Briefing by: Samantha Flaws, Director of Education and Children's Services

Date: 19/06/2026

Subject: Additional Information, Synthetic Pitch Options Appraisal, Brae Campus Project

<b>Public</b>
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### **Purpose**

Following Education and Families Committee on 15 June 2026, a request was received for additional information to be made available to all members, in relation to report reference number CS-13-26-F ('New Brae Pitch – Synthetic Pitch Options Appraisal'). The purpose of this briefing is to provide all Members with this additional information in advance of Policy and Resources Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2026, and Shetland Islands Council on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

The information requested was:

1. The potential income from a hockey facility in Lerwick, reflecting the anticipated increased usage.
2. Cost of transferring the Brae Hockey Pitch to Shetland Islands Council.
3. Use of the new synthetic football pitch.
4. Timescale for the Option 1 replacement pitch.

### **Background**

At its meeting on 25 March 2026, Shetland Islands Council instructed the Director of Children's Services to undertake an options appraisal on the current synthetic pitch position (Option 1) and the alternative proposal (Option 2) to identify the most suitable option to replace the Brae Community grass playing field (Min Ref: 17/26). As the existing Brae Community grass playing field has been identified as the preferred site for development of the new Brae Campus buildings, replacement provision is required should the new Brae Campus proceed.

Option 1: The current proposal within the agreed design brief for a new Brae Campus is to construct a new synthetic pitch suitable for competitive football on the site of the existing school once the new school is built on the existing Brae Community grass playing field. The existing sports ground adjacent to the school is owned and managed by Shetland Recreational Trust (SRT) as a synthetic hockey pitch and is not affected by the current design brief.

Option 2: The alternative proposal is to acquire the existing sports ground from SRT and resurface it to create a synthetic grass pitch suitable for competitive football, alongside the development of a new synthetic hockey pitch in Lerwick on land belonging to the Council.

Following the meeting of the Education and Families Committee on 15 June 2026, additional information was requested as outlined above.

## **Key points**

### **1. Potential Income from a Hockey Pitch in Lerwick**

Based on current participation levels and facility usage in Shetland, it is estimated that a hockey pitch in Lerwick could generate an annual income in the region of £28,000–£29,000. This estimate has been reached as follows:

#### **Current Position (Benchmark – Brae)**

At present, hockey activity is concentrated at Brae, with:

- Approximately 12 hours of weekly bookings over a 26-week season (312 hours annually).
- An estimated additional 50 hours per year for events, training, and community activities.

Using current Shetland Islands Council charging levels (£55 per hour for adults; £36 for juniors), this equates to an annual income of approximately £18,960.

#### **Projected Lerwick Provision**

Based on the successful development and growth of other sports in Shetland, including girls and women's rugby and football, which are mainly based in Lerwick but include participants from all areas of Shetland, it is anticipated that there would also be an

increase in hockey bookings and numbers playing the sport, both at senior and junior level, if the hockey pitch was located in Lerwick. This assumption is also based on the numbers of people living and working in and around the central mainland of Shetland, including children and young people staying in the AHS Hostel, and the enhanced transport options into the town. It also takes account of the fact that many parents and adults will already be coming into the town for other purposes e.g. shopping, cinema that could be done in conjunction with playing hockey as well as other sports. On this basis, the following assumptions have been made:

- Adult usage: 16 hours per week over 26 weeks - £22,880 per year
- Junior usage: 4 hours per week over 26 weeks - £3,744 per year
- Additional bookings (training, events, etc.): 60 hours annually - £2,160 per year

This results in an estimated total annual income of £28,496.

### Considerations

- The estimate excludes use by schools and Sport and Leisure services, which would not generate income.
- It does not include potential additional income from other sports or activities (e.g. athletics, para-sport, community events).
- There is potential for further growth, including the development of junior leagues, expanded training provision and inclusion in National competitions.

### Comparator

For context, North Loch Park has generated over £23,000 in income since opening in November, including approximately £10,000 in April and May of the current financial year. It is worth noting that without the North Loch Park being constructed, virtually none of this income would have been achieved, and the sports of rugby and football would not have had the opportunity to play competitively or train outdoors over the last 7 months because of the wet winter and spring.

## **2. Transfer of Brae Hockey Pitch**

Shetland Recreational Trust (SRT) has indicated they are willing to transfer ownership of the Brae hockey pitch to the Council for a nominal sum.

### Key Points

- The transfer would be on the basis of a nominal purchase price.

- SRT has indicated that it would not seek to make a financial gain from the transfer.
- SRT have requested that any reasonable costs associated with the transfer are covered, ensuring that the process does not result in a financial loss to the organisation.

### Considerations

- The Council would need to identify and meet any legal, administrative, or technical costs associated with the transfer.
- Further due diligence may be required in relation to:
  - Asset condition
  - Ongoing maintenance liabilities
  - Future lifecycle costs

### **3. Use of the New Synthetic Football Pitch**

The proposed 3G football pitch in Brae is proposed to have a 40mm pile carpet, which is mainly suitable for football but can be used for other sports including Hockey. The 3G pitch at North Loch Park was constructed with a 60mm carpet pile length, mainly suitable for rugby and football but not suitable for hockey. The guidance from **sportscotland** on Pitches and Pavilions for 3G Synthetic Turf Pitches confirms that a 40mm pile carpets is suitable for hockey in the following situation:

- Schools hockey up to S3
- Beginner sessions
- Low level social play

However, it also states that it would not be suitable for training or match play leading to performance development.

### Considerations

This additional information confirms that a 40mm 3G synthetic turf pitch in Brae would be suitable for some school and community hockey sessions but would not be suitable for higher-level training or matches leading to performance hockey i.e. Shetland County matches and training.

#### **4. Timescale for the Option 1 Replacement Pitch**

The provisional sequencing of the construction phase of the new Brae Campus would see the building of the new school on the existing grass football pitch, which could be completed by October 2028. Following this, the old school buildings would need to be demolished before the construction of the replacement pitch would be undertaken. The estimated timescale for completion would be late 2029.

#### **Considerations**

There would be no suitable facility for football matches in Brae from the start of the construction period until the completion of the new synthetic football pitch.

In option 2, there are no sequencing considerations, as work could take place on both pitches and the new school building at the same time reducing potential disruption to sports provision.

#### **Overview**

This briefing provides additional information requested in relation to report CS-13-26-F, specifically on the potential income from a hockey facility in Lerwick and the transfer of the Brae hockey pitch to Council ownership.

It indicates that a Lerwick-based hockey facility could generate annual income in the region of £28,000, assuming increased participation and usage compared to current levels in Brae. However, this estimate is subject to demand and excludes wider use and operational costs.

The briefing also confirms that Shetland Recreational Trust (SRT) is willing to transfer the Brae hockey pitch to the Council for a nominal sum, subject to the Council covering reasonable transfer-related costs and undertaking due diligence on the asset and associated liabilities.

It also confirms that a 40mm 3G synthetic turf pitch in Brae would be suitable for some school and community hockey sessions including local club training but would not be suitable for higher-level training or matches leading to performance hockey i.e. Shetland County matches and training.

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