Briefing Note Template

Elected Member Briefing – *Pitch Options at Brae Campus – Points of Clarification*

Elected Member Briefing Note Ref. No. 2026-33

About this Briefing Note
Briefing by: *Robert Sinclair, Executive Manager, Assets Commissioning and Procurement*
Date: 26 June 2026
Subject: Points of Clarification following Education and Families Committee on 15 June 2026 and Policy and Resources Committee on 24 June 2026

Public ~~/ Exempt / Confidential~~ *if exempt or confidential explain risks and consequences.*

Purpose
This briefing note is to provide further clarity to Members on some key issues raised at both of the above committees to assist the decision-making process at the Council meeting on 1 July 2026.

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.

Having considered the options, Members voted (at both of the above committees) to recommend that the Council continues with Option 1 described above.

During questions and debate some recurring themes emerged. This briefing seeks to categorise and clarify some of these points below.

Key points

Alignment with the Council's Gateway Process for the Management of Capital Projects

The Council's Gateway process aligns very closely with HM Treasury Green Book methodology, which, for sizeable or complex projects such as the Brae Campus, follows three stages. These are the Strategic Outline Case (SOC), followed by the Outline Business Case (OBC) and finally the Full Business Case (FBC), where the final investment decision is taken. The OBC for the Brae Campus project was approved by the Council on 24 January 2024. The FBC is expected to be presented to Members in early 2027 and certainly in advance of the pre-election period. There are no other gateway decision points in relation to the project as a whole.

The Project comprises many different elements and issues, such as internal layout, site constraints, traffic management, design, materials, facilities and implementation planning.

One of these many elements is the provision of outdoor recreational space. Since the approval of the OBC, an opportunity has been identified by the project team, through stakeholder engagement, that has potential benefits in relation the wider provision of recreational facilities across Shetland. This is Option 2 above.

The project team have concluded that the current programme would allow time for either option to be taken forward in the FBC, but that in order to do so a decision must be taken now. The FBC must present a detailed and fully costed proposal and we cannot therefore include multiple options.

This is not a decision in terms of the Gateway process set out above, instead it is an interposed decision in relation to one element of the design.

Assessment and scoring of the options by Council officers

In providing an assessment of each option, the Project Board has sought at every stage to do so by way of an objective process that aligns with existing Council policy.

The process was therefore based on the scoring system approved by Members for prioritising projects within our Asset Investment Plan. In that process, officers use documented scoring guidelines to assess each proposal using the following criteria and weightings.

Criteria	**Weighting**
Strategic	10
Economic	30
Commercial	10
Financial	10
Management	10
Risk	10
Legal	20

Bearing in mind that this project is not driven by any legal imperative, but conscious of the financial challenges anticipated, The Project Board decided to reallocate the 20% weighting relating to legal drivers to finance, resulting in the revised table below.

Criteria	**Weighting**
Strategic	10
Economic	30
Commercial	10
Financial	30
Management	10
Risk	10

The Critical Success Factors from the Outline Business Case were used to inform the appraisal questions, ensuring that the assessment remained linked to the original objectives of the New Brae Campus project and wider Council priorities.

The appraisal questions were developed to translate the Five Case Model headings into practical assessment criteria. Several specific questions were developed under each of the criteria above. Each was debated and marked by the Project Board from 1 to 5 points on a consensus basis. The marks for each criteria were then averaged and weighted. Each question was designed to test a specific aspect of the options, such as alignment with Council priorities, whole-life affordability, deliverability through procurement, stakeholder impacts, programme dependencies and the ability to manage risk. This allowed each option to be assessed in a consistent and auditable way.

The Project Board had input from officers and services involved in the delivery, governance and assessment of the New Brae Campus project. This included consideration of education, project delivery, finance, procurement, asset management, stakeholder engagement and wider service implications. The scoring therefore used agreed methodology and was informed by professional judgement, available project evidence, consultation feedback, cost information, delivery considerations and the requirements of the wider business case process.

Net Present Value

Net Present Value (NPV) is a financial metric that calculates the difference between the present value of cash inflows and outflows over a period of time to allowing comparison between projects.

The calculation included in the financial appraisal CS-13-26 Appendix 3 uses the £13k income that SRT has stated is the part of the current £15k pitch income which is attributable to hockey use.

Increasing this to the potential income of £28k in the 19/06/2026 briefing note reduces the gap between the options, however option 2 is still £1.042m (previously £1.289m) more expensive over a 25 year period using the gateway process for the management of capital assets basis to calculate affordability including capital and revenue costs.

Net Present Value	£m
Option 1: Construction of a new synthetic grass football pitch on the existing school site at Brae.	9.658
Option 2: Acquisition and resurfacing of the existing Brae synthetic pitch for football use, alongside delivery of a new hockey-standard synthetic facility in Lerwick.	10.700

Overview

It is hoped that the information above will address any residual ambiguity that may exist in relation to the committee documents already provided.

The project team requests that if there are any further matters that Members would like clarified at Council on 1 July, that these are forwarded to the Director of Childrens Services in advance so that the most comprehensive responses can be provided.

Last modified on: *26 June 2026*

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