

## Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 - Annual Reporting Return Template

Name of Relevant Authority:	Shetland Islands Council
Reporting Period:	April 2022 – March 2023

Please describe how your organisation has had regard to island communities in carrying out its functions.

The Community Planning and Development Team continued to raise awareness and support to enable the Council to meet its statutory duties of the Islands (Scotland) Act by:

- Issuing a survey to all managers, to enable the right support and monitor success.
  - Of this, 84% had heard of ICIA's, but, not everyone knew where to find everything in order to complete one.
  - 46% of respondents were not so confident in completing an ICIA
  - Training from the Scottish Islands Team was offered to all managers and team leaders; this is currently being organised
  - 61% of respondents were interested in training
- Ensuring that guidance and templates are all easy to find and in one place: an Island Communities Impact Assessments (ICIA) home page on the Council's intranet site has been created. This includes information on what an ICIA is; who is responsible; how to carry one out; alongside other links, information and the ICIA template form. The video and leaflet recently issued from the Scottish Islands Team was included.
- Issuing a staff briefing outlining the information above
- Promoting the Scottish Government Islands Team email address for any advice, assistance and questions, alongside Community Planning and Development's contact details.

The Islands with Small Populations Locality Plan continued to facilitate and ensure regular engagement with five of Shetland's most remote island communities. The Plan covers the communities of Fair Isle, Fetlar, Foula, Papa Stour and Skerries and is based on extensive dialogue between public service providers and the people who live and work in these isles. The Strategic Group includes representatives from each of these island communities, Directors, service managers, key stakeholders and Community Involvement and Development Officers. A range of topics have been regularly discussed at the meetings over the past year including: health care; transport; connectivity; housing; tourism and infrastructure. This work continues to ensure that the Council and its partners allocate resources towards the priorities of these islands. The Council has worked with telecommunications companies to encourage improvements to the digital connectivity of these islands, for example community broadband in Fetlar has improved and a 4G mast has been built in Foula.

This approach ensures that the needs of island communities are better understood, and can be taken into account in the day to day delivery of services as well as policy development. It also provides a means of regular engagement when needed, to ensure that the needs of island communities are taken into account in strategy and policy development.

In terms of services, following a meeting with the Papa Stour community in June 2022, the Council confirmed that it would reinstate a sailing to and from Papa Stour on Mondays, something the community had been raising as an issue since flights stopped a couple of years ago, having an impact on the mail service and access to healthcare for example.

From August 2022, the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 required local authorities to ensure period products are provided free of charge to anyone who needs them. With regard to island communities, these are available on all inter-island ferries and Tingwall airport (where flights to Fair Isle and Foula are based). Online ordering will also soon be available.

Power cuts and severe snow in December 2022 was declared a major incident across parts of Shetland, which included many islands. The Council, in carrying out its functions to an emergency response, checked in with residents known to be vulnerable, such as those with health or care needs and called on additional resources from emergency services where necessary. In communicating with communities, all islands were contacted for updates on the situation to find out what was required by communities as well as promoting any warm spaces and help available. Most islands were affected (but not all) and communication was crucial in directing resources and supplies such as torches, blankets and gas. Generators were delivered to Yell, Unst and Whalsay as part of the emergency response.

In March 2023, a report on Interim Ferry Fare and Ticketing Review was presented to the Environment and Transport and Policy and Resources committees. A screening was undertaken, which determined that only positive impacts on our islands would result from the Policy Change.

Please provide a list of policies, strategies or services for which your organisation has completed a Section 10 assessment Island Communities Impact Assessment.

- Local Housing Strategy 2022-27

What other steps has your organisation taken for those policies for which an ICIA was not required (under the section 10(b)(ii) assessment).

The Council continues to raise the need to think about islands differently. The work of the Locality Plan ensures that information is regularly shared which helps officers understand these differences.

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) acknowledges that impacts/outcomes may differ across island and rural communities in Shetland according to the unique nature of each locality, community, housing stock profile access to resources (including fuel, transport and digital connections) and local economy. To address these differences, the LHS will fully align to a new place model currently being developed by Shetland Islands Council, the Scottish Futures Trust and Hub North Scotland, which aims to join up the planning and delivery of economic and social infrastructure investment including housing, planning, net zero, transport and Covid recovery.

A shared commitment to community led-place making and land assembly will enable the design and delivery of housing solutions which reflect the needs and context of each place through co-production with residents and communities. This framework will be important in island communities, including islands with small populations, ensuring that housing planning and development is aligned to transport, connectivity and jobs. This approach fully aligns to the Islands with Small Populations Locality Plan which aims to increase the working age population and support island sustainability.