

Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 - Annual Reporting Return Template

Name of Relevant Authority:	Shetland Islands Council
Reporting Period:	April 2023-March 2024

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

Raising Awareness

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:

- Organising two online training/overview sessions for completing Island Communities Impact Assessments (ICIAs) with the Rural Economy Team Leader from the Islands Policy Unit at Scottish Government. Invitations were sent to all team leaders, executive managers and directors and was open to all council officers. These took place in September and November with 36 Council staff attending.
- A survey to all managers to inform support and monitor success had the following findings:
 - 80% had heard of ICIAs and 20% had completed one. 60% of respondents would know where to find everything in order to complete one.
 - 60% of respondents were not confident in completing an ICIA.
 - Some qualitative feedback was also provided which will be useful to inform further promotion of ICIAs.
- An impact assessment page was created on the Council intranet, as well as an ICIA sub-page so that all Council staff can access information, guidance and the template. Contact details for the Community Planning and Development team are provided if officers need any help or advice.

Islands with Small Populations Second Locality Plan

In addition, Shetland Partnership's Islands with Small Populations: [Second Locality Plan](#) was published and signed off by partners including organisations and communities. A workshop was carried out in June 2023, three years after the first plan. This brought together the representatives from the Islands with Small Populations Strategic Delivery group to review the Plan and its delivery, as it was time for it to be refreshed.

The Plan has been developed by and with the five communities of Fair Isle, Fetlar, Foula, Papa Stour and Skerries – collectively and as individual communities. A Locality Plan ensures that agencies and communities are working together to find solutions to local challenges. It ensures that the Council and its partners allocate resources towards the priorities of these islands.

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.

The Delivery Structure includes quarterly visits to each of the islands by a Community Involvement and Development Officer from the Council's Community Planning and Development Team, a member of Shetland Partnership's Management and Leadership Team (or nominee) and any other key agencies. Annual in person events bringing island community representatives, members of Shetland Partnership Management and Leadership team and other key agencies will continue.

Spring visits by the Council and partner organisations have begun to the islands on the theme of community resilience. Led by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the visits help to ensure that all emergency services understand the challenges for these remote communities and builds good relationships with the island communities.

Island Profiles and Locality Profiles

Profiles for each of these islands, alongside Profiles for each of Shetland's seven localities were created by Partnership Officers. All of the profiles were co-produced with community members input. Profiles provide local data which is useful for a number of reasons including service redesign, local plans and maximising opportunities to seek external funding to support community development.

The profiles for the 'Islands with Small Populations' include demographic and economic data provided by the communities; and results from a survey of all five islands. Meetings with community members were held either on the islands or online to ensure that profiles portrayed the islands accurately. Island profiles rely on local information as data is often not available at island level.

[Locality profiles](#) covering larger populations and geographies, were also produced by the Shetland Partnership for the seven localities of Shetland. Two of these localities are island groups – "Whalsay and Skerries" and "Yell, Unst and Fetlar". The data is mostly administrative and is different to that of the island profiles as more data is available at the larger geographic scale. Opportunities to discuss the profiles and contribute were carried out throughout, with island sessions held in Yell and Whalsay. Community workers also brought these to Unst, Fetlar and Skerries for discussion.

Due to the way administrative data works, the island of Bressay cannot be statistically separated from the town of Lerwick; with an approximate population of 340. All other islands are captured via individual profiles or island group locality profiles. Therefore, work is underway to create a Bressay Profile.

Community Workers

Community workers continue to have good relationships with island communities, providing opportunities to raise any issues regularly. Winter Pop-Ins were held between November and March by community workers, where hot drinks, snacks, games and company were offered. Cost of living support measures were also available. These took place all over Shetland, including many islands such as Whalsay, Skerries, Yell, Fetlar, Papa Stour, Skerries and Foula.

Community Council Scheme of Establishment

The Community Council Scheme of Establishment review began in 2023/24. Drop in sessions were held in each locality. A Teams meeting was arranged for the residents of the islands with small populations to ensure opportunities to respond, alongside an online survey.

Cost of Living Support

A cost of living campaign was carried out over the winter. The purpose was to ensure the community knew what support and help was available, and how to access it. It also aimed to normalise and reduce the stigma around asking for, receiving and offering help and support. Social media, the Council website, radio, news outlets and posters were used. With regard to island communities, the posters were available on all inter-island ferries and Tingwall airport (where flights to Fair Isle and Foula are based). All Community Workers and Islands with Small Populations representatives were emailed the information and asked to share where possible.

Online Provision of Period Products

Since August 2021 the Council has been supplying Health Centres, Leisure Centres, Council-owned public buildings and community halls with period products for anyone to access freely. These are also available on ferries and at Tingwall Airport. In August 2023, free period products became available to order online. Some people find it difficult to access free products at local pick-up points, perhaps due to location, lack of transport or a health condition. People can now have their products of choice – reusable or disposables – delivered directly to their door. While beneficial to all in Shetland, this may be particularly useful for island communities.

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

- Shetland's Local Child Poverty Action Report 2023
- Islands with Small Populations Locality Plan 2023
- Shetland Community Justice Plan 2023-2028
- Council Tax – Second Homes and Long-Term Empty Properties
- Shetland's British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2024-2030
- Participation and Engagement Policy
- Skeld School Mothballing

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 and Locality Profiles ensures that information is regularly shared. This helps officers and Councillors, when developing and approving policy.

From the list above, a full ICIA was only required for Council Tax – Second Homes and Long-Term Empty Properties.

Shetland's Local Child Poverty Action Report (including strategy from 2023 onwards) involved:

- consulting with Anchor for Families to ensure that families on islands can be linked up with support, if there is a need
- Ensuring that Money Worries sessions are offered to all professionals including island communities
- The Cost of Living campaign ensured that all islands were included in the communications
- Ensuring that benefit check support is offered by Community Workers on islands as well as the Shetland mainland.

The Islands with Small Populations Plan is focussed on Shetland's 5 islands with distinct socio-economic differences as outlined above.

The Community Justice Plan 2023-2028 ICIA highlights that community justice support and interventions are tailored to meet individual need, regardless of geography.

Shetland's BSL Plan 2024-2030 highlights the difficulty of understanding levels of need, across Shetland, including island communities.

The Participation and Engagement Policy is underpinned by the National Standards for Community Engagement and promotes the use of an engagement planning tool. This tool will ensure that the needs of different service users or communities are taken into account when planning and delivering any engagement.

The Skeld School Mothballing ICIA highlighted that no mitigations were necessary, however, the process highlighted the need to assess the Mothballing Toolkit for the Outer Isles.