

## Guidance booklet

### Purpose

1. This paper considers options for provision of a guidance booklet to explain the review in the three islands-only councils; and provides a draft booklet to support public consultation.

### Discussion

2. The Commission currently has more than one booklet providing an explanation of its approach to electoral reviews. For the 5th Reviews it produced a review-specific guidance document (19 pages long) covering the approach to determining councillor numbers, ward design and legislative requirements in some detail. It is similar to a standing document, one of the series of Commission Information Papers "Electoral Reviews: Guidance" (20 pages long) and which describes the Commissions' general approach to reviews (and needs to be updated). Finally, there is a 2-page "Quick Guide" on the website.
3. The Secretariat suggest that there is value in continuing to have a general guidance booklet explaining in detail the legislative background to the Commission's work and full explanation of the processes and procedures followed. However, while this would be useful reference for those wishing to have a full understanding of all aspects of a review, it is not particularly accessible or helpful for the purposes of trying to encourage public participation in consultation rounds.
4. It is suggested therefore that that a revised "technical" guide be produced for reference on the Commission's website. The guide would explain the legislation, methodology and approach to reviews and how people can get participate effectively in consultation. It would not be review-specific but would set the framework for all reviews of electoral arrangements, including the islands. Its audience would be those who require, or are interested in, more detail of legislation, councillor number methodology, electorate forecasting and so on. If the Commission agree then a draft paper will be brought to the December meeting. The initial version of the paper is likely to have a short shelf-life as it is will require updating after the expected Electoral Reform Bill is published in 2019. It would, however, be available for the start of the public consultation in the 3 islands and so be complementary to the document outlined below.

### Islands Review

5. In the meantime it would be helpful to have a guide to the Islands Reviews that is detailed enough that it explains the review as a standalone document but is short enough that it is easy to read for a lay audience. It is envisaged that this document would be distributed to interested parties (community councils, local groups, elected representatives) in order to support the public consultation. A draft is attached in Appendix A for any comments and amendments.
6. It is suggested that once the text is agreed that the Secretariat consult APS Group who hold the Scottish Government contract for all design, print and publishing work with a view to producing a document that is user-friendly, appealing and meets accessibility standards. This would be available on the website and distributed hard-copy. At this stage no quotation for this work has

been obtained but it is anticipated that it can be met within the review budget for 2018–19.

**Action**

7. The Commission is asked to:

- consider the approach outlined to providing supporting guidance;
- decide whether it wishes to see a full technical guidance document at its December meeting; and
- comment on the shorter Islands guidance in Appendix A.

Secretariat  
October 2018