

**LGBCS Paper 2473****Islands Reviews: Communications and Engagement Plan****Purpose**

1. At its meeting of 30 October 2018 the Commission considered Paper 2455 which considered various suggestions to improve publicity and engagement with stakeholders during the Islands Reviews, in particular during the public consultation phase which is estimated to take place for 12 weeks between July - October 2019.
2. The Commission is invited to consider feedback following discussions with the three Island council areas.

**Display Points**

3. Historically the Commission has generally used display points at council offices and libraries to publicise its proposals.
4. All three Councils suggested extending the type of display points used and suggest: ferry noticeboards (used by Orkney Council); community school noticeboards; sports centre noticeboards or GP surgery/ NHS noticeboards (suggested by Shetland Council).

**Household Mailing**

5. The Commission could consider writing to all households with a simple guide to the Island Reviews. Royal Mail provided an approx. quote in 2017 of £0.10 per household.
6. Both Orkney and Shetland Islands Council advised that many residents have mailing preferences to receive no junk mail but they suggested placing leaflets in the main newspapers in their area instead. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar have no experience of a mail drop other than council tax notices but felt it could be worthwhile.

**Local Press**

7. The Commission must place public notices in local newspapers to publicise the start of its public consultation. The public notices are usually placed in the rear of newspapers. The Commission could consider a placing a higher profile advert in the newspaper or placing a leaflet in each newspaper.
8. The Orcadian, a weekly newspaper, has the largest readership in Orkney. The Orcadian offer various formats of advertising and have quoted:
  - £150 for a full page advert in their monthly Living Orkney magazine;
  - £500 to insert 8,000 postcards; or
  - £3,400 for a four-page print wrap that encases the newspaper .
9. The Shetland Times, a weekly newspaper, has the largest readership in Shetland. They have quoted between £300-£400 to print 6,500 leaflets, plus a further £290 to insert them. Their four-page print wrap would cost approx. £8,100.

10. The Stornoway Gazette, a weekly newspaper, has a readership of 20,000. A leaflet insert would cost approx. £1,200 but they recommended a four-page print wrap instead, at a cost of £950.
11. The West Highland Free Press is published once a week. A half page advert would cost £640 plus or a full page advert would cost £1,280.

### **Video**

12. The Commission could produce a short information video to publicise and explain the Islands Reviews.
13. The three Councils advised that a video could be a popular way of publicising the reviews. Orkney Council has a YouTube channel but most videos are viewed through Facebook. Shetland Council also confirmed YouTube video advertising works well for them and are happy to host a YouTube video on their own YouTube channel. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar do not have a YouTube channel but some videos have been produced in the past by other council teams.

### **Local Radio**

14. The Commission could be interviewed by local radio stations, similar to the LGIU podcast, to publicise and explain the Islands Reviews to the public.
15. Orkney Council recommended an interview or feature on BBC Radio Orkney as it has a wide audience.
16. Shetland Council suggested an interview or feature on BBC Radio Shetland. Shetland Islands Broadcasting Company, a commercial radio station, could publicise the Review for a fee.
17. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar advised that BBC Radio Alba would favour a Gaelic speaker. An interview in English might be considered if the following discussion was conducted in Gaelic. They also suggested contacting Isles FM, a popular local commercial radio station.

### **Roadshows**

18. The Commission could attend a public event to publicise the reviews and have further information available to the public.
19. Orkney Council recommended the Orkney County Show on 10 August 2019 as it is well attended by island communities. Some Orkney councillors have had stalls there. They recommend booking flights and accommodation as soon as possible as the County Show is very popular.
20. Shetland Council confirmed most of their public events are entertainment events which involve a large number of visitors from outside the area. Therefore it would unlikely generate much engagement from local communities.
21. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar advised that no island events would be appropriate or well attended.

### **Public Meetings**

22. The Commission could hold a public meeting to publicise the reviews and have further information available to the public.
23. Orkney Council advised that they have held drop in sessions, held by their Planning Department at Kirkwall Town Hall. They advise use of the town hall is dependent on whether cruise ships are docked, if a cruise ship is in the harbour only tourists will likely attend. They also advised that it could take around a week to hold public meetings in the North Isles due to poor transport links.
24. Shetland Council offered use of Lerwick Town Hall or the Museum, however stressed that there would likely be a minimal turnout.
25. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar had no specific advice on public meetings.

### **Meeting with Community Councils**

26. The Commission will write to all community councils in each area to inform them that the public consultation has commenced. The Commission could attend community council meetings to explain and discuss their proposals.
27. The Association of Community Councils in Shetland, where all community councils meet together, meets on the following dates 26 March 2019, 25 June 2019 and 17 September 2019 in Lerwick.
28. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Orkney Council advised that representatives from their community councils do not meet together.

### **Other suggestions**

#### **Council Meetings**

29. Orkney and Shetland both invited the Commission to give an informal presentation at a Council meeting to discuss the proposals. The Orkney meeting is scheduled for 23 April 2019 and Shetland council meeting for 17 April or 15 May 2019. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar are still considering whether to invite the Commission to a Council meeting.

#### **Social Media**

30. The Commission could trial Facebook or Twitter advertising.
31. All three Councils are happy to publicise the Islands Reviews via their social media channels.
32. Orkney Council suggested targeting community groups on Facebook.

#### **Youth Council and Community Landlords**

33. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar suggested contacting their Youth Council and engaging with community landlords.

#### **Budget**

34. The corporate plan provides for £85,382 to cover publicity. While this was built around the estimated cost of holding public meetings it could be used to cover any of the options here.

### Expected Timetable and Review stages

35. The table below shows the expected timeframe and stages of the Islands Reviews. Activities under each Review Stage will be confirmed after the discussion of this paper.

<b>Dates (approx.)</b>	<b>Review Stage</b>
October 2018 – February 2019	Development of initial proposals
January 2019	Commission formally announces start of the reviews
March 2019 – May 2019	Statutory 2 month consultation with Councils – councillor numbers and ward designs
July 2019 – October 2019	Public consultation – councillor numbers and ward designs. 12 weeks
November 2019 – January 2020	Consider responses to consultations
February 2020 – June 2020	<i>Optional – Consult with public and Councils on revised proposals</i>
June 2020 – July 2020	Commission considers all responses and develops its final recommendations before submitting its reports to Scottish Ministers

### Evaluation

36. The Secretariat will consult Scottish Government to advise whether there are effective ways to evaluate the success of any option taken forward.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

37. The Secretariat recommends that the Commission improves its engagement and communications plan for the Islands Reviews by:

- placing adverts in the local press;
- contacting local radio stations for an interview;
- considering a short video;
- considering developing its social media reach; and
- attending a Council meeting to explain its proposals during its consultation with councils stage.
- At this stage public meetings seem to offer little benefit but having a stall at the Orkney County Show might be worth trialling in Orkney.

**Secretariat**

**February 2019**