

## Appendix 1

### Background to Our Islands Our Future (OIOF) Campaign

The Council's Constitutional Reform Working Group (CRWG) was established to consider the relevance, potential impact and opportunities posed by possible constitutional reform. At its meeting on 19 March 2013, various models were considered. These included:

- Balliwick of Guernsey, British Crown Dependency
- Balliwick of Jersey, a self-governing British Crown Dependency
- Falkland Islands, an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom
- Faroe Islands a Self-governing Territory under the sovereignty of Denmark
- Isle of Man, a Self-governing British Crown Dependency

Appendix 2 gives headline details of these constitutional models.

At its meeting held on 18 June 2013, the Policy and Resources Committee recommended that the following six key areas of focus for lobbying with the UK and Scottish Governments be endorsed:-

1. Prosperous Islands: Securing a strong fiscal position and powers including local direction and management of funding and grants;
2. Empowered Islands: Developing a new 'islands growth model' with the powers and freedoms to drive the local economy and make a lasting contribution to national well-being and growth;
3. Connected Islands: Ensuring parity of infrastructure (including communications, energy and transport) with the rest of the UK and Europe so that our communities live in 'islands without frontiers';
4. Powerhouse Islands: Securing benefit from our natural resources and driving Orkney's energy and marine development;
5. Special-Status Islands: Recognition of Orkney as a unique island region, embedding the principle of decision-making at a local level; and
6. Autonomous Islands: A constitutional model that supports the uniqueness of Orkney, its communities and its future.

In response to the Referendum on Scottish Independence, Scotland's three island councils, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council), Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council, launched a campaign on 17 June 2013 on the future of the Islands regardless of the result of the Referendum. This campaign "Our Islands Our Future" was non-partisan, and took no position on the outcome of the Referendum but sought to engage and negotiate with political leaders and decision makers on either side of the independence debate, to ensure that the particular nature and needs of Scotland's Island groups were recognised and taken fully into account.

OIOF's Joint Position Statement expressed a vision:

“... for a stronger future following the Independence Referendum of 2014. We are calling for a commitment that whatever the outcome, the needs and status of island areas are clearly recognised in the new era for Scotland”.

The Joint Position Statement also stated:

“The Islands Councils seek to negotiate with the Scottish Government over additional powers for the Islands such as:

- Control of the sea bed around the islands, allowing revenues currently paid to the Crown Estate to be channelled into local needs.
- New grid connections to the Scottish mainland to allow wave, tidal and wind energy resources to generate maximum benefits for the islands.
- New fiscal arrangements to allow the islands to benefit more directly from local resources, including renewable energy and fisheries.
- Recognition of the status of the three island groups in a new Scottish Constitutional Settlement and within the European Governance Framework”.

At its meeting held on 26 November 2013, the Policy and Resources Committee noted amongst other things:-

1. that the Constitutional Reform Working Group (CRWG) continued to meet to consider the relevance, potential impact and opportunities posed by potential constitutional reform;
2. the issues considered by the CRWG on 3 September 2013, as detailed in section 5.1 of the report by the Chief Executive;
3. that the CRWG had consolidated the six key areas of focus for lobbying with the UK and Scottish Governments and the European Union, agreed by the Council in July 2013, into three campaign areas as follows:-
  - 3.1. Marine Resources and Energy Growth – led by Shetland Islands Council;
  - 3.2. Constitutional Status and Public Sector Change – led by Orkney Islands Council; and
  - 3.3. Economic Drivers and Island Wellbeing – led by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

The CRWG undertook a series of public engagement events to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Campaign were communicated to all sectors in Orkney. A conference on constitutional reform, hosted by the three Islands Councils, was held in Orkney on 19 and 20 September 2013.

The OIOF campaign has sought greater autonomy for the islands. For example, at the Island Areas Ministerial Working Group on 24 March 2014, papers submitted by OIOF under Constitutional Status and Public Sector Change included:

- Legal and Constitutional Status
- Single Public Authority
- Special Status
- State Aid
- Revenues and Funding Settlement

In regard to the Special Status paper, OIOF was seeking special status within the EU and referenced the many European Islands already enjoying special status with the EU.

Appendix 3 outlines areas tabled for discussion at the Island Areas Ministerial Working Group on 24 March 2014. It is important to note that the Scottish Government's Prospectus "Empowering Scotland's Island Communities" was predicated on there being a yes vote in the Independence Referendum. As this did not happen, a number of the commitments made in the Prospectus could not be taken forward. The Islands Bill is one example of a commitment in the Prospectus being taken forward.

The UK Government recognised the potential of the islands and in 2014 made a statement of support in "A Framework for the Islands". The UK Government has honoured its commitment within "A Framework for the Islands" with the devolution of the Crown Estate.