

---

**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**

**Argyll Islands Strategic Group**

**Chief Executive**

**28 August 2018**

---

**Scottish Government – Draft Description of Island Liaisons Partners**

---

## **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Further to the report in January 2018 regarding a pilot for civil servants from the Scottish Government to volunteer as Island Liaison Partners, the civil servants have drafted a proposed description of the role. This is set out below and any comments received on this draft version would be welcomed.
- 1.2 Members are asked to note in the detail the draft description and objectives of the Island Liaison Partners as prepared by civil servants and provide any comments they may have.

**Scottish Government – Draft Description of Island Liaisons Partners**

---

**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 This paper sets out a draft description of the role of the Liaison Partners and the objective of the pilot. Comments from the committee would be welcome before the description is finalised.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Members are asked to note below the draft description and objectives of the Island Liaison Partners as prepared by civil servants and provide any comments they may have.

**4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 Further to the report in January 2018 regarding a pilot for civil servants from the Scottish Government to volunteer as Island Liaison Partners, the civil servants have drafted a proposed description of the role. This is set out below and any comments received on this draft version would be welcomed.

**Island Liaison Partner Role Description**

- 4.2 Scotland's Islands are renowned across the world for their proud traditions and vibrant cultures. Playing host to numerous festivals and events, they are wonderful places to live, work, study and visit. Our islands contribute much to the fabric of Scotland and are home to some of our most energetic and resilient communities. However, geographical remoteness, connectivity and demographic changes pose distinct challenges for our island communities.
- 4.3 Island Liaison Partners, as part of location teams, will build knowledge, understanding and relationships with communities and local partners

on the islands. Specific objectives of these roles include to:

1. Improve the Scottish Government's understanding of the specific challenges, circumstances and opportunities that exist on our islands.
  2. Shape and influence local empowerment and improvement programmes to better meet the needs and interests of our island communities.
  3. Use the experience and knowledge to inform the implementation of the Islands (Scotland) Bill and the Local Governance Review.
  4. Provide broader intelligence to colleagues on how SG policy priorities and reforms are playing out locally.
- 4.4 The aim of this innovative approach is to improve how we engage with island communities. The role of the Partners is therefore not to replicate existing processes and procedures unless there is an opportunity to add value by, for example, facilitating and signposting. The voluntary nature of these posts will also mean that the Liaison Partners will need to consider how they can most effectively engage with the island communities.
- 4.5 Our partnership with Argyll and Bute is already strong and the Community Planning Partnership have good arrangements in place to ensure that there are regular opportunities for island communities to engage proactively with Community Planning processes. We propose to mirror the arrangements already in place in the way we organise Scottish Government engagement. The aim of this innovative approach is to add value in how we engage with island communities. It is not to replicate
- 4.6 We have concluded that, given the geography and diversity of the Islands in Argyll and Bute, we will need more than one Island Liaison Partner and, on that basis, have selected 5 individuals to provide support as follows:

**Cluster 1; Bute and Cowal (B &C) – 6,948: Ralph Throp**

1. Bute

**Cluster 2; Oban, Lorn and the Isles (OLI) – 4,844: Gavin Sellar and Jon Rathjen**

2. Coll
3. Easdale
4. Kerrera
5. Lismore
6. Luing
7. Shuna
8. Mull, Erraid, Ulva and Gometra
9. Iona
10. Seil
11. Tiree.

**Cluster 3; Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (MAKI) – 3,719: Iain MacAllister and Dannie Onn**

12. Islay
13. Colonsay
14. Gigha
15. Jura
16. Oronsay

- 4.7 Short biographies for Ralph, Gavin, Jon, Iain, and Dannie can be found at appendix 1.
- 4.8 We anticipate that Liaison Partners will stay in the role for a good period of time to establish and develop enduring relationships. It will be for the Liaison Partners and local partners to determine the local liaison arrangements and it is unlikely that they will be the same everywhere. We anticipate that meetings of partners on the identified islands to progress local priorities will take place between 2 and 4 times a year, likely in line with the rhythm and routine already underway as part of the current community planning arrangements.
- 4.9 As a pioneering approach to community engagement, we are keen to capture learning from how the Island Liaison Partner role works in practice. We will therefore work with national, local and third sector partners in the coming months to establish how this approach will be evaluated.

4.10 Comments and suggestions on the description above from the Argyll Islands will be welcome.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

5.1 The paper sets out a draft description of the role of the Liaison Partners and the objective of the pilot and comments from the committee would be welcome before the document is finalised.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy; none
- 6.2 Financial; none
- 6.3 Legal; none
- 6.4 HR; none
- 6.5 Equalities; none
- 6.6 Risk; reputation of public sector at risk if expectations are not managed.
- 6.7 Customer Service; none.

**Chief Executive of Argyll and Bute Council;** Cleland Sneddon  
**Policy Lead for Islands** Councillor Robin Currie  
**Date of Report** 05 December 2017  
**For further information contact:** Stuart Green

Appendix 1 – Biographies of Scottish Government Island Liaison Partners

## **Appendix 1: Biographies of Scottish Government Island Liaison Partners**

### **Ralph Throp**

Ralph is responsible for developing the Scottish Government's approach to community resilience to emergencies (find out more at [Readyscotland.org](http://Readyscotland.org)). He has worked on behalf of the Government on numerous emergency responses.

He is originally a development planner by trade, and has worked at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh, with a focus on international policy and planning in general and Chinese development in particular. He moved on to Scotland's regeneration agencies, Scottish Homes and Communities Scotland, where for 10 years based in Inverness, he had territorial responsibility for working with Highland and the 3 Island council areas.

### **Gavin Sellar**

Gavin works in Parliamentary Counsel Office, the Scottish Government's legislative drafting office. He has drafted and contributed to a number of Acts of the Scottish Parliament, including the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016, the Seat Belts on School Transport (Scotland) Act 2017 and the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, the latter being of particular interest as the son of a Tirisdeach.

### **Jon Rathjen**

Jon is the team leader of the Water Industry Team in the Scottish Government with policy responsibility for the Scottish Water Industry including sponsorship of the public corporation Scottish Water and the new Hydro Nation agenda. Scotland the Hydro Nation focuses on the economic, social and environmental development of the value of water resources in Scotland and the raising of Scotland's international profile through its performance on global water issues.

Jon has over 25 years' experience as a Public Servant having worked for Customs and Excise and now the Scottish Government. With experience in front line service delivery and then with policy responsibilities from IT security through to Better Public Service Delivery and e-Government, Sustainable Development, and now the Water Industry. Jon is a board (or equivalent) member of Aqua Publica Europea, UK Water Partnership, UNESCO Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science.

## **Iain MacAllister**

Iain is currently Head of the Care and Resources Unit in Health and Care Analytical Services Analysis Division, managing a team of economists, researchers and statisticians. This role includes providing analytical advice to drive the continuing reform of primary and social care in Scotland, including health and social care integration. Issues around delivering sustainable, high quality and person-centred services in remote and island communities are a key challenge. Iain's previous roles in the Scottish Government included posts in Population Health, Communications & Strategic Research and Local Government & Public Sector Reform Research. The latter role included working on community planning and local government governance research.

Like generations before him Iain was born and bred on the Isle of Colonsay, attending Oban High School and the universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde. Iain still considers Colonsay home, frequently taking his young family back to the island.

## **Dannie Onn**

Dannie is a chartered architect and historic buildings specialist. He is employed part time by SG as a reporter in the Planning and Environment Appeals Division. This means that he is a homebased civil servant. He lives on the west coast of Scotland near Oban. Dannie's wife has family connections with Colonsay where they spend much of their time, getting increasingly involved with island life. To fill up his time, Dannie volunteers with various charitable enterprises including a community development company and the Oban Hockey Club.