

## **Island Champions: Update Paper**

### **Introduction**

1. It is now a year since we had our introduction to the Council and its work with island communities across Argyll, and 9 months since our draft job description (link attached in Annex A) was considered by the Islands Strategic Group.

2. Our expectations were that we should:

- Develop our role as we go along
- Look to agree specific objectives and outcomes
- Manage island and wider expectations through consistent communications
- Not get involved in individual issues, or mirror existing structures and processes
- Report quarterly to the Islands Strategic Group and the Argyll and Bute Location Director on key issues
- Evaluate the pilot after 18 months

3. Our roles are broadly at 2 levels: strategic and local

### **Strategic/CPP engagement**

4. At the strategic level, our input has included:

- Engaged with Rhona Gold and the work of the Community Planning Partnership.
- Attended meetings of the council's Argyll Islands Strategic Group
- Engaged with the Islands Team at the Scottish Government, including providing comments on the draft Island's Plan consultation.
- Engaged with each other as fellow Island Liaison Officers / champions to discuss approaches and share learning.
- Attended the council's CPP conference in Dunoon.
- Link person in SG who can help the Islands Strategic Group engage effectively with the process of developing guidance for "Island Impact Assessment" identified.
- Advice provided on contingencies around the consequences of the UK exiting the EU, about the issue that was raised at the meeting concerning passport and customs checks for cruise ship passengers at small ports.

## **Island / local engagement**

5. The approach and level of engagement undertaken by the Islands Champions varies largely depending on capacity.

### Bute

6 Initial contact made with stakeholders.

### MAKI

7. Iain and Dannie have visited all four islands between them (taking Colonsay and Oransay together) and engaged with local community representative bodies. The latest was Gigha this week. They will now pull together a report on the engagement and issues for consideration.

8. Dannie has attended two of the Island team consultation events (Colonsay and Gigha) and met with the Islands Team and their consultants. Iain has used social media to promote the consultation across the islands. The results of the consultations should be made available so that we can feed them into our report on relevant issues.

9. Work still to do includes a meeting with the council's relevant community development officer to discuss how community engagement works for island communities.

### Lorn and the Isles

10. Seeking to attend the Islands Plan consultation events in June.

## **Key learning and on-going challenges**

11. A number of key points are worth highlighting:

- We are still struggling to define what our role is and what approach we should take in engaging with the Islands; there is variation in our approach largely tied to capacity. We would benefit from a greater steer from the Argyll and Bute Location Team in Scottish Government on how they see the role developing.

- The expectations of what we can achieve – at least via our engagement within MAKI – range from very little to unrealistically large. We have at times struggled to explain to the communities what our role is and what benefit it will bring to their islands. We are hopeful that the consultation events will help communities better understand the potential of the islands Act and the real opportunities it can bring.
- The island communities we have visited appear supportive of the principle of our roles, and the Islands Team at SG feel there is benefit to the pilot (and that this will increase as the Islands' Plan is developed over the coming months).
- A common issue is the time we have had to dedicate to these roles. It is a voluntary commitment and we have challenging jobs within the Scottish Government. This limits the amount of time we have to engage and to some extent determines our approach/

### **Priorities for next quarter**

12. Our priorities for the next quarter include:

- To further establish our relationship with the Islands Team within the Scottish Government as we see value in the Team drawing on the local knowledge of the Island Champions. We will establish what role we may play in developing the Islands' Plan.
- We will look to further establish our links with the CPP.
- We will meet the Argyll and Bute Location Director to review progress of the pilot and discuss our roles.

Island Champions  
21 May 2019

## **ANNEX A**

A link to the Islands Champion job description is available on the Argyll and Bute Council pages:

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s129442/Scottish%20Government%20-%20Draft%20Description%20of%20Island%20Liaisons%20Partners.pdf>