

# Petitioner submission of 26 August 2021

## PE1862/B – Introduce community representation on boards of public organisations delivering lifeline services to island communities

Community and place should be at the heart of good Government. This principal is the basis of the Islands Act and the commitments contained in it.

For the Islands this manifests itself in how our lifeline services are constructed and managed. In our view, public Boards which have been put in place to do this have historically not recognised Islanders knowledge and life experience of these services as a necessary skill that should be recognised as a vital component of good decision making.

We believe that deficiency means that decisions can be made with unseen consequences for our Island Communities, the country as a whole and work against the best outcomes for sustainable services.

Much effort and resource is being applied to try and address the recognised challenges for our Islands such as demographics, population and economy. There are often instances where public boards make decisions that work against these efforts simply because they don't have the complete mix of skills around the board table. No value or recognition seems to be given to the contribution Island knowledge can bring to enhance decision making and ensure all consequences are considered. These are publicly owned companies that should be aligned with Islander and national needs and ambitions and should not be taking decisions divorced from real cause and effect on the wider world.

It is fully recognised that skills such as finance, good governance and legal are essential to a board but equally important is the knowledge and skills of those who lives are dependent on these services.

We call on the Parliament and the Government to recognise this fact and demonstrate that by making it part of the essential skills required for membership of these boards delivering lifeline services to Scotland's Island communities.

Put communities and place at the heart of good government in a

meaningful way.