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McArthur seeks clarification about localised approach to tackling coronavirus

Orkney's MSP, Liam McArthur, has today (Tuesday) sought clarification from Ministers about what consideration the Scottish Government has given to a more localised approach in tackling the spread of Coronavirus.

This follows an interview on BBC Radio Orkney in which Dr Alyson Pollock, Consultant in Public Health Medicine at Newcastle University, argued that Covid-19 should not be treated as a single pandemic and instead should be viewed as a series of local outbreaks at different phases. Dr Pollock has suggested that contact tracing and clinical observation should be introduced in places like Orkney via local teams to track the spread of the disease with the intention of 'snuffing it out' at source.

In light of Dr Pollock's proposals, Mr McArthur has written to both the First Minister and the Health Secretary to establish if consideration has been given to adopting such an approach, and whether the Scientific Advisory Committee had been asked for its views on the potential risks and benefits.

Mr McArthur commented:

"These proposals from Dr Pollock have attracted a lot of interest in Orkney. They reflect what she published in a recent newspaper article and I understand she has also written to the First Minister making the case for a more localised approach to tackling the spread of Coronavirus.

"There were aspects of what Dr Pollock said that appear to be at odds with what the National Clinical Director for Scotland, Professor Jason Leitch was saying in a similar interview last week. However, it is important that the Scottish Government explains what consideration has been given to these proposals and the rationale for adopting a different approach.

"I have therefore written to the Health Secretary, Jeane Freeman and First Minister asking for that clarification. I have also sought confirmation as to whether the Scientific Advisory Committee has been asked for its comments on Dr Pollock's proposals. If not, I certainly hope that this will now happen.

"As soon as I have received a response from Ms Freeman, I will share this widely with constituents. Now more than ever, it is essential that there is as much transparency as possible and that government is clear about the basis for the decisions it is taking".

ENDS.

Notes to Editors:

-Dr Pollock discussed her proposals on BBC Radio Orkney on 14th April. The interview can be found [here](#).

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