



Lochaber, Skye, Small Isles and Raasay Ferry Stakeholder Group

Moorings Hotel, Banavie, 1100 on Wednesday 5th December 2018.

Minute

Present

Cllr Denis Rixson, Highland Council
Neil MacRae, HITRANS
Robert Morrison, CalMac Ferries Limited
Demi Wyllie, CalMac Ferries Limited
Bill Main, Calmac Ferries Limited
David Cannon, Calmac Ferries Limited
David Gibson, CalMac Ferries Limited
Camille Dressler, Small Isles CC (Telecon)
Alan McCabe, Transport Scotland
Brian Gordon, Transport Scotland
Rob Ware, Sleat Transport Forum
Roddy Murray, Sleat Transport Forum
Andy Crossan, CMAL
David Summers, The Highland Council
Scott Dingwall, HIE

Apologies

Cllr Alan Henderson, Highland Council
Des Bradley, ScotRail
Ker Corbett, Scottish Citylink
Chris Taylor, VisitScotland

Neil MacRae, HITRANS chaired the meeting and welcomed Members to the meeting and invited a round of introductions.

- 1 **Minute of Meeting held on 25th April 2017 and Matters Arising**
Matters Arising – Minute approved. Spelling of Cllr Rixson to be amended

- 2 **Matter Arising**
All matters arising to be discussed under relevant item on Agenda

3 **Appointment of Vice Chair**

After initial discussion on the appointment of a Vice Chair of the group it was agreed to return to the matter later in the agenda. A subsequent discussion never took place.

Note: Following a review of the number of Ferry Stakeholder Group Meetings as per Item 9 on the agenda it has subsequently been agreed to merge the Lochaber, Skye, Small Isles and Raasay Ferry Stakeholder Group with an element of the former Argyll FSG reducing the overall number of FSG's to three. The appointment of a new Chair and Vice Chair of this newly formed FSG will be required at the initial meeting of this group.

3 **Cal Mac Operational & Performance Update**

Robert Morrison provided members with a hard copy of the performance reporting for Summer 2018 timetable.

A number of issues relating to the update were discussed including; cancellations on Lochaline – Fishnish where there had been recent tidal impact on the timetable, Concern that statistics provided on Mallaig – Armadale did not reflect total number of cancelations. Rob Ware requested that a narrative accompanies the report in future to improve understanding of the performance update.

Roddy Murray said that the key issue on the Mallaig – Armadale route remained the removal of the dedicated vessel in 2015 which had transformed a reliable service into an unreliable one. Cllr Rixson highlighted economic impact it was having on both sides of the crossing.

CalMac recognised the concerns raised but highlighted their challenge given need for new tonnage on the network. CMAL stated that the latest timeline for the introduction of the vessels under construction in the Clyde was June 2019 for 801 and 2020 for vessel 802.

Transport Scotland recognised that the current situation on the Mallaig Armadale route was unsatisfactory and were reviewing what might be made for the 2019/20 winter timetable. Sleaf Transport Forum confirmed that they would provide a brief on the current issues.

Action – Sleaf Transport Forum to provide Transport Scotland with a brief on the current issues affecting the Mallaig- Armadale service.

4 **Corran Ferry Update**

David Summers updated members on recent work undertaken by PBA Associates to develop a STAG-based study, equivalent to a Strategic Business Case for the future of Corran Ferry service. A link to this review can be found at the following link on the Highland Council website https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/74112/item_11_-_corran_ferry_options_appraisal

5 **Winter 2019/2020 Timetables Overview**

Cal Mac reported that they had not received any requests for amendments to Winter 19/20 timetable. Rob Ware confirmed that Sleat would like Transport Scotland to consider if MV Loch Bhrusda could be used on the Armadale – Mallaig service when it was not in dock? It was highlighted that businesses in Sleat had indicated they would be willing to increase their opening hours if the Ferry timetable was improved.

6 **Regional VRDP Update**

Bill Main of Cal Mac provided an overview of the emerging update to the Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan. He highlighted that there was a focus on the vehicle deck utilisation for the 9 week period in the summer when demand was highest.

A number of issues were discussed including carrying capacity of vessels as they age; tariffs and impact of campervans on capacity; Evaluating the impact of RET; Replacement of ticketing platform; Islay vessel – on basis of an order being placed by 2019 it will not be in operation until 2023.

7 **Current Project / Programme Update**

a. Marketing

A number of opportunities to collaborate on marketing were discussed. Andy McNair, Cal Mac's new Head of Marketing is keen to work with communities to develop campaigns. Rob Ware highlighted focus of island based Direct Marketing Organisations in driving demand in the shoulder periods either side of the peak summer demand. Other Opportunities highlighted included; Youth market, Year of Coast and Waters in 2020 and heritage and archive opportunities such as anniversary of 1745.

b. Commercial

No update provided for this standing item.

8 **Ports / Harbours Update**

Andy Crossan provided an update of CMAL's planned work in the FSG area including at Lochaline where a contractor had been appointed with work due to commence in 2019.

A meeting of the Mallaig Steering Group had been updated on anticipated costs of £80million for the delivery of the Mallaig Masterplan.

Work on the port infrastructure at Uig / Lochmaddy / Tarbert that was needed to accommodate the new vessel was nearing completion.

Officers were currently reviewing impact of work required on Oban linkspan where impact on traffic management was being considered

Proposal to Reduce No. of Ferry Stakeholder Group Meetings

Neil MacRae introduced the paper with the four options for future FSG geography set out.

These options were:

I. Status Quo - Retain the current four FSG groups covering the following areas:

Argyll Group is concerned with services operated in the Campbeltown, Islay, Jura, Gigha, Colonsay, Oban, Mull, Iona, Lismore, Coll & Tiree area.

Clyde Group is concerned with services operated within the Arran, Bute, Campbeltown, Cumbrae, and Cowal area.

Hebrides Group is concerned with services operated within Barra, South Uist, North Uist, Harris and Lewis.

Skye, Raasay, Lochaber and Small Isles Group are concerned with services operated within Skye, Raasay, Lochaber and Small Isles area.

II. Option 2 - Change FSG Geography to reflect CalMac Area Operations to cover the following areas:

Argyll and Lochaber Group is concerned with services operated in the Campbeltown, Islay, Jura, Gigha, Colonsay, Oban, Mull, Iona, Lismore, South Uist, Barra, Small Isles, Coll & Tiree area.

Clyde Group is concerned with services operated within the Arran, Bute, Campbeltown, Cumbrae, and Cowal area.

Hebrides and Skye Group is concerned with services operated within Skye, Raasay, Barra, South Uist, North Uist, Harris and Lewis.

III. Option 3 - Change FSG Geography in line with the proposal made by Arran Ferry Committee and Islay Community Council at the previous round of FSG meetings which would see the current Argyll FSG merge with the Clyde FSG to cover the following areas:

Argyll and Clyde Group is concerned with services operated in the Arran, Bute, Campbeltown, Cowal, Cumbrae, Islay, Jura, Gigha, Colonsay, Oban, Mull, Iona, Lismore, Barra, South Uist (winter only), Coll & Tiree area.

Hebrides Group is concerned with services operated within Barra, South Uist, North Uist, Harris and Lewis.

Skye, Raasay, Lochaber and Small Isles Group are concerned with services operated within Skye, Raasay, Lochaber and Small Isles area.

IV. Option 4 - Change FSG Geography with the objective being grouping more common routes and achieving a better balance in Membership size across groups to cover the following areas:

Argyll, Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles Group is concerned with services operated in the Oban, Colonsay, Mull, Iona, Lismore, South Uist, Barra, Skye, Small Isles, Raasay, Coll & Tiree area.

Clyde and Kintyre Group is concerned with services operated within the Arran, Bute, Campbeltown, Cumbrae, Islay, Jura, Gigha and Cowal area.

Hebrides Group is concerned with services operated within Barra, South Uist, North Uist, Harris and Lewis.

Discussion on the merit of the proposals followed but a consensus emerged that it was important that any future FSG geography should ensure that the services to both the Small Isles and Armadale from Mallaig should be considered at the same group which Option 2 did not permit. Beyond that no specific preference for the other options which retained these services in the same FSG.

9 **Communities Board Update**

Rob Ware provided an update of behalf of the Cal Mac Communities Board stating that there were now 14 members and it had been agreed that all existing members would continue for a further 12 months before the membership would begin to evolve with new members replacing other would step down at the end of their term.

10 **Transport Integration Updates**

Demi Wylie provided an update on Transport Integration issues relating to the Ferry Stakeholder Group area..

11 **Scottish Islands Passport**

Neil MacRae presented an update to Members on progress being made to develop a Scottish Islands Passport as a marketing initiative that has the potential to not only develop sustainable tourism opportunities in our most remote islands but also to support the lifeline ferry and air services that serve them.

Members noted the report.

14 **Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 3rd or Wednesday 5th June identified as preferred dates. HITRANS to confirm date and venue following completion of all FSG Meetings.