

**HEBRIDES FERRY STAKEHOLDER GROUP
(Barra, the Uists, Lewis and Harris)**

Minute of Meeting held through Microsoft Teams, on 2 December 2021 at 11.00am.

<p>IN ATTENDANCE</p>	<p>COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR Cllr Uisdean Robertson (Chair) Mr Iain A. MacNeil Cllr. Iain M. Macleod Cllr. Donald Manford Mr Ian Buchanan Ms Mairi Sine Macdonald (Clerk)</p> <p>TRANSPORT SCOTLAND Mr Laurence Kenney Mr Richard Hadfield Ms Alison Wills Ms Carol Nowbaveh Ms Caroline Connelly Ms Athena Avratidis Mr David Caulfield Mr Graham Patrick Ms Jacqueline Trousdale</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE LTD (CALMAC) Mr Finlay Macrae Ms Fiona Galbraith Mr Neil Hunter Mr Andrew MacNair Ms Fiona Lucas</p> <p>FERRIES COMMUNITIES BOARD Mr Angus Campbell (Ferries Community Board)</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD. (CMAL) Mr Brian Fulton Mr Kevin Hobbs Ms Morven Bridges Mr Graham Patrick</p> <p>HITRANS Mr Neil MacRae Mr Ranald Robertson</p> <p>HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE (HIE) Mr Nicky Sobey</p> <p>OUTER HEBRIDES COMMERCE GROUP Ms Gail Robertson</p> <p>OUTER HEBRIDES TOURISM Mr Alan Graham</p> <p>ULLAPOOL HARBOUR TRUST Mr Kevin Peach</p>
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	SCOTTISH CITYLINK Mr Ker Corbett
APOLOGIES	Cllr John Mackay (CNES) Mr Kenneth Morrison (CNES) Cllr. Paul Steele (CNES) Cllr Kenny Macleod (CNES) Mr D.R. Macleod (RHA) Mr Rob Mackinnon (OHT) Mr David Summers (THC)

1	Minute of Meeting held on 3 June 2021	The Minute of Meeting of 3 June 2021 was approved .
2	Matters Arising – Action Tracker	<p>The Action Tracker provided a ‘live’ update on the action points for all the Ferry Stakeholder Groups. There were currently nine actions for the Hebrides FSG, two of which had been completed. Timetabling, the Socio Economic Study of the Sounds and the Pentalina negotiations were addressed at items 3, 4 and 6 respectively on the Agenda.</p> <p>In reference to an action point for Argyll Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles FSG requesting CFL to look at presenting cancellation data over a long term period by cause. It was requested that this information also be provided for the Hebrides FSG routes.</p> <p>Other points raised were as follows:</p> <p>Cllr Donald Manford followed up on a request from the previous meeting regarding the Sound of Barra and whether a reduction in winter sailings and an increase in summer sailings had been explored as a cost-effective solution to address summer capacity. Finlay Macrae confirmed that this had been looked at and that there was no cost-benefit but it would form part of the socio-economic study currently underway.</p> <p>Gail Robertson highlighted issues with CalMac’s consultation process specifically in regard to timetabling and the lack of engagement with the commercial sector.</p> <p>Both Finlay MacRae and Andrew MacNair, representing CalMac acknowledged that there had been failures in communications both externally and internally and gave assurances that CalMac were making improvements to internal structures and reviewing their consultation process with a view to having these changes in place early in the New Year.</p> <p>Cllr. Iain M. Macleod highlighted an issue that was missing from the tracker in regard to CalMac’s performance regime and referred to a point he had raised at the previous meeting in June in regard to penalties for CalMac for not meeting timetable turnaround times and the discord in communications between CalMac customer services and the ports during periods of disruption.</p> <p>Finlay MacRae apologised for the oversight and that he would follow up on this action. Gail Robertson asked to be included in the circulation of this information.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <p>(1) to note the Action Tracker update and to include the action point on CalMac’s performance regime raised in June regarding penalties for not meeting timetable turnaround times and the discord in</p>

		<p>communications between CalMac customer services and the ports during periods of disruption;</p> <p>(2) that Finlay MacRae, CalMac would action the above, in addition to:</p> <p>(a) providing ‘cancellation data over a long term period by cause’ for all networks going forward; and</p> <p>(b) collate and circulate the data on CalMac’s performance on timetable turnaround times.</p>
3	Caledonian MacBrayne Operational, Commercial and Performance Update covering (CFL)	<p>CalMac submitted an operational and performance report which addressed the various aspects relative to the Hebrides FSG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CalMac Marketing and Commercial Update • Timetable Integration and Consultation Update • Hebrides Area Update <p>The update on the marketing and commercial side of business focused on the repositioning the CalMac brand and guidelines around how CalMac speak and write in their communications both internally and to external customers which reflect the brand values. The roll out of the new brand across all communications and other areas of work including vessel, signage and uniforms etc would take some time and be managed in stages.</p> <p>The Report stated that good progress continued with the new website in tandem with the ticketing ‘Ar Turas’ project to ensure a more customer friendly booking experience in future which was tailored to different customer groups’ needs. Finlay Macrae added that the booking system was on target to be live on 1 March 2022 and there would be community and end user consultation as part of the process.</p> <p>Reference was made to the successful ‘<i>Isle Be Back</i>’ campaign on social media to encourage people to think about what it is they have missed during the period when they have not been able to visit the islands due to lockdown. Many positive comments had been posted about the islands from people planning to visit again in 2022. A merchandising pilot had also proven to be very popular with further expansion planned in 2022.</p> <p>Andrew MacNair, Head of Business Development and Marketing acknowledged there were failures in communications and as indicated in the Report the team were working closely with Operations colleague to be more proactive in building relationships and managing the needs of all customers. He introduced Neil Hunter recently appointed as Senior Business Development Manager who would deal primarily with the commercial sector. The Team, since October, had met with all major Commercial accounts and had given assurances that going forward there would be a plan in place for contact as appropriate and required for all Commercial customers to help manage their expectations and deliver the best service possible.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the CalMac Marketing and Commercial Update</p> <p>The timetable integration and consultation section of the report referred to the proposed Summer 2022 timetables. CalMac apologised for the delays and indicated they were working hard to deliver these timetables expected to be published on 19 December 2021 with the exception of Mallaig routes due for 19 January 2022. The addition of MV Utne next year would have an impact on Mallaig services and there were other considerations due to the interconnected nature of the services, changes still to be approved for all three routes and the necessity to finalise tidal timetable. This was an extensive piece of work which required time to ensure accuracy.</p>

It was noted that the Transport Planning team intended to issue the Winter 2022/23 timetable feedback forms within the next week which may overlap with summer timetables for some routes and appreciated the communities support in this to mitigate any further delays with the publication of these timetables.

There was a lot of discussion on the timetable consultation and the main points of note were:

Lochboisdale- Mallaig

As weather issues affected the approach to Mallaig it was asked if it would be possible to review the route to Armadale or Uig. This was not considered to be feasible and explanations were provided by Finlay Macrae, CalMac. It was noted that there was a change of Master on the MV Lord of the Isles (LoTI) who was willing to change the timetable to suit weather windows which had been positively received.

With the expected deployment of MV Utne into the fleet next summer this would allow the LoTI to deliver a dedicated -Lochboisdale-Mallaig service, potentially an opportunity to deliver 3 additional returns per week to Lochboisdale. Therefore there were no issues with the proposed timetable on this route.

Uig Linkspan – Outage Implications

Concerns were raised on the impacts to all the Hebrides routes during the outage scheduled for a five month period from September 2022 to February 2023. CalMac gave an assurance that discussions would continue over the next couple of weeks prior to publication in regard to the possibilities of increasing sailings on MV Hebrides and double returns on the LoTI during this period, specifically pinch points in September/October.

Uig-Tarbert and Uig-Lochmaddy

The Comhairle had responded to the initial consultation on 19 November 2021 on the timetable options which had offered two alternative proposals each representing a loss of capacity on the ferry services across the Little Minch from the service Calmac Ferries had committed to deliver under the terms of the CHIFS Contract. The proposals had been met with widespread condemnation from the communities. There was an overwhelming majority against any further loss of ferry service or capacity on these routes and both options had been rejected.

CalMac in response to the feedback had discounted the community's desire for a proposal mirroring the 2019 timetable allowing mezzanine decks to be deployed on every sailing due to the costs of additional crewing. A third option had been proposed by CalMac and at the time of the meeting this was out to further consultation with the community and feedback requested by 7 December 2021. This proposal also reduced capacity on MV Hebrides with no regard to the severe negative economic impact to Uist and Harris and had not been well received and had resulted in further negative feedback from the community. The Chair indicated that a formal response to that effect would be submitted from the Comhairle by the deadline.

It was agreed to note the Timetable Integration and Consultation Update

The report on the Hebrides area of the network stated that Covid-19 restrictions continued to ease with the final stage of 'Beyond Level 0' coming in on 9 August 2021. It was indicated that the summer timetable had operated as planned with an increasing demand on services in line with the easing of restrictions. In response to a question from a Member of the Group, and acknowledgement of a formal request by Cllr. Paul Steele regarding the deep cleaning of vessels to be undertaken locally. Fiona Galbraith indicated that there were some issues around Health and Safety

and certification but that CalMac were actively looking at opportunities for sub-contracting the work locally which was welcomed.

An update was provided on each of the following routes:

Stornoway-Ullapool

The Report stated that following the MV Loch Seaforth outage at the beginning of the summer timetable the service had been operating as normal throughout the summer period. MV Arrow joined the fleet for a 6-week charter period at the end of July. The additional capacity provided by MV Arrow had been well received by the port teams and commercial customers. The charter provided a temporary dedicated freight service to the Stornoway-Ullapool service and released the MV Loch Seaforth to provide resilience to the fleet and operated an additional third sailing twice a week to provide much needed additional capacity during the peak summer period.

The Report indicated that the MV Loch Seaforth's resilience was called upon during the technical issue with MV Hebrides and was able to operate additional services from Stornoway to Ullapool to provide capacity for displaced Tarbert traffic. The Report detailed that MV Loch Seaforth had suffered outages over the summer period due to positive Covid cases amongst crew.

Uig-Tarbert-Lochmaddy

The Report stated that during summer 2021 MV Hebrides had operated a robust service on the 'triangle' route. As with other routes, capacity was constrained up until 9 August 2021 when government restrictions eased and there was high demand on this route. MV Hebrides suffered a technical issue which saw her return to dock and MV Clansman and MV Lord of the Isles were redeployed to Uig and Coll/Tiree/Colonsay, respectively.

The Report further indicated that in addition, MV Hebrides had also suffered disruption due to cases of Covid-19 within the crew and the vessel has been temporarily removed from service whilst replacement crew was deployed, and the vessel underwent a deep clean.

Sound of Harris

The Report indicated that MV Loch Portain had suffered outages over the summer period due to positive Covid cases amongst crew. It was highlighted that teams continued to work hard to ensure replacement crew were sourced and the vessel was cleaned and ready for service as soon as possible.

Sound of Barra

The Report detailed that this service was operating without issues.

Lochboisdale- Mallaig

The Report stated that the service had operated as expected on this route over the summer but as with the other routes in the network, it had been constrained by Covid government guidelines until restrictions eased on 9 August 2021. MV Lord of the Isles suffered technical issues with her bow visor seal and propulsion system which saw her temporarily removed from service whilst these issues were rectified. The service had also been affected by Covid 19 amongst the crew which saw the vessel removed from service whilst replacement crew was sourced and the vessel deep cleaned.

Barra-Oban

The Report stated that with the exception of a minor technical defect with the fire door system on board MV Isle of Lewis and a fire on the car deck from a gas cylinder within a motorhome, this service had operated with no issues throughout the summer period. As with other routes, capacity was restricted by Covid government guidelines however, once the restrictions lifted, numbers returned to normal and service was running as planned.

		It was agreed to note the Hebrides Area Update.
4	Sounds of Barra/Harris Socio- Economic Case for Change	<p>Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager, HITRANS, submitted a Report providing an update on a study funded by local partner organisations to help establish the socio-economic case for improving ferry services across the Sounds of Barra and Harris. The Report stated that during biannual consultations on the ferry timetables for the following summer and winter season, communities in the Western Isles had made requests for additional sailings across the Sounds of Barra (between Barra and Eriskay) and Harris between (Berneray and Leverburgh on Harris).</p> <p>The Report detailed that Transport Scotland had indicated that any changes to the current timetables which were not cost neutral would require in the first instance a strong business case to support any increase in the frequency of services and/or the operating day that would come at additional cost to the contract. In response to this, HITRANS in partnership with the Comhairle and HIE had commissioned Reference Economic Consultants to identify the socio-economic case for supporting the requests for improved connectivity across the Sounds of Barra and Harris.</p> <p>The methodology was outlined in the Report and the Findings would be brought together in two separate reports and provide a full analysis of the data collected. A final chapter would set out the case for timetable enhancements and the benefits from additional sailings will be quantified as far as possible, informed by discussions with Transport Scotland.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Update on the Sounds of Barra/Harris Socio-Economic Case for Change.</p>
5	Fair Fares Appraisal	<p>Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager HITRANS, submitted a Report providing an update on work HITRANS were undertaking in regard to Fair Fares. The Report stated that the Scottish Governments Programme for Government 2021/22 outlined a commitment to commission a Fair Fares Review to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to transport fares. and HITRANS had committed to undertaking early work that would consider a number of issues relating to fair fares in the context of the Highlands and Islands.</p> <p>The Report referred to the legislation approved by the Scottish Parliament enabling the introduction of a new statutory scheme to allow 5-18 year olds resident in Scotland to access free bus travel through the National Entitlement Card (NEC) and the Young Scot branded NEC. A further commitment was introduced on 23 August 2021 to allow the scheme to be extended to include under 22s. Subject to Parliamentary approval of the extension, around 930,000 young people in Scotland aged between 5-21 would be eligible for free bus travel from 31 January 2022.</p> <p>However, in many parts of the HITRANS area, the local ferry service either provided the equivalent form of public transport to that fulfilled by a bus service or formed part of a multi-modal journey that included the local bus. The Report indicated that the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy therefore highlighted that in our islands and remotest mainland communities, passengers should have the same entitlements as those benefitting from the National Concession Travel Scheme where regular bus services provide the core local public transport network. The Report highlighted that such an approach was needed to ensure that eligible people in all areas had equality of access to at least the public transport that was available in their area regardless of their location.</p>

		<p>The Report stated that HITRANS supported the policy objectives behind concessionary travel but believed that recognition should be given to the unintended outcomes and full consideration of it applying on to other modes of transport where they perform the same function of local bus services. HITRANS were currently finalising the scope of the appraisal anticipated to be completed early in 2022 so that the outputs could help inform the wider review of fares by the Scottish Government.</p> <p>It was agreed to note:</p> <p>(1) the update on the Fair Fares Appraisal; and</p> <p>(2) that a further update would be provided to the next meeting of the FSG in June 2022.</p>									
6	Transport Scotland Update	<p>Richard Hadfield, Transport Scotland provided an update on the presentation delivered to the previous meeting in June 2021. The Programme summary detailed the Scottish Government £580m investment in vessels and harbours over the next five years, in addition to the completion of vessels 801 and 802. Plans had been set out in the Infrastructure Investment Plan published on 4 February 2021 which included replacement vessel projects for a number of areas, including Mallaig-Lochboisdale and that there were 20 vessels currently in the pipeline. A list was also provided of the major harbour development projects which included the Skye Triangle and Lochboisdale in the Outer Hebrides area. Richard Hadfield highlighted the challenges, particularly in the second half of the programme for additional funding for projects, and that robust business cases would be required to the Scottish Government and that Transport Scotland would continue to work with communities to make the case.</p> <p>Updates from the previous meeting included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MV Pentalina time charter and MV Arrow time charters • New Islay vessels – releasing MV Finlaggan for redeployment • MV Utne – purchase and subsequent vessel cascades • Argyll and Bute Council decision on Craignure interim works – impacts on proposed MV Hebrides cascade to Craignure-Oban <p>Richard Hadfield provide an overview of the Vessel Replacement Programme. Phase 2 of the small vessel replacement programme and associated infrastructure would build on Phase 1 with similar low emission aspiration and highlighted the challenging design issues for “Euro B” routes replacement vessels which would include both Sounds. In regard to major vessels there was potential impacts of redeployments but in-scope vessels and current routes were listed and included MV Isle of Lewis (Oban - Castlebay) and MV Hebrides (Uig- Tarbert/Lochmaddy).</p> <p>Further detail on the vessel replacement programme pertaining to the Hebrides area were provided in item 7 in the CMAL infrastructure update report.</p> <p>The update also included information on the 2022 Ferry Fares provided by Laurence Kenney which proposed a 2.1% increase on all fares (except those currently frozen under contract on Northern Isles routes), 1% on cars (and derived) fares and 50% discount for school minibuses. A +1 increase in multiplier had been proposed for motorhomes/caravans and sample fares provided by route. The Ullapool/Stornoway sample is provided below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="603 2004 1329 2107"> <thead> <tr> <th>Length</th> <th>Current Motorhome</th> <th>Proposed Motorhome</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>6-8m</td> <td>81.20</td> <td>135.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8-10m</td> <td>108.10</td> <td>162.15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Length	Current Motorhome	Proposed Motorhome	6-8m	81.20	135.20	8-10m	108.10	162.15
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		10-12m	135.20	189.20												
7	Infrastructure Update	<p>In regard to the Islands Connectively Plan Fares Review the scope of fare types was provided which included Passenger and Vehicles, Commercial, Freight, Accommodation and Concessions. Incentives to be included would be off-peak discounts, promotions, islander travel, cabins and pods, demand management, U22s and free voucher schemes. Laurence Kinney also referred to the manifesto commitment to retain RET and to the Evaluation Report on the Clyde and Hebridean Network on Transport Scotland's website.</p> <p>Transport Scotland made a commitment to engage on the review through regular meetings with the Ferries Community Board, through workshops once options had been developed and consultation on the identified options. A draft timeline was provided as follows:</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="600 613 1342 842"> <tr> <td>Early Engagement/Consultations</td> <td>February-April 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Draft Options Paper</td> <td>May-July 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Draft Consultation Paper</td> <td>October 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consultation on Future Fares Policy Options (As part of ICP)</td> <td>December 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Analysis of consultation</td> <td>March-April 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Publication of consultation paper</td> <td>May 2023</td> </tr> </table> <p>It was agreed:</p> <p>(1) to note the Transport Scotland Update; and</p> <p>(2) that the presentation would be circulated to all FSG members.</p> <p>(Andrew MacNair, CalMac left the meeting at 12.25pm)</p> <p>The Infrastructure updates were as follows:</p> <p>CMAL</p> <p>A detailed report had been submitted by CMAL which included updates on Net Zero, MV Utne, the Ferry Replacement Programme, progress with MV Glen Sannox and H802, an overview of Port Infrastructure, Development and maintenance and an update on each CMAL port within the network.</p> <p>Brian Fulton highlighted the following points:</p> <p><u>Net Zero</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMAL had been involved in several activities at COP26. • CMAL continued to explore all means to reduce emissions using modern technology and were approximately 50% through the concept design element for a Hydrogen Fuelled Ferry within the HYSEAS III project. • £30k funding awarded by the DfT to partner with Strathclyde University for a Clean Maritime Fuel Project. • Any vessels built must actively consider mid-life retrofits to consider Hydrogen and any future technology solutions specifically larger vessels as LNG was only a transition fuel solution. <p><u>MV Utne</u></p> <p>CMAL became the owners of the 2015 built MV Utne on 22 November 2021. Dale Marine at Leith had been awarded the tender to carry out modifications to enable the vessel to be successfully used on the Oban-Craignure route. It was anticipated that Sea Trials will take place in late March 2022 with a view to the vessel being in service following a 2/3 month familiarisation period which would enable the cascade of vessels across the network in spring/summer. 2022</p> <p><u>Ferry Replacement Programmes</u></p>			Early Engagement/Consultations	February-April 2022	Draft Options Paper	May-July 2022	Draft Consultation Paper	October 2022	Consultation on Future Fares Policy Options (As part of ICP)	December 2022	Analysis of consultation	March-April 2023	Publication of consultation paper	May 2023
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- In reference to the CMAL 3 Year Corporate Plan (which included programme to 2030) this would include the following:
 - 6 Major Vessels
 - 7 Small Vessels (Phase 1)
 - 3 Sound Route Vessels (Phase 2)
 - 3 Gourock/Dunoon/Kilcreggan
 - 2 Northern Isles Freight Vessel Replacements
- SVRP Phase 1 (7 Vessels) was underway which did not include any vessels on the Outer Hebrides network.
- Initiation internally with TS/CFL on the projects for the Small Vessel Replacement Programme (Phase 2 'Sound' Route Vessels) to consider the scope regarding the re-categorisation of the waters to Euro B status. Also the Mallaig/Lochboisdale (Armadale) LoTI replacement'
- The MV Glen Sannox and H802 remain incomplete at FMPG. The dates for delivery had been informed to the NZET Committee and there had been further slippage since the last meeting.
 - MV Glen Sannox - July 2022 to September 2022 (2-month window)
 - H802 - April 2023 to June 2023 (3-month window)

Port Infrastructure

CMAL had concluded network condition surveys on all ports, testing bollards and replacing EV units as required following funding from TS Low Carbon Economy Team. In regard to future port projects a formal section on accessibility will be included in all design reports and businesses cases as well as sustainability and net zero solutions. Carbon and sustainability surveys will be undertaken across the network to target specific areas. Revised Harbour dues would also be published shortly.

An update was also provided on works at specific Hebrides ports i.e.

Castlebay

- Adjustment to mooring outlay required which will cause minimum disruption.
- Maintenance and repairs to roof and some building alterations to be completed early in the new year

Gasay

Works continued on the outline business case for this project to replace Lochboisdale pier and was being progress by a Working Group.

Lochboisdale

- The tendering works were substantially completed onsite
- The deck plating works has commenced and were due to be completed in the New Year
- This is necessary life extension works pending the move to Gasay

Tarbert

- The pier upgrade is progressing and expected to be completed by the end of the year
- The tender for the new terminal building has been issued and start onsite anticipated early in the new year.

Lochmaddy

CMAL will support and project manage on behalf of the Comhairle following the award of contract.

Brian Fulton on conclusion of his address invited Members to contact him directly if further information was required on any of the points raised.

It was agreed to note the CMAL Infrastructure Update.

Ullapool

Kevin Peach provided an update on the Ullapool Promenade project to improve the Shore Street approach road to provide a full width trunk road to improve connectivity and traffic flow. He indicated that the planning process had been lengthy and the marine licence remained outstanding. It was anticipated that the tender would be issued on 17 December 2021 and awarded mid-January 2022 with a view to commencing construction works in September 2022 for completion in March 2023. He further stated that the road would remain open during this period with lane restrictions.

Noting the overlap of construction work at both Ullapool and Uig, Fiona Galbraith, Area Operations Manager (Hebrides), CalMac stated that the arrival times of MV Hebrides and MV Loch Seaforth would require to be reviewed and an assurance was given that additional marshalling would be in place for traffic management at Ullapool.

It was agreed to note the Ullapool Harbour Trust Update.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Iain Buchanan, Assistant Harbour Master provided the Comhairle update and stated that work was ongoing with CalMac to implement improvements to traffic management at all ferry ports and provided an update on the following Comhairle ports and harbours.

Lochmaddy

- Interim safety and security works by local contractor complete.
- Construction of the Enabling Works Package No.3 by Macaulay Askernish Ltd in collaboration with Scottish water and S&SE substantially complete.
- Manufacture of the permanent fender assemblies continuing through contract step-in arrangements with Trelleborg
- Main Works Contract - procurement and evaluation process remains ongoing. Transport Scotland Final Business Case review and approvals process ongoing. Current milestone envisaged January 2022; award of the Main Works Contract likely now February 2022; construction start March 2022 and completion March 2023.

Leverburgh

Work due to begin shortly on improving the aesthetics of the port. The initial stage would be to screen the fishermen's gear storage area with further work planned for next year under a Placed Based Investment Fund being progressed with local fishermen. This will include:

- increasing car parking provision at the port for all users; and
- installation of a mobile phone booster system, a live weather information system and AIS antenna. The exact detail of this is still at the early stage of investigation.

It was agreed to note the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Update.

The Highland Council

A progress update had been submitted by Andrew Maciver, Principal Engineer, Highland Council on the Uig Harbour Redevelopment Project. The Report stated that following award of the main civils infrastructure contract to RJ McLeod on 31 July 2021, the contractor started site establishment at Uig Harbour on 15 November 2021 with construction works on site to follow.

The Report stated that the community will be informed of further details of the construction works and traffic management arrangements through locally held liaison meetings over the next month and throughout the project, and on the Highland Council Project website [Uig Harbour Redevelopment](#), community Facebook pages and on noticeboards located around the local community.

The construction works were expected to be completed in Summer 2023 with an outage period (to construct the linkspan and outer roundhead,

		<p>during which there can be no ferry service to/from Uig) programmed from 12 September 2022 to 3 February 2023. CalMac were currently assessing options associated with alternative ferry service arrangements during the closure period of Uig to provide capacity for this vital ferry link with a view to consulting with the relevant communities in the coming weeks.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the update on the Uig Redevelopment Project.</p>
8	Ferries Community Board Update	<p>Angus Campbell, Chair, Ferries Community Board submitted an update report. The new name was noted and that the Board had welcomed five new members, three of which were local, Murdo Maclean from Ness, who had returned to live on the island, Ida Holmstrom of Stornoway Port Authority and Joanna Peteranna based in Uist. The other two members were based in Tiree and Coll. Therefore 6 of the 15 Board members were from and based in the Outer Hebrides.</p> <p>The Board continued to meet quarterly via Teams, the next scheduled meeting would be 3 December 2021. Board meetings include sessions with Transport Scotland, CMAL and CalMac Managing Director. The Chair also met bi-annually with the Transport Minister. There were currently three subgroups within the Board engaging with CalMac, CMAL and Transport Scotland on various issues. These were dealing with feedback to the new ticketing system, terms and conditions for travel and establishing a more prominent on-line presence for the Board. The Board were also represented on the National Islands Plan delivery group and had also been invited to be part of the Small Vessel Replacement Reference Group. A meeting had also been arranged with the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands on the 8 December 2021.</p> <p>Angus Campbell highlighted customer improvement issues which had been raised with CalMac Director Diane Burke and an update on the apprenticeship scheme run by CalMac. An interim report had been received from CEBR the company doing the Socio Economic Impact report on the network. It was anticipated that the first stage of research would be completed in March to June of next year, with a view to a final Report by the end of the calendar year. He confirmed that the Report concentrated on customer need; young people and decisions to stay on islands, the Health Service, among other pertinent matters.</p> <p>The report highlighted the Board's work on Young People's Transport resulting on the new scheme being approved and commenced this month. The Board would continue to make the case on under-26 travel as the Board's view was that ferries are the equivalent of buses for young people on our Islands and should be afforded the same treatment.</p> <p>In regard to ferry capacity and resilience the Board welcomed the decision to build two new Ferries for Islay and the purchase of MV Utne to be introduced next year. The delay in the two vessels from Ferguson's had caused great damage to our communities and businesses and the Board continue to press for increased efforts to identify new tonnage both in conventional ferry tonnage and appropriate freight tonnage to help the situation.</p> <p>Feedback from the communities mirrored the issues highlighted daily i.e. lack of capacity, vessel breakdown and the level of communication. Individuals and businesses contacted Board members in relation to effects to access to services, access to employment, damage to business viability and decisions on remaining on Islands or not and there had been a significant response on the timetable consultation process presently running. Angus Campbell stated that the monthly meetings with the Comhairle-led local Ferries Group had proved very beneficial.</p>

		<p>It was noted that Board members contacts and minutes of meetings were available online and that the Board were working towards having a more independent online presence very soon.</p> <p>Under consideration of this item Angus Campbell voiced his disappointment in regard to the appointment of the Chair and 3 Non-Executive Directors on the Board of David MacBrayne Ltd. none of whom were from an islands' community. He felt that an opportunity had been lost to add knowledge and improve decision making for both the company and the communities they serve. These sentiments were echoed by the Chair, Cllr. Uisdean Robertson who indicated he would be issuing a press release to that effect.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Ferries Community Board Update.</p>
9	Scottish Islands Passport	<p>Ms Sarah Compton Bishop, Scottish Islands Passport Project Manager HITRANS submitted a Report providing an update on the Scottish Islands Passport Project. The Report provided an update on the launch of the App for iOS and Android and following feedback gathered during the user testing in the Shetland isles, functionality of the app had been improved prior to release. Extensive live, on-island testing of the app continued to ensure quality and other refinements. The next phase of digital development had been completed and would focus around adding richer sensory materials and creating functionality for visitors to donate to local island charities. As indicated in the Report due to current circumstances a 'soft launch' approach had been employed and the information on the app and how to download it was being gradually rolled out with an 'islands first' approach.</p> <p>The Report indicated that advertising space had been secured with Northlink Ferries, Citylink and HIAL and early discussions had taken place with ScotRail. CalMac were currently unable to offer advertising space and discussions ongoing about procuring a campaign early next year. As awareness of the project increased on islands and island transport routes, marketing would then begin more widely, including via social media and wider marketing campaigns.</p> <p>The Report further stated that the current steering group membership included DMO representation from Visit Outer Hebrides and Destination Orkney as well as Visit Scotland, ZetTrans, HITRANS, Scottish Islands Federation, Scottish Government and a community development representative from Raasay. The steering group continued to meet quarterly and would review meeting schedules and structures to ensure that stakeholders remained engaged in an effective manner. The LEADER funding period completed at the end of October 2021 and the final claim was still in progress but on track to spend the full allocation. The funding secured from Scottish Government (Tourism and Islands) would be used to deliver the project going forward until September 2023 and that work would be undertaken to identify additional funding and revenue opportunities.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the update.</p>
10	Confirm Pre-agreed Date of Next Meeting	<p>It was agreed that the next meeting of the Hebrides Ferry Stakeholder Group would take place at 11.00am on Thursday 2 June 2022</p>