



## Argyll Ferry User Group Meeting

**Venue – Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead**

**Date - Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

Present – Cllr Alistair McDougall, Argyll and Bute Council (Chair)  
Cllr Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Council  
Cllr Mary Jean Devon, Argyll and Bute Council – by video conference  
Cllr Donald Manford, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
Cllr Ronnie MacKinnon, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
Jim Porteous, Islay Ferry Committee  
Billy MacFarlane, Islay Community Council  
Jane MacLeod, Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce  
Fergus Murray, Argyll and Bute Council  
Alan Millar, Argyll and Bute Council  
Brian Fulton, Calmac Ferries Limited  
Ross Moran, Calmac Ferries Limited  
Demi Wylie, Calmac Ferries Limited  
Blair Moglia, Calmac Ferries Limited  
David Taylor, Calmac Ferries Limited  
Lachie Wotherspoon, Calmac Ferries Limited  
Kevin Hobbs, CMAL  
Graham Laidlaw, Transport Scotland  
Douglas Ellis, Transport Scotland  
Ranald Robertson, HITRANS

Apologies - Cllr Elaine Robertson, Argyll and Bute Council  
Moya Ingram, Argyll and Bute Council  
David Adams McGilp, Visit Scotland  
Neal Goldsmith, Tourism  
Alan Parker, Federation of Small Businesses

**1. Minute of previous meeting**

Minute approved as an accurate reflection of the discussion.

**2. Matters Arising**

Under matter arising from previous meeting Graham Laidlaw updated on progress being made towards providing advice to Ministers on the Freight Fares Review. Graham provided details of the working group process and other engagement that has been undertaken.

### 3. Performance Audit

Ranald Robertson presented information on the Audit on behalf of Audit Scotland. The presentation covered the following areas:

- Aims and Objectives
- Audit Questions
- Audit Evidence
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Next Steps
- Offer from Audit Scotland to present the final report to the next round of ferry user group meetings

Ian Gillies drew attention to a limited engagement with the small island communities from Audit Scotland.

**Action – HITRANS to flag up the concern in smaller islands at level of engagement and suggest AS arrange interviews with representatives of communities including Coll, Tiree, Colonsay in the Argyll FUG area.**

**Action – Audit Scotland to be invited to present the findings of the Performance Audit at the next round of ferry user group meetings.**

### 4. Ferry Procurement Review

Ranald Robertson presented a report to update Members on the announcement of a review to be undertaken into procurement processes and state aid requirements for the future funding of Scottish Government ferry services.

Ian Gillies asked if Brexit will have an impact. Graham explained that Brexit will be an important consideration and will be a feature in the second order of the review agenda. Donald Manford highlighted the importance in capturing a mechanism for communities to engage with CMAL.

**Members noted the report.**

### 5. Caledonian MacBrayne Operational and Performance Update

Statistical information was shared in advance of the meeting on the following routes:

- Fionnphort to Iona
- Fishnish to Lochaline
- Kennacraig to Islay
- Kennacraig to Islay/Colonsay/Oban
- Oban to Coll/Tiree
- Oban to Craginure
- Oban to Lismore
- Castlebay to Oban
- Lochboisdale to Oban
- Tayinloan to Gigha
- Tobermory to Kilchoan

Cllr Currie raised a request to add the following routes to the above:

Claonaig to Lochranza

Campbeltown to Ardrossan

Ross Moran agreed to add reporting on the above routes for future Argyll ferry user group meetings.

Ross Moran presented the Operational and Performance Update setting out the daily update of timetable performance by route and route by route comparison that is now published on the Calmac website and is made available historically.

Community specific packs that are designed to be more meaningful and transparent have now been prepared. The Arran report pack was circulated as an example of this which is at an early stage and is still being refined. These will be prepared monthly. The timescale is to embed for Islay and Arran by end of May 2017 and extended network wide within 2 to 3 months.

Issues raised from consideration under the work in progress nature of this were:

- Develop mechanisms that see car deck weight carrying capacity reflected alongside lane metres available to take account of those times when car deck carryings are restricted by the vessel car deck weight constraint as well as the physical space.
- Group welcomed this as a lever for change in more intelligence led planning.

On operational issues concern was raised by Cllr MacKinnon that services are lost to additional work post dry dock period and this needs to be managed carefully.

David Taylor explained that the Asset Management process and procedures are being refined to better manage dry dock works.

**Action – Kintyre routes will be reported at future Argyll FUG meetings even if in addition to reporting at Clyde FUG.**

**Action – The Performance Report Packs will be circulated to Ferry Committees and Ferry User Groups and in due course they will be available for download on the CalMac website for anyone.**

Captain Lachie Wotherspoon attended the meeting to discuss Masters' decision making and the tools that are available to help with these key decisions. Weather forecasting while not always reliable represents the main tool available to support the process. Wind direction and speed can be variable and depending on the wind direction some ports are susceptible to a particular direction. The composition of the bridge team and experience of the team is also the next most significant factor.

The discussion continued to cover stability conditions that effect car ferry operations. It is rare that a cancellation relates to sea state or swell it is more to do with conditions at the arrival ports. Ross Moran added that consideration is being given to utilising more experienced Masters to mentor new Masters to support the decision-making process

**Members thanked Captain Wotherspoon for sharing this useful insight.**

## **6. Ferry Availability Study**

Ranald Robertson presented the report on the Ferry Availability Study with attention given to the tables / charts included within the report.

With progress being seen through VRDP and by the operator towards a new bookings and reservation system, HITRANS have decided not to continue with the work for 2017 but should it become evident that the work needs to be restarted that could be feasible in future years.

## 7. **Summer 2018 Timetable**

Demi Wyllie presented the process and steps required to be met by CFL on timetable consultation.

Key points of the presentation included:

- Winter Deadline
- Summer Deadline
- Feedback forms now distributed by future planning.
- Proposed timetables will be based on previous years. Change requests will only be if they are cost neutral or can demonstrate savings elsewhere to facilitate cost neutrality.
- Process Steps

Brian Fulton confirmed that the exceptional nature of having to time these meetings to enable continuous attendance from elected members ahead of the LG elections on 4<sup>th</sup> May meant that the FUG role in consultation could not be included physically for Summer 2018 so instead the stage 1 proposals would be circulated for a soft consultation with FUG members at the end of May.

**Action – FUG role in consultation for Summer 2018 would be via circulated a soft consultation at the end of May.**

## 8. **VRDP**

Graham Laidlaw presented the report. Unfortunately, the presentation was not received in advance due to a communication issue. HITRANS to circulate this after the meeting,

Key points from the presentation were:

- Background to VRDP and Publication of 2015 Report
- Approach
- Key Assumptions
- Benefits
- Methodology
- Update on actions from VRDP 2014
- Major Route Model Outputs
- Medium / Minor Route Outputs
- Conclusions and next steps on the 4 identified priorities
- VRDP 2016 Report progress

Subsequent discussion included discussion on the following themes:

- Capturing unmet demand and suggestion consideration be given to reviewing the approach Loganair are taking for this.
- MCA reconsideration of classification of waters and impact on vessel deployment including on the Iona route. One view is that the hull form of the Hybrid ferries could see them become Euro B standard compliant.
- Capacity of vessel deployed on Lochaline service not coping well with freight traffic.

**Members noted the report.**

## 9. Consultation Terms of Reference

Ranald Robertson presented the report on Consultation Terms of reference and invited Members to feed any comments / thoughts they have. The aim of revising the terms of reference is to find a way of ensuring that the FUG groups are fit for purpose and we would welcome thoughts on how Members see us achieving this objective. Key elements to the revisions proposed within the Draft terms of reference are:

- Greater clarity of the roles and relationships that allow FUGs to coexist alongside without confusing the role of the ferry committees and other first point of engagement fora.
- A suggestion that an Independent Chair be appointed to provide a consistent Chair for all 4 Ferry User Group meetings. This individual would provide a link to the CalMac Communities Board.

Brian Fulton added information on the round of local discussion he has had and some opinion that the FUGs may not always be fit for purpose.

Thoughts and suggestions from the Membership were:

- Page 30 Argyll Group must reflect that Kintyre is part of the area covered by this group.
- Representation from users / islanders is crucial.
- Importance that Community Empowerment is at the heart of this. An aspect is that elected members are appointed by Councils to the FUG and it is not necessarily the case that the local elected members will be selected.

**Action - Calmac Ferries and HITRANS to meet in May to further refine the Terms of Reference. They will reflect the feedback from the meetings in finalising the Terms of Reference.**

## 10. Integrated / Public Transport Update

Ranald Robertson provided the following update which was received by email from Des Bradley:

“There are no major updates from a ScotRail perspective, for example no significant timetable developments except usual summer enhancements on West Highland Line. We are holding 3 times per year meeting with CalMac (including Neil Paisley, their newly appointed Transport Integration Manager) specifically to discuss any timetabling issues and to get early sight on any planned changes from either operator. Last of these held in March, next planned in June / July.”

**Members noted the report.**

## 11. Date of Future Meeting

**Action – It was agreed that FUG members be contacted once local authorities have completed their appointment process with meeting dates with a view to these taking place early in November 2017.**

## 12. AOCB

No issues raised under AOCB.