

Report to Partnership Meeting 3 February 2023

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Islands Connectivity Plan Update

Purpose of Report

To update Members on the latest status of the Islands Connectivity Plan.

Summary of Islands Connectivity Plan

The Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP) will replace the current Scottish Government Ferries Plan but will be broader in scope having regard to aviation, ferries and fixed links, as well as connecting and onward travel.

ICP will include a high-level strategy covering all islands. Transport Scotland (TS) will develop detailed delivery plans for the Clyde & Hebrides (CHFS) and Northern Isles (NIFS) ferry networks which Ministers are responsible for.

These ICP delivery plans will include a Long-Term Plan for Vessels and Ports that will aim to improve resilience, reliability, capacity and accessibility, while increasing standardisation, cutting emissions and meeting the needs of island communities whilst providing value for money.

It is envisaged that other components of ICP will include:

- A strategic overview document
- Refreshed community needs assessments
- A review of ferry fares (alongside the wider “fair fares” review),
- Pathways to zero/low emission ferry transport, and
- Links to connecting and onward travel.

These outputs will be supported by the statutory impact assessments, a financial plan and arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review.

Work Completed to Date

Priority during 2022 was given to preparing a draft of the Long-Term Plan for Vessels and Ports. An advance draft has been shared with key stakeholders with a view to undertaking public consultation on the draft in early 2023. This working draft is available to view on the Transport Scotland website:

[Draft for consultation - Long-Term plan for vessels and ports on the Clyde & Hebrides and Northern Isles networks \(2023 – 2045\) - Islands Connectivity Plan | Transport Scotland](#)

Other components of ICP have been put on hold due to limited Transport Scotland staff resource. Additional staff have been sought from across Transport Scotland – this team is now largely in place.

In late 2022 Transport Scotland were able to commence the refreshed community needs assessments. Cowal and Rosneath were selected as the first communities for assessment due to inputs required to business cases ongoing live investment projects. Transport Scotland have awarded the contract for this first community needs assessment to Stantec; work is underway and should be completed early in 2023

Transport Scotland are currently developing the programme of subsequent community needs assessments to be carried out during 2023.

Engagement to Date

Transport Scotland have facilitated a number of discussions of ICP with a key stakeholder group, beginning in March 2022. These consultations typically consist of a presentation followed by further discussion of key issues.

Discussions in 2022 focused on the draft Long-Term Plan for Vessels and Ports and the community needs assessments methodology (developed from the Routes and Services Methodology created during the Ferries Review).

Read outs from each of the meetings have been shared with attendees following the session. These meetings have been informative and have helped to shape the development of these components of ICP. There will be further engagement throughout 2023.

Next Steps

Transport Scotland are aiming to consult on the long term investment plan early in 2023.

With additional resource now in place, work on other components of ICP can be taken forward and accelerated during 2023.

Transport Scotland are also discussing internally how to best align work on ICP with other major projects: CHFS3 procurement and the follow-up to Project Neptune.

Risk Register

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – ICP timelines will align well for RTS emerging issues and Case for Change inputs to be included in the process.

Policy

Impact - Positive

Comment – ICP will shape strategy and delivery plans particularly around TS supported networks.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – No direct impact but the policies and priorities will provide a focus for future investment in key services.

Equality

Impact – Neutral

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note the report.

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Date:	19 th January 2023