



LOCHABER & SKYE FERRY USERS GROUP
(Small Isles, Skye, Raasay, Kilchoan, Lochaline)

Held at The Moorings Hotel, Banavie, Fort William
10:00 on Tuesday 27 October 2015

IN ATTENDANCE

HITRANS

Neil MacRae
Katy Cunningham

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Clr Allan Henderson
Clr Andrew Baxter
Clr Brian Murphy

SMALL ISLES COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Camille Dressler

SLEAT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Rob Ware
Roddy Murray

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND (FERRIES DIVISION)

Paul Linhart-MacAskill

SCOTTISH CITYLINK

Fraser Smith

CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE

Eric Smith
Mathew Harrison

HIGHLAND AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE

Scott Dingwall

Presentation

Transport Scotland Procurement

Alan Malone
Andy Nicol

Bid Team

Cynthia Spencer – CalMac

Robbie Drummond – CalMac
Finlay Macrae – CalMac

APOLOGIES

Cllr Audrey Sinclair
Lorna Spencer
Des Bradley
Richard Evans

Welcome & Introductions

Cllr Henderson (Chair) welcomed Members to the meeting with round table introductions.

ITEM 1

Operational FUG Meeting

a) Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan

Paul Linhart-MacAskill provided the group with a verbal presentation on Transport Scotland's Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan (VRDP) summarising key points of the plan which was circulated prior to meeting. Paul added he is happy to take back any comments or questions that he is unable to answer back and report back to the group.

Camille Dressler - Small Isles are keen to have the Loch Nevis, surprised this is still mentioned for Colonsay
Roddy Murray – also concerned with the moving of Loch Nevis to Colonsay.

PLM – can only comment he is aware of moving around of fleet but not aware of what the movements are
Matthew Harrison - It's in the report but currently no plans to do it, that could change, but no current plans.

Action: PLM to provide clarification on matters raised.

b) CalMac Summer 2016 Timetable Discussion

Mathew Harrison outlined proposed timetable changes for summer 2016. Adding statement will be out in September / October.

Mathew has spoken with Robert, who has now returned from leave, and is aware of concerns on the routes, but some requests contradict each other. Following this meeting they will be going to have a conversation to discuss these concerns

Rob Ware – raised concern on withdrawal of the MV Coruisk, vessel built for the Armadale - Mallaig service and its replacement by a smaller vessel, reduction in capacity and service.

Matthew - Decisions were taken on where to maximise capacity.

Discussion followed where Mathew advised Robert will come up with draft 2 & 3 and will come and consult with Rob and the community.

Camille - would like to carry on with consultation but is dissatisfied with no response being received from CalMac. Small Isles would also look to have dialogue on possible daily link with mainland.

Mathew – happy to consult further, but this will not include a daily return service.

c) Public Transport Update

Fraser Smith gave a verbal update and reported that the Skye summer timetable would be extended through to the end of October and this would apply next year as well.

Citylink are currently in negotiations with Operators re extension of the contract. Citylink had no current plans to change summer timetables.

Rob Ware said feedback on Skye route was very positive in terms of quality of vehicles and service.

Chair and Cllr Brian Murphy expressed concern about the reduction in the Fort William – Inverness service stating that there had been a number of complaints and couldn't understand the decision since it appeared to be a well used service and that there appeared no opportunity to reverse the decision. Fraser Smith stated that Citylink had engaged beyond any statutory responsibilities and provided officers in the Council's Public Transport team with the proposed timetables but had submitted the revised timetables following no response. There would still be 6 daily services between Inverness and Fort William with Stagecoach picking up a further two. Fraser Smith said that Oban and Stirling would have a link in the summer timetable. Rob Murray noted support of the Glasgow Airport link on some services.

The Chair said he would discuss internally with officials.

Neil MacRae provided the group with an email update provided by Des Bradley, ScotRail. Scotrail have had discussions with CalMac and were aware of timetable changes proposed for March 2016 stating that dialogue would continue to try and ensure integration of services would be as optimal as possible. He also highlighted the impact on timetables of upcoming works on Queen Street services.

The Chair noted recent problems on Mallaig service due to lack of drivers highlighting the disappointment of visitors who had repeatedly to use the replacement bus service in place of the renowned scenic train journey. Paul Linhart-MacAskill to report back rail issues with colleagues in Transport Scotland

d) Performance Reporting

Matthew introduced stats circulated prior to meeting and advised reporting was for Summer 2015.

Camille Dressler raised concern over changes to handling of Small Isles freight requesting that historical freight agreement should be retained in new tender. CalMac reported that they are currently reviewing. Camille requested that if there is a problem with delivering the freight, then this needs to be discussed with the community.

Mathew Harrison stated that freight volumes for the small isles were huge with other routes use freight vehicles, whereas Muck is moving loose freight and taking up deck space, it's not safe, and cannot continue.

The Chair noted that Small isles are very small islands and freight situation is unique and freight service needs to be clarified.

Eric Smith confirmed he is meeting with Transport Scotland to discuss this issue. Alan Malone stated that he would ensure that the new contract would make explicit the arrangements for Freight to the Small Isles.

Rob Ware made request for some form of communications system in place when Loch Nevis is going out of service so the community can spread the

word, rather than for people to have to check websites. This will allow people to prepare if there is an issue.

e) Ferry User Group Meetings 2016

Neil MacRae introduced proposed meeting dates for 2016 Ferry User Group Meetings. Neil advised meetings should coincide in with draft timetables being produced to allow the groups input to process and requested timetables be provided in advance of meetings. He asked that CalMac and other members to advise if dates fit were suitable so that they can be confirmed at the earliest opportunity.

Action: Mathew Harrison to confirm dates with HITRANS.

Presentation

CHFS Procurement update from Transport Scotland

Alan Malone provided background and an update on the procurement process for the new Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services Contract which will commence in September 2016. This was followed by a question and answer session.

Bidder Engagement Session

Caledonian MacBrayne Ferries Limited

Representatives of Cal Mac's Bid Team provided a presentation on their CHFS bid followed by a question and answer session.

Serco Caledonian Ferries Ltd

Representatives of Serco Caledonian Ltd were also invited to participate in the Bidder Engagement Session but elected not to participate.

