

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

Minute of Meeting held in the Chamber, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Council Offices, Stornoway and via Microsoft Teams, on Wednesday 15 June 2022 at 10.00am.

<p>IN ATTENDANCE</p>	<p>COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR Cllr. Uisdean Robertson (Chair) Cllr. Susan Thomson (Vice Chair) Cllr. Kenneth J Maclean Cllr. Mustapha Hocine Cllr. Grant Fulton Cllr. Duncan Macinnes MBE Mr Kenneth Morrison Ms Mairi Sine Macdonald (Clerk)</p> <p>TRANSPORT SCOTLAND Mr Laurence Kenney Mr Richard Hadfield Ms Alison Wills Ms Margaret McGunnigal Ms Laura Smith Ms Caroline Connelly Mr Paul Flynn</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE LTD (CALMAC) Mr Robert Morrison Mr Finlay Macrae Mr Don McKillop Ms Demi Wylie Mr Andrew MacNair Mr Darrell Broom</p> <p>FERRIES COMMUNITIES BOARD Mr Murdo Maclean Rhoda Campbell</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD. (CMAL) Mr Brian Fulton Ms Morven Bridges</p> <p>HITRANS Mr Neil Macrae Mr Ranald Robertson</p> <p>THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL Cllr. Ian Cockburn David Summers</p> <p>HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE (HIE) Mr Nick Sobey Ms Kathleen Stewart</p> <p>OUTER HEBRIDES COMMERCE GROUP</p>
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	<p>Ms Gail Robertson</p> <p>OUTER HEBRIDES TOURISM Ms Sarah Maclean Mr Alan Graham</p> <p>ULLAPOOL HARBOUR TRUST Mr Kevin Peach</p>
APOLOGIES	<p>Cllr. Iain M Macleod, CNES Kevin Hobbs, CMAL Joanna Peteranna, HIE Fiona Galbraith, CalMac Andrew McIvor, The Highland Council Angus Campbell, Ferries Community Board</p>

1	Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair	<p>Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, HITRANS Chaired the Meeting and referred to the circulated Terms of Reference document for the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of the Hebrides Ferry Stakeholder Group. In accordance with the Terms of Reference these appointments were required to be elected Councillors of the Local Authority. Historically these appointments had been the Chair and Vice Chair of the Comhairle's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to which the Group agreed should continue.</p> <p>It was agreed to appoint Uisdean Robertson as Chair and Susan Thomson as Vice Chair of the Hebrides Ferry Stakeholders Group.</p>
2	Minute of Meeting held on 2 December 2021	<p>The Minute of Meeting of 2 December 2021 was approved.</p> <p>Under consideration of the Minute, Alan Graham, OHT highlighted an omission he had raised at the previous meeting in relation to crew cars taking up vital spaces on the Lochboisdale ferry. He noted that there were regular instances, especially at crew change times on the Wednesday sailing, whereby up to eight crew vehicles were onboard and he was of the view that this was a result of the lack of carparking in Oban.</p> <p>Finlay Macrae, Head of Operations, CalMac explained that 'pool' crew serving a number of vessels required to take their vehicles and that Fiona Galbraith, Area Operations Manager, CalMac was currently reviewing local arrangements with the unions on getting crew to points of departure to try and get a better understanding of whether the use of vehicles was necessary or a choice.</p> <p>It was noted that Finlay Macrae would update Alan Graham directly on the issue of crew vehicles on the Lochboisdale service.</p>
3	Matters Arising – Action Tracker	<p>With reference to Item 2 of the Minute of Meeting of 2 December 2021, HITRANS submitted the Action Tracker detailing updates on the action points for all the Ferry Stakeholder Groups. There were currently 13 actions for the Hebrides FSG, two of which had been completed. The remaining actions were items on the agenda with the exception of two outstanding actions for Finlay Macrae:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) CalMac's performance regime and penalties for not meeting timetable turnaround times and the discord in communications between CalMac customer services and the ports during periods of disruption; and (2) providing '<i>cancellation data over a long term period by cause</i>' for all networks going forward and the collation of data on CalMac's performance on timetable turnaround times. <p>Finlay Macrae provided an update on these and indicated that he had a meeting scheduled with Cllr. Iain M. Macleod that afternoon in regard to point 1 and he would circulate further information on these as requested by Gail Robertson.</p>

		<p>It was agreed:</p> <p>(1) to note the Action Tracker update:</p> <p>(2) to include the action raised under the Minute that, CalMac resolve crew vehicles taking up vital spaces on the Lord of the Isles; and</p> <p>(3) Finlay Macrae would circulate an update on the two outstanding action points</p>
4	Caledonian MacBrayne Operational, Commercial and Performance Update covering (CFL)	<p>With reference to Item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 2 December 2021, CalMac, submitted an operational and performance report which addressed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marketing 2. Contract Commitments 3. Timetable Integration and Consultation Update 4. Socio-Economic Report 5. Terms and Conditions Consultation (See Item 5 on the agenda) 6. Ar Turas Update (See item 6 on the agenda) 7. Route updates <p>The update on the marketing and commercial side of business focused on the repositioning the CalMac brand and the delivery of the new brand guidelines. The roll out would be managed in stages across all communications and include vessel, signage and uniforms. MV Loch Frisa being the first vessel to bear the new CalMac lettering font on her hull. Work continued with Digital Scotland on the digital refresh project and new campaigns targeting international customers from German speaking audiences and Travel Trade customers.</p> <p>The Report highlighted further focus on the customer experience with the roll out in the next six months of a new a new platform to measure performance which would identify areas of improvement to increase customer satisfaction. Also work in partnership with an external research agency to measure and track customer experience with commercial customers. Further analysis continued of bookings and ticketing data to gain insight on changes in purchase and use of ferry services since the pandemic.</p> <p>In reference to the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) the Report stated that CFL were currently at 97.0% complete or on track with the contract commitments. These include ongoing commitments with revised delivery dates e.g. the ticketing and reservation system now scheduled for October 2022.</p> <p>The Report confirmed that CalMac aimed to publish the Winter 2022/23 timetable by the end of July. The Summer 2023 consultation would also commence then with a view to publishing the timetable by year end.</p> <p>The Report further detailed the Socio-Economic assessment of CalMac's services commissioned by CFL postponed due to the pandemic. As the results would not be representative of 'normal' times, the consultants Cebr had been asked to consider options for delivering the study with an initial phase by the end of 2021 and delivery of the final project report in summer 2022.</p> <p>Further updates were also provided on the CalMac Community Fund, Sponsorship Programme and Youth and Philanthropy Initiative.</p> <p>An further update was provided on each of the Hebrides area routes and Cllr. Grant Fulton and Gail Roberson noted their dissent with the wording that '<i>disruption was minimal</i>' to both Harris and Uist communities over the past period. Gail Robertson stated that aside from the inconvenience, the financial impact on businesses had been significant. Finlay Macrae acknowledged these points and would amend the wording. In regard to the more recent MV Hebrides breakdowns and recovery from disruption, he indicated that tough decision had</p>

		<p>been required and these were based on the Triangle route being the main freight route via Lochmaddy/Uig as Harris could be accessed via Stornoway.</p> <p>Finlay Macrae opened the floor to questions and the Chair, on behalf of Cllr. Kenneth Maclean enquired about replacement plans for MV Isle of Lewis. Finlay Macrae stated that there were no immediate plans and that discussions continued on wider ferry replacement programme in regard to ferries, which included MV Isle of Lewis, that were in the later stages service life.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Hebrides Area Update.</p>										
5	Terms and Conditions Consultation	<p>An update was providing of the impending consultation of changes to CalMac’s current Terms and Conditions in regard to booking changes, cancellation and no-shows. CalMac proposed that these changes would address a significant problem of unused deck space, currently denying other customers the opportunity to travel. It was stated that these proposals had been developed in proportionate and comparable to the policies of other UK ferry operators. The consultation would be undertaken across the eight appointed Ferry Committees/Transport Forums and once concluded a more detailed overview of the proposals would be provide to the Ferry Stakeholder Group.</p> <p>Finlay Macrae provide a general overview stating that the main driver was that there were currently no firm rules around CalMac’s ability to control the way the car deck spaces is booked, utilised and any changes made at the last minute. This was applicable to both general and commercial customers and referenced that utilisation of car deck space was one of the Commitments under the CHFS2 contract. The consultation on Terms and Conditions was being undertaken in layers and currently in a discussion and information gathering phase.</p> <p>Ranald Roberson indicated the Secretariat’s disappointment that a more detailed presentation had not been provided and clarified that CalMac’s proposed cancellation levies were as follows:</p> <table data-bbox="411 1144 1157 1305"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>Options</u></th> <th><u>Levy</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>29 Days or more before travel</td> <td>25% of the total vehicle fare</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8 to 28 days before travel</td> <td>50% of the total vehicle fare</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24 hours and 7 days before travel</td> <td>75% of the total vehicle fare</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less than 24 hours or no show</td> <td>100% of the total vehicle fare</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>He further referred to an excellent response by the Ferries Community Board on this matter and felt reassured that this proposal was not imminent and that due consideration would be given to the new booking system as a means of resolving this. He also mentioned that Zerco North Link and Orkney currently reimbursed full fares up to 24 hours notice. Whilst he acknowledged that there were issues across some, but not all routes, he stated that RET, proportionality, and consistency across all Scottish domestic fares should be considered in any proposals.</p> <p>Gail Robertson concurred with Ranald Robertson’s comments and noted the bad timing of the consultation in reference to CalMac’s recent poor performance across the network and current public opinion of their late and sometimes lack of notification to changes and/or cancellations on routes. She stated that island circumstances had to be acknowledged in that ferries were a continuation of the roads network and cancellations and changes unfortunately did occur. She also felt that any proposals should await the data available from the implementation of the new booking system to show trends, identify repeat offenders and to ensure that demand and capacity were clearly identified.</p> <p>Cllr. Duncan Macinnes MBE asked about the scale of the problem in percentage terms in view of the standby option, and if this just at peak times. Finlay Macrae responded indicating that it was difficult to give an accurate figure because of the variables. The current system showed a vessel was full, within compass, based on deck space, mix of traffic etc. and until such time that a vessel was loaded what made the difference in reality is what turned up at the port. Historically 12+ vehicles on Standby could be loaded, now this figure was down to 3 or 4.</p>	<u>Options</u>	<u>Levy</u>	29 Days or more before travel	25% of the total vehicle fare	8 to 28 days before travel	50% of the total vehicle fare	24 hours and 7 days before travel	75% of the total vehicle fare	Less than 24 hours or no show	100% of the total vehicle fare
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		<p>Finlay Macrae further stated that the new booking system would allow 24/7 access and be much more effective in allowing people to take advantage of any cancellations. He concluded by stating that the changes to the terms and conditions had not been designed as a penalty but as a rule to stop deck space being available when a vessel left port.</p> <p>Sarah Maclean stated that OHT were being proactive and actively engaging with visitors and signposting them to local websites and highlighting capacity issues and encouraging them to be considerate and to notify CalMac of any changes or cancellations to travel plans.</p> <p>In regard to capacity, Alan Graham, OHT highlighted that due to the irregularity of sailings he was aware of people who made two or three bookings to ensure they get off islands. Perhaps in some instances they did not cancel these journeys which exacerbated the problem. Finlay confirmed that this was the case.</p> <p>Finlay Macrae took on board the Groups' comments and indicated that the full impacts of the reservation booking system would take some time to be in situ and that the current proposal was to formalise the current problems. He gave a further assurance that based on current feedback there would be a refresh on some of the messaging about what was trying to be achieved. He concluded that CalMac, over the years had been very adaptable and helpful to customers making changes to the bookings, especially for funerals or hospital appointments etc., which the Chair acknowledged.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <p>(1) to note the update; and</p> <p>(2) following a re-evaluation of the next steps, CalMac would re-engage with the FSG on the Terms and Conditions consultation process.</p>
6	Ar Turas Update	<p>A presentation submitted by Marc Stevenson, Customer Experience Lead, provided an update on the Ar Turas programme which aimed to deliver a modern booking, ticketing and travel experience for customers and staff by using market led software to standardise and simplify the process and help make buying CalMac travel easy and efficient. The update on the last quarter highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges with delivering in March - Covid-19 had prevented the team training >700 colleagues face-to-face. • System Stability and Readiness- The wider E-Dea team was now onsite and in the network discussing the change; 1:1 testing and familiarisation with customers was continuing; and there was focus on ensuring the system and setup was stable and ironing out any issues. Many of the team were out in the network demonstrating eBooking in preparation for formal training. • Communications and Engagement - Full re-plan was now in place, including Community Events, Digital Comms (social media, blogs, videos), Traditional Comms (posters, leaflets). The team continued to engage with various Ferry Committees, User Groups, Community Councils and other Partners. Insights had been gathered through various digital and traditional research and it was indicated that 4,502 responses had been received to date. <p>An action plan detailing key dates and actions from May to November 2022 was provided at the conclusion of the presentation and it was highlighted that the following themes would be taken forward between now and October:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and Engagement • Customer and Booking Migration • Training and Adoption • Cutover and testing

		<p>Kenneth Morrison, Harbour Master asked if disability bookings would be available online as currently this required a day-time telephone call to the call centre which was not efficient. Finlay Macrae confirmed that the current methods of bookings would remain but the new system would provide additional flexibility for individuals to make bookings 24/7 and applicable concessions recorded in the individual's profile.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Ar Turas update.</p>
7	<p>Sounds of Barra/Harris Socio-Economic Case for Change</p>	<p>With reference to Item 4 of the Minute of 2 December 2022, Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, HITRANS, submitted a Report providing the findings of the socio-economic case for improving ferry services across the Sounds of Barra and Harris. 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.</p> <p>The methodology was outlined in the Report and the Findings, appended in two separate reports, provided a full analysis of the data collected. These set out the socio-economic case for timetable enhancement ahead of Transport Scotland undertaking the Islands Connectivity Plan which will replace the current Ferries Plan.</p> <p>The conclusions of the studies for both Sounds was that the case for timetable enhancements was evident and summarised as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) the traffic forecasts indicate potential for significant increase in demand for use of both Sounds (2) in addition, some existing trips could now be made at more suitable times, saving both time and costs. (3) the strategic case was strong and the options collectively address the main issues for improving the economy and quality of life for residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by more fully meeting household, business and visitor travel needs; and • by providing sufficient capacity, greater day trip opportunities, ability to travel at short notice, and access to a number of mainland and inter-island transport services. (4) The study quantified a range of impacts in monetary terms. Not only potential generated demand on the ferry but also reflected the assumptions that underpin the calculations e.g. how far the generated visitor trips on the Sound would lead to new spend in the Outer Hebrides rather than simply distributing existing expenditures more widely across the islands. (5) It was recognised that some of the business benefits of enhanced timetables cannot be quantified. In particular, the business survey and the consultations highlighted the significance of improved timetables in providing better access to customers (potentially leading to new sales); and also more opportunities to collaborate with other Outer Hebrides businesses' which would help to increase productivity. (6) An issue raised by consultees and in the surveys was greater integration of the timings of the two Sounds services. However, each route has its own dynamic requiring sailings at certain times. Co-ordinating timings on the two routes could have significant negative impacts on some households and businesses. However, an increased number of sailings-and ones at new times of the day-will still offer greater opportunities for more efficient journeys between Barra and Lewis/Harris. <p>Neil Macrae highlighted that that it was representations originated through the Group that had initiated the study and he thanked all those who had participated and responded. Following feedback to the consultants in the following week a final report would be submitted to Transport Scotland.</p>

		<p>The Group welcomed the report and that there was a strong strategic case for timetable enhancements and given the predicted growth it was anticipated that under STRP2 commitments the study would feed into future discussion on the potential for fixed links.</p> <p>It was further highlighted that the timetable options for Leverburgh indicated potential for a second ferry. A proposal for an additional berth at Leverburgh had been discussed by the Harbour Users Group in consultation with the Comhairle as the Harbour Authority. Neil Macrae agreed to consider the infrastructure proposals within the document. Finlay Macrae indicated that CalMac had welcomed the opportunity to feed into the consultation and agreed that any additional options to further develop supply chain connections, such as those suggested for the Sound of Harris, would be welcomed by CalMac as a future option.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the update on the Sounds of Barra/Harris Socio-Economic Case for Change and to amend the typo.</p>
8	Fair Fares Review Scoping Study	<p>With reference to Item 5 of the Minute of 2 December 2022, Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, HITRANS submitted a Report on a Fair Fares Review Scoping Study commissioned by HITRANS. 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>Following the commissioning of transport consultants Stantec to assist with the review, the report provided a brief analysis of how bus use varied by location, a review of the existing framework in relation to concessionary travel and details of existing concessionary scheme. It also provided considerations for the forthcoming national fares review and the impacts of extending concessionary travel i.e. the benefits and costs of free ferry/rail travel, the financial impacts on islands residents an a very high level estimate of the cost to government of providing free ferry travel to under 22s.</p> <p>Ranald Robertson further highlighted the estimated £3.7m per annum cost to extend free travel to ferry services for Under 22s. This had been developed on conservative assumptions and therefore the true cost could be lower. However, it would be useful for discussions going forward in considering the work being done by the Ferries Community Board and other groups on this matter and HITRANS were happy to information share on any aspects of the Report.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the update on the Fair Fares Appraisal.</p>
9	Transport Scotland Update	<p>With reference to Item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 2 December 2021, Richard Hadfield spoke to the Islands Connectivity Plan Update presentation submitted by Transport Scotland. The presentation was based on the previous submission and provided the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICP Overview • Community Needs Assessments/Market Assessments • Long-term Plan and Investment Programme for Vessels/Ports • Fares Policy Review • Engagement and Consultation • Provisional Timings <p>Richard Hadfield referred to the ICP Provisional Programme for 2022/23 which involved bringing forward a suite of documents to full public consultation:</p> <p><u>2022</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Produce draft Ferries Plan implementation report for feedback ➤ End-2022 - full public consultation into Q1 2023 ➤ Draft vessels/ports investment plan ➤ Draft ICP – the overview strategy document ➤ Fares policy options

- Engagement Strategy
- Impact assessments & Financial Plan

2023

- Finalise documents following the consultation
- Community Needs Assessments
- Low Carbon Plan, Onward & Connecting Travel

However, Richard Hadfield indicated that work streams were not as advanced as anticipated and proposed to prioritise the Draft Vessels/Ports Investment Plan and the Draft ICP Overview Strategy Document to full public consultation by the end of the year. In anticipation of this, Transport Scotland would engage with all the organisations represented on the FSG on both these prior to going to the public in December 2022.

In reference to the replacement of MV Isle of Lewis referred at item 7, Richard Hadfield referred to the presentation slide on “Medium Term” replacement of Major Vessels 2026 to 2035 which indicated that MV Isle of Lewis had been placed as a fourth priority on the list. He further highlighted that there were currently 20 vessels at difference stages within the replacement programme and that Transport Scotland/CMAL would continue to feed into the programme over the coming years to ensure sustainable ferry services across the network.

Richard Hadfield opened the floor to questions and wider discussion and the following points were raised:

Kenneth Morrison, Harbour Master, referred to the aspirations of the Leverburgh Ferry Users Group for future regeneration of Leverburgh port, touched on at item 7 and requested that representatives of TS and CMAL meet with the local community on this. He indicated that the Comhairle as Harbour Authority and HIE had been involved in discussions with the Group and it would be beneficial to have a collaborate approach to consider the future possibilities such as additional infrastructure, replacement of the Loch Portain, changes to sea classification and a fixed link.

In addressing these points, Richard Hadfield further explained the ICP processes and mechanism in place which would arrive at decisions and that the outcomes of the final STPR2 report would determine if a fixed link would be a recommended option for the Sound of Harris. He recognised the community interest and the number of potential future long term solutions for Leverburgh. As stated earlier, engagement with community groups to outline and articulate needs and options would be beneficial in the period up to December and he would be keen to have these discussions. Future service needs and looking at each route individually and each community formed a key part of the ICP but at this stage there was no timeline on any decisions until such time as the analytical needs of solutions were undertaken which would form the strategic direction of the ICP.

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Transport Scotland Update; and**
- (2) that Kenneth Morrison, Harbour Master would contact Richard Hadfield to organise a meeting with all the relevant stakeholders for high level discussion in regard to the future options for infrastructure investment and regeneration at Leverburgh Pier.**

Cllr. Grant Fulton highlighted the ‘Sustainable Hierarchies’ slide and commented that it was not a ‘good fit’ for islands. He made specific reference to the point ‘*make better use of existing capacity*’, and that this should apply to the under-utilisation of the mezzanine deck on the Triangle Route. Richard Hadfield stressed it was a hierarchy which provided the preferred priority options for Local Authorities whilst acknowledging it did not fit all. He further stated that the Comhairle’s Local Transport Strategy promoted active travel and public transport and this aligned with that and the NTS.

In regard to the issue of the mezzanine deck Richard Hadfield stated this was being addressed with other TS colleagues. He provided a generalised overview on capacity issues across the network and made the point that there was capacity on every vessel, every day on every route

		<p>if you were travelling without a vehicle and that integrated journeys and better utilisation of capacity was promoted through the NTS and STPR2.</p> <p>The Chair referred to discussions and representation to the Transport Minister on accelerating spend on vessels and that there seemed to be some encouragement on this. Richard Hadfield stated that TS would continue to make the case for increased investment within the confines of the current Scottish Government Budget.</p> <p>Rhoda Campbell, representing the Ferries Community Board raised a paper from Robbie Drummond, Managing Director, CalMac, presented to Transport Scotland before the meeting with the Transport Minister on 27 May 2022 detailing eight points, one being the utilisation of the mezzanine deck on the Hebrides. Laurence Kenney responded stating that there had been initial discussion with CalMac who had subsequently submitted further detail and Transport Scotland were considering the options, one being the cost of the mezzanine deck and additional crew. He confirmed that these were a new set of proposals and would be responded to as soon as possible and gave an assurance that the Minister would be fully appraised of all matters.</p> <p>It was noted that Laurence Kenney would notify the FSG via HITRANS on the outcomes of the options paper presented by CalMac.</p> <p>CIlr. Duncan MacInnes MBE sought clarification on the overall cost of the deployment of the mezzanine desk on the Triangle Route taking into account the additional income to CalMac to reduce the overall cost to the public purse. Finlay Macrae responded stating that mezzanine decks were not used on every sailing and made the point that they were not deployed on every sailing historically. He indicated that that revenue loss for not using the mezzanine decks had been stated in the decision making sum but he would revisit the data to get a percentage figure.</p> <p>It was agreed that Finlay Macrae would review the data and seek to provide additional non-commercial data to the Group.</p> <p>Linda Cunningham, Corporate Policy Officer, CNES sought an assurance that the ICIA process will be evoked at the policy stage of the ICP and not at the outcome stage. Richard Hadfield confirmed that this will be done in draft form aligned with the development of the policy papers along with the other required impact assessments. Linda Cunningham stated that in regard to STPR2 the ICIA process had been invoked at the outcome stage therefore all islands connectivity considerations had not been taken in consideration.</p> <p>It was noted that Laurence Kenney Transport Scotland would seek confirmation of what stage the ICIA process had been invoked in regard to STPR2.</p>
10	CMAL Update	<p>With reference to Item 7 of the Minute of Meeting of 2 December 2021, Brian Fulton, Head of Business Support, CMAL submitted an update report. The Report indicated that projects remained on track as reported and Brian Fulton confirmed that ICIA's were being undertaken for each project and suggested that CMAL be included in discussions around the process and timing of these to ensure consistency across all stakeholders.</p> <p>Following December's update, positive progress was reported on the following:</p> <p><u>Vessels</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the contract for 2 Islay vessels to the value of £45.5m each had contractual delivery dates of 15 November 2024 and 15 February 2025. • the Mallaig/Lochboisdale project had been formally initiated and a working group formed. The first public meeting had been recorded and was available on the CMAL website project page. • SVRP Phase 1 for 7 vessels in concept design phase with 2 variants for the routes for which they are intended (15 car capacity and 25 car capacity) - intention remained that they are

all electric and work had commenced with SSEN in regard to grid capacity at all overnight berths.

- SVRP Phase 2 will follow on from Phase 1 to address the replacement of the 'Sound Route' vessels (approx. 2027).

In reference to the Dual Fuel Vessels at Fergusons it was noted that a letter had been sent to NZET Committee on 23 March 2022 and Brian Fulton indicated there was more confidence in the delivery dates for MV Glen Sannox (March-May 2023) and H802 (October-December 2023). CMAL had also agreed to second a senior executive to Fergusons as Project Director and the CMAL site team were now assisting with resolution of the Owner's Observation Reports. This was welcomed by the Group.

Brian Fulton recapped stating that the overall investment programme was for 22/23 vessels in total i.e. 10 small, 6 major, 3 passenger only and the 2 currently at Ferguson Marine. A total 10 year programme of £1.5 billion of which £580m had been committed for the first 5 years. He indicated that CMAL were keen to accelerate the programme and would have favoured an additional two vessels to the two Islay vessel contracts. However, competing priorities for the funding had made that unrealistic.

In reference to the update on the Loch Frisa, Brian Fulton confirmed that the vessel came into service on 6 June 2022. Out of a total of 600 vessels looked at over a number of years this was the first second hand tonnage to be brought into service. He further confirmed CMAL will continue to look at second hand tonnage and would be doing so over the next 2 weeks specifically to address short term resilience issues.

Port Infrastructure

The report confirmed that the marshalling area and the new pier structure at Tarbert had been completed and progress was underway with Phase 2. The new terminal building was due for completion by the end of the year. It was anticipated that the temporary building would be removed in the first quarter of the New Year and the area completed with EV Charging Points.

Alterations and improvements to the Castlebay ferry terminal building continued and had been completed with the exception of a few snagging issues.

Lochboisdale fender works had also been completed and deck strengthening work was well underway to give life extension prior to the development of Gasay. Work continued regarding the design of the new Gasay ferry terminal.

Brian Fulton opened the floor to questions and the following points were highlighted:

Alan Graham, OHT referred to the lack of resilience and additional tonnage and the socio economic impacts on the Southern Isles communities. He further reiterated serious concerns over recent technical issues, the withdrawal of the Lochboisdale service and further weather disruption anticipated during the winter months. He specifically enquired why the Pentalina had not been considered as a short term measure and made the point that the vessel had seriously been considered last year until the RMT had stopped the process stating that the vessel was unseaworthy.

Brian Fulton responded stating there were challenges with the Pentalina. Specifically there was no Passenger Certification and that significant work would be required to bring the vessel up to standard. The vessel was in poor condition and it was not feasible for CMAL to purchase an end of life vessel. He acknowledged that leasing options had been discussed which was a consideration for CalMac and Transport Scotland. He further reiterated the challenges to find additional tonnage i.e. the type of ports, shallow draft, length, condition etc. and stated that there were currently six ship brokers actively searching for vessels on behalf of CMAL.

Finlay Macrae offered CalMac's perspective and commented that a deeper inspection regime and independent view of the vessel had been undertaken and provided to some agencies and a trial undertaken last year prior to her being removed from availability by her owner. In addition, there would be limitations on bringing the Pentalina into service as the vessel was

		<p>set up for port side working to berth. CalMac as the operator continued to work with CMAL and TS on bringing alternative additional second hand tonnage into service.</p> <p>The Chair stressed that the lack of available short term tonnage was becoming increasingly concerning and potentially disastrous for all the communities concerned.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the CMAL Infrastructure Update.</p>
11	Other Ports and Infrastructure Updates	<p>With reference to Item 7 of the Minute of Meeting of 2 December 2021, updates were provided on other ports and infrastructure as follows:</p> <p>Ullapool Port Authority</p> <p>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 stated that RJ Macleod had been awarded the contract due to commence on 1 August 2022 for a six month period to 1 March 2023. It was anticipated that there would be impacts on the trunk road from October when it would operate a one way system. This work coincided with the Uig Pier closure as two ferry arrivals and departure required to be managed and CFL would be resourcing extra staff for marshalling and traffic management at the port. Mr Darrell Broom, Operation Planning Project Manager, CalMac offered further reassurance stating that Uig staff would be redistributed to Ullapool to assist and there would be increased messaging to customers to mitigate traffic congestion at check-in times.</p> <p>Under consideration of this item Cllr. Duncan Macinnes OBE made an observation regarding traffic management issues at Stornoway caused by the tailback of vehicles from the check-in booth, particularly at lunch-time and whether consideration had been given to relocating the booth within the carpark or an alternative solution in view of the ample space available within the port. He emphasised that these issues would be exacerbated by potential additional traffic from Harris during the Uig Pier closure period.</p> <p>Finlay Macrae, CalMac acknowledged the issues in Stornoway and highlighted similar problems at other ports due to their location. He cited that relocating the booth would not give the required 'peace' to the check-in process and this was a longer term solution which would require discussion with Stornoway Port Authority. It was anticipated that e-booking system will speed up the process. Other solutions included requesting staff to be on duty early especially if there are constraints on services, redirecting traffic within the port area and addressing passenger behaviour by increased pre-travel messaging. Finlay Macrae gave an assurance that monitoring continued by CalMac in liaison with the Comhairle and Police Scotland.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Ullapool Harbour Trust Update.</p> <p>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar</p> <p>Kenneth Morrison, Harbour Master provided the update on the relevant Comhairle ports and harbours.</p> <p><u>Lochmaddy Pier Project</u></p> <p>In the period since the last meeting of the FSG the main contract for the Lochmaddy project had been awarded to George Leslie Ltd. and work was significantly underway and remained on schedule for completion by the end of March 2023.</p> <p>Consideration had been given to establishing a community forum to facilitate engagement and communications between the delivery team and the wider community during the construction period. Identified issues related to the provision of long-stay parking at or near the pier and traffic management, including the management of drop-trailers during this period.</p> <p>The contractor was currently engaging with the Comhairle Education Department and the Apprentice Training section to take forward the implementation of a project Community</p>

Benefit Strategy, including facilitating visits and other engagement with schools in the Uists, and through Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).

Inter-island ferry Ports

Tender returns were due on Wednesday 15 June 2022 for works to replace fenders at Leverburgh and Ardmhor ferry terminals and it was anticipated that contracts would be awarded in the next couple of weeks.

Breedon would commence on site to extend the car park adjacent to Leverburgh ferry slipway on Monday 20 June 2022.

Gail Robertson raised safety issues at Lochmaddy Pier because of the lack of parking due to the contract works. This had been raised a number of times and she was not aware of any consultation or resolution which was causing issues for hauliers and tour buses etc. Kenneth Morrison agreed to raise the matter with the Project Team and the Chair would also bring it to the attention of the Director for Investment Delivery at a meeting later that day.

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. Works had progressed with placement of fill to the new marshalling area and ongoing concrete repairs and pilling works to the new fisherman's compound quay shown (progress photos were appended to the Report).

The Report stated that the community will continue to be informed of details of the construction works and traffic management arrangements throughout the project through locally held liaison meetings and via 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 November 2023 with an outage period during which there can be no ferry service to/from Uig) programmed from 10 October 2022 to 27 March 2023.

Draft ferry timetables were provided for the outage period. All ferry timetables had been shared with Citylink and the Comhairle for consideration and transport connections for Ullapool and Mallaig were also provided. Mr Darrell Broom, CalMac addressed the proposed timetables and provided a high level overview.

Lochmaddy/Ullapool

Day	Depart Lochmaddy	Arrive Ullapool	Depart Ullapool	Arrive Lochmaddy
Monday - Saturday	05:30	10:00	11:00	15:30
Sunday	06:00	10:30	11:30	16:00

Stornoway/Ullapool

Day	Depart Stornoway	Arrive Ullapool	Depart Ullapool	Arrive Stornoway
Monday – Friday	06:00	08:30	09:30	12:00
	13:00	15:30	16:30	19:00
	21:30	00:01	02:00	04:30
Saturday	06:00	08:30	09:30	12:00
	14:00	16:30	18:00	20:30
Sunday	-	-	-	-
	09:30	12:00	17:00	19:30
	21:30	00:01	02:00	04:30

Lochboisdale/Mallaig

Day	Lochboisdale Depart	Mallaig Arrive	Mallaig Depart	Lochboisdale Arrive
Monday, Thursday, Saturday	05:40 13:55	09:10 17:25	09:50 17:55	13:20 21:25
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday	09:40	13:10	14:00	17:30

Under the terms of the 2018 island Act, Cllr. Grant Fulton asked Transport Scotland representatives whether an ICIA had been undertaken to assess the impacts on the Harris Community of removing the lifeline services during the outage period. If that was not the case, he requested an explanation of why this had not been done. In regard to the timetable and in reference to the 'Sustainable Hierarchy' slide at item 7 of the agenda, he asked what public transport provision would be in place for Harris residents, noting that South Harris residents would require to leave at 03.30am to travel to Stornoway to get the ferry. He further enquired if the fare cost would remain as is and whether compensation would be offered to vehicle passengers in view of increased fuel costs.

Caroline Connelly, Transport Scotland responded acknowledging the concerns raised by all the communities affected by the outage and that work continued with CalMac and The Highland Council to make this process as smooth as possible. In respect of the ICIA she stated that the undertaking was the responsibility of the Statutory Harbour Authority for the project, which was The Highland Council in this instance. She would seek clarification and respond to Cllr. Fulton after the meeting. The Chair commented that an EIA had been undertaken in regard to Uig village itself and not to the entire affected network and that the Comhairle's Chief Executive was going to write to Donna Manson, Chief Executive, The Highland to confirm whether an ICIA had been undertaken. It was further noted that to date pertinent Comhairle Officers had not been consulted in regard to an ICIA for the project.

in regard to the connectivity issues raise by Cllr. Fulton, Darrell Broom, CalMac responded stating that bus or taxi services would be provided to displaced passengers on the morning ferry and confirmed there would be negative impact on Harris or Uig passengers in regard to the ferry fare.

Cllr. Fulton whilst relieved to note CalMac's response his concerns remained in regard to the ICIA which, in his view should have been undertaken over a year ago. He did not think that if it went ahead at this stage that it would be undertaken in a meaningful way to allow time for the community to reflect on the findings. In conclusion he stated the community had lost faith in the ferry services and that the closure would have huge impacts on already fragile communities. He further voiced his disappointment that there had been no positive outcomes from all the consultations and many representations made by communities and by the Chair and that disastrous and serious problems lay ahead.

Cllr. Duncan Macinnes, OBE raised further concerns about the road conditions in the winter for people travelling from Harris and sought clarification of whether the Comhairle would be

compensated if gritting of roads would be required outwith the terms of the current Winter Maintenance Policy. The Chair confirmed that this point had previously been raised by Cllr. Fulton.

Neil Macrae raised the passenger only vessel options and Darrell Broom stated that CalMac had recommended that there would be one ferry provided for Tarbert/Uig and one for Lochmaddy/Uig for the duration of the outage period and confirmation of this provision was in discussion with Transport Scotland. Neil Macrae responded stating that in view of the circumstances that this was the minimum provision that should be provided and the only option for direct connectivity to these areas over the winter period. He further sought confirmation that there would be bus connectivity at both points for this and if not there should be bus connectivity provided at both Ullapool and Mallaig for displaced passengers to all connection points and vice versa.

Ronald Robertson provided further detail on work being undertaken by HITRANS led by the Comhairle on the socio-economic impacts of the closure and that Reference Economic consultants had been commissioned to undertake a high level overview to quantify the scale of the impacts and thereafter it would be available to assist the decision makers with mitigation measures. This was an unprecedented event, the proposed action was reactive and it was anticipated to have the work completed prior to the advance of the closure by the end of July 2022.

Gail Robertson noted her agreement with all the points raised by Cllr. Fulton in regard to the Harris community. In respect of the Uist community she made the point that a third of regular freight could not be accommodated during the closure period in Uig and that some businesses were seriously considering the viability of continuing to operate during that period. Hauliers operations would be reduced due to lack of capacity and timetable changes, operational costs would be significantly increased and it was strongly felt that businesses could fold. Harris would have no lifeline services and Uist would have a significant decrease in lifeline supplies. She sought confirmation of when the timetables would be available as until that time Hauliers could not move forward in any positive way. Darrell Broom, CalMac, acknowledged the urgency but could not give an exact date as these were currently with Transport Scotland and communications would be issued as soon as these were finalised. The Chair supported the comments made and sought further reassurance from Transport Scotland on the timetables indicating the proposals had not been well received.

Caroline Connelly, Transport Scotland acknowledged the significant challenges and the strength of feelings from the Group. She stated that conversations had taken place with CalMac on other options and also with The Highland Council on reducing the outage. She reassured the Group TS they were listening and doing all they can by offering support to local tourism and businesses and confirmed that business compensation was currently not being offered. However, given the number of enquiries it merited further consideration in ongoing discussions.

Cllr. Mustapha Hocine agreed with all the points made by Cllr. Grant Fulton and Gail Robertson and reiterated his concern that an ICIA had not been undertaken prior to this major closure to provide data on the significant impacts which was contrary to the spirit of the Islands Act. He further enquired about Highland Council's dismissal of the option to provide a floating linkspan. Caroline Connelly, Transport Scotland responded in detail citing technical, tidal conditions and marine licencing issues.

Sarah Maclean, OHT referred to the discussion on economic impact assessments indicating that she was not aware of any requests for input from the tourism sector and requested that she be contacted directly on this.

It was agreed:

(1) to note the update on the Uig Redevelopment Project; and

		<p>(2) that Caroline Connelly, Transport Scotland would clarify the situation with the ICIA for the project.</p>
12	<p>Ferries Community Board Update</p>	<p>With reference to Item 8 of the Minute of Meeting of 2 December 2021, Angus Campbell, Chair, Ferries Community Board submitted an update report which Murdo Maclean presented to the Group. The Report stated that the Board continued to meet regularly and had met with Erik Ostgaard, the new Chairman of DML at its meeting on 25 February 2022. The most recent meeting had been held on 27 May and with contributions from regular attendees, Transport Scotland, CMAL and CalMac.</p> <p>The following updates were provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence on the delivery of the 801/802 based on information provided by Transport Scotland. Further reassurance had been sought on the budget and the importance of speeding up new tonnage. The Board had discussion around resilience and using relief vessels to do extra runs to free up daytime space and it was recognised that there was a budget to be found around extra crewing. • The Board had a presentation and discussion around the ICP and a working Group had been set up. The fares element was a concern and it was noted that a starting point should be the refreshment of community needs assessment. There should also be a chance to look again at connectivity and the Board continued to campaign for equality on under 22 travel between bus travel and ferry travel. • CMAL had given the Board a comprehensive update on new builds and infrastructure improvements. The Board had requested increasing the existing order for the two Islay vessels to four to deal with reliability issues. Reassurances had been given that the search for second hand tonnage was an ongoing priority. It was noted that the Loch Frisa had been added to the fleet and the work of the Small Vessel Replacement Plan was also noted. • The Board had met with the Minister for Transport, Jenny Gilruth 2 who had expressed a willingness to work with the Board and Island Communities. There had been discussion around accelerating the new tonnage and delivering a better more inventive resilience planning. Direct involvement in recent outage discussions and the recent visits to many of our islands had been welcomed and it was hoped that the Minister would join the September Board meeting. • Robbie Drummond had updated the Board on resilience issues and the Board had raised questions in relation to working hours restrictions, cost of additional crews and how to better utilise fleet in times of outage. Age and reliability of the fleet were core issues but the Board urged flexibility and testing of new ideas/ways of working. • In regard to the proposed changes to CalMac Terms and Conditions, the Board were of the opinion that charging for no shows was the wrong approach at this time as many islanders were suffering socially and economically through failures in ferry services. It was felt that a more targeted and refined approach was necessary and it was hoped that the new ticketing system would help with deck space utilisation and persistent offenders. • Project Neptune was due and it was hoped to see a more formal place in the decision making process for island communities and clearer lines or responsibility. • The Socio Economic Report was due to be published by the end of June and should inform ICP and the make case for a fit for purpose ferry system which would drive other policies, including the NET Zero agenda. The Board had contributed to NSet and taken part in discussions with the Cabinet Secretary with a follow on meeting planned in the future. <p>It was agreed to note the Ferries Community Board Update.</p>

13	Any other Business	<p>Gail Robertson highlighted concerns in regard to communications during times of disruption which she had raised with Finlay Macrae and Diane Burke, CalMac. She detailed recent instances of late notices, one related to technical issues with a text received at 3.55pm for a departure at 4.15pm. She would continue to raise this and wished it noted by the Group</p> <p>Finlay Macrae noted the concerns and agreed that CalMac would continue to work on the timing of disruption notifications.</p>
14	Confirm Pre-agreed Date of Next Meeting	<p>It was agreed that the format of future meetings would be hybrid for the summer and online for the winter. The next meeting of the Hebrides Ferry Stakeholder Group would take place at 10.00am on Thursday 1 December 2022</p> <p><i>A reminder that the committee cycle has changed and if you wish to go with this date it would have to be the afternoon. Alternative options are Friday 2 December or Thurs 8 December. Please contact Derek to confirm</i></p>