

# Outer Hebrides STAG Appraisal

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Barra & Vatersay Public Exhibition

17<sup>th</sup> May 2018, 16:00-20:00

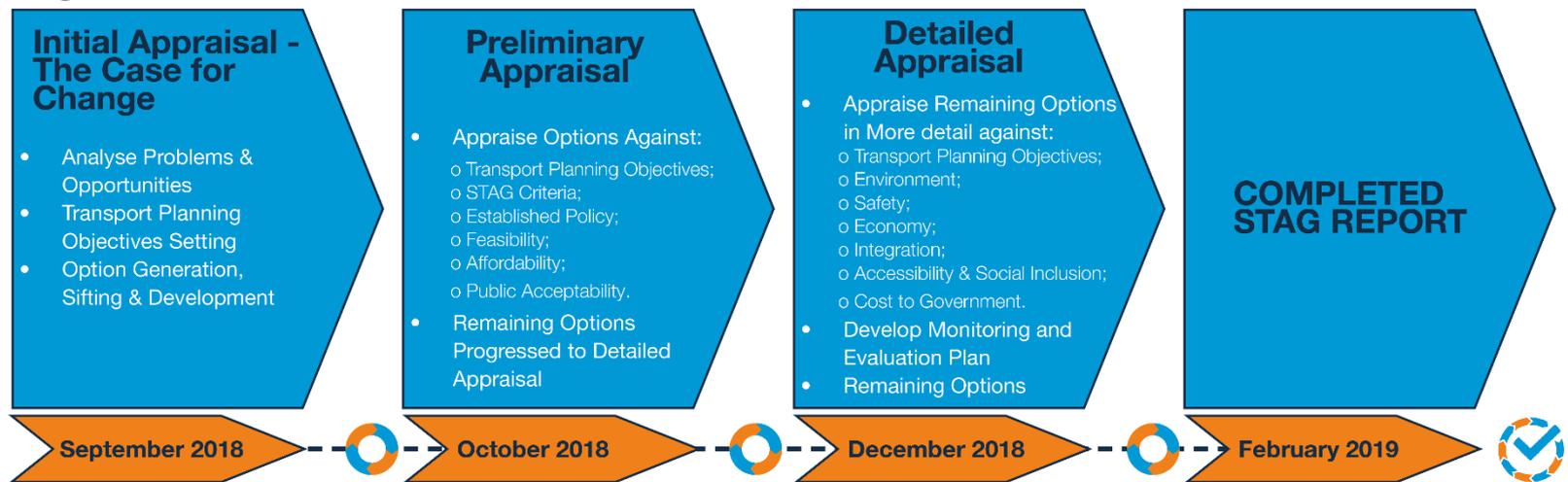
Castlebay Community Hall, Barra

## What is the study about?

- A transport appraisal of the long-term options for the ferry routes to, from and within the Outer Hebrides, including the Sounds, was a commitment made in the Vessel Replacement & Deployment Plan (VRDP) annual report for 2015
- Peter Brett Associates LLP has been commissioned by Transport Scotland to carry out this appraisal. The study is being informed and guided by a Reference Group, which is being led by Transport Scotland and includes Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, HITRANS, CMAL and CalMac Ferries Ltd
- The appraisal will identify and appraise options for the long-term (i.e. for the next 30 years)

# Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG)

- The appraisal is being undertaken using a Transport Scotland process referred to as 'STAG', the approved guidance for the appraisal of potential transport projects
- The principle of STAG is that it is **objective-led rather than solution-led**, ensuring that the option(s) ultimately taken forward address the identified transport problems and are the most appropriate when judged against a range of criteria



- The study is currently at the **Initial Appraisal** stage, which will consider problems & opportunities with the current and potential future service

# How and when are we engaging with communities?

- **Stage:** Initial Appraisal
- **Purpose:** To collect views on current and future problems and opportunities associated with the current service(s)
- **What engagement will take place?**
  - Public Exhibitions and comments form (May 2018)
  - Resident household survey (May – July 2018)
  - On-ferry surveys on all routes (July – August 2018)
  - Stakeholder consultation (April – June 2018)
  
- **Stage:** Preliminary Appraisal
- **Purpose:** To seek initial community and stakeholder feedback on the identified problems & issues and the emerging options
- **What engagement will take place?**
  - High level web-based presentation of material together with online questionnaire (paper copies can be provided for those without internet access) – autumn 2018
  
- **Stage:** Detailed Appraisal
- **Purpose:** To seek further community and stakeholder feedback on the emerging findings from the appraisal
- **What engagement will take place?**
  - Public Exhibitions and exit questionnaire (early 2019)
  - Stakeholder consultation (early 2019)

# What are we presenting today?

- For your **local** route (**Castlebay-Oban**), the following boards set out the:
  - vessels and ports
  - level of connectivity provided by the service
  - punctuality and reliability 'story' of the route
  - carryings & available capacity 'story' of the route
  - *Profiles of all other routes operating to, from and within the Outer Hebrides are provided in booklet form on the tables around the room should you wish to browse these.*
- **Please browse the information for the routes relevant to you. When you are finished, please:**
  - **Take the time to give your thoughts to a member of the team if you wish**
  - **Fill out and hand back the comments form before leaving**
  - **All of the material presented is available on the Comhairle and HITRANS websites**

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# Castlebay - Oban Vessels & Ports

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# Primary Vessel

## MV *Isle of Lewis*

### Key Characteristics

- **Entered service:** 1995
- **Capacity:**
  - Approx. 101 cars
  - Can be varied between 132, 680 or 970 passengers
- **Speed:** 18.0kts
- **Overnight berth:** Castlebay
- **Refit Cover:** MV *Isle of Arran*
- **Other Points of Note:**
  - MV *Isle of Lewis* can only regularly operate the Castlebay – Oban and Stornoway – Ullapool routes due to her draught
  - She is also closed deck which means that she cannot carry certain categories of dangerous goods whilst in passenger operation



# Ports

- Castlebay
  - Castlebay is generally meeting the current needs of the service
- Oban
  - The current berthing arrangements at Oban meet the operational needs of the fleet at present.

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# Castlebay - Oban Connectivity

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# Barra & Vatersay – Recent Service Changes

- Until the commencement of the summer 2016 timetable, Barra was predominantly served by the triangular Oban – Castlebay / Lochboisdale route
  - This service did not offer a daily connection to Oban and on occasions operated via Lochboisdale, extending journey times
  - In its final years, the triangular route was predominantly operated by the MV *Clansman*, with the MV *Lord of the Isles* fulfilling part of the service
  - The reliability record of the Oban – Castlebay / Lochboisdale route was relatively poor
- The summer 2016 timetable introduced a daily (5 days in 7 in winter) service between Castlebay – Oban using the MV *Isle of Lewis*, which had been cascaded from the Stornoway – Ullapool route
- The MV *Lord of the Isles* also became available at the same time, allowing the permanent operation of the Mallaig – Lochboisdale route.
  - The triangular Oban – Castlebay / Lochboisdale route was therefore discontinued at this point

# Timetable – Key Points

- Summer Timetable
  - The Castlebay – Oban timetable is ‘clockface’, in that departure & arrival times are entirely consistent across the week
  - There is an additional Wednesday service to / from Oban via Coll & Tiree
  - This service is reasonably well integrated with public transport in that it is possible to connect to / from the Glasgow Queen Street train and bus services to both Glasgow and Inverness. There is however a reasonable length of layover for the majority of connections (particularly in terms of bus connections to Glasgow)
- Winter Timetable
  - The winter timetable is also broadly clockface, although there is no service on a Thursday or Saturday
  - Journey times are extended during refit as the substitute vessel cannot maintain the speed of the MV *Isle of Lewis*
- The relatively short turnaround in Oban does not permit a meaningful day return trip to the Scottish mainland in summer or winter. However, it seems unlikely there would be any desire for this given the length of the crossing



Oban Castlebay

BUS From Inverness From Glasgow  
TRAIN From Glasgow

# Ferry Departures From Oban Summer

30<sup>th</sup> March 2018 to 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018

Oban Departures



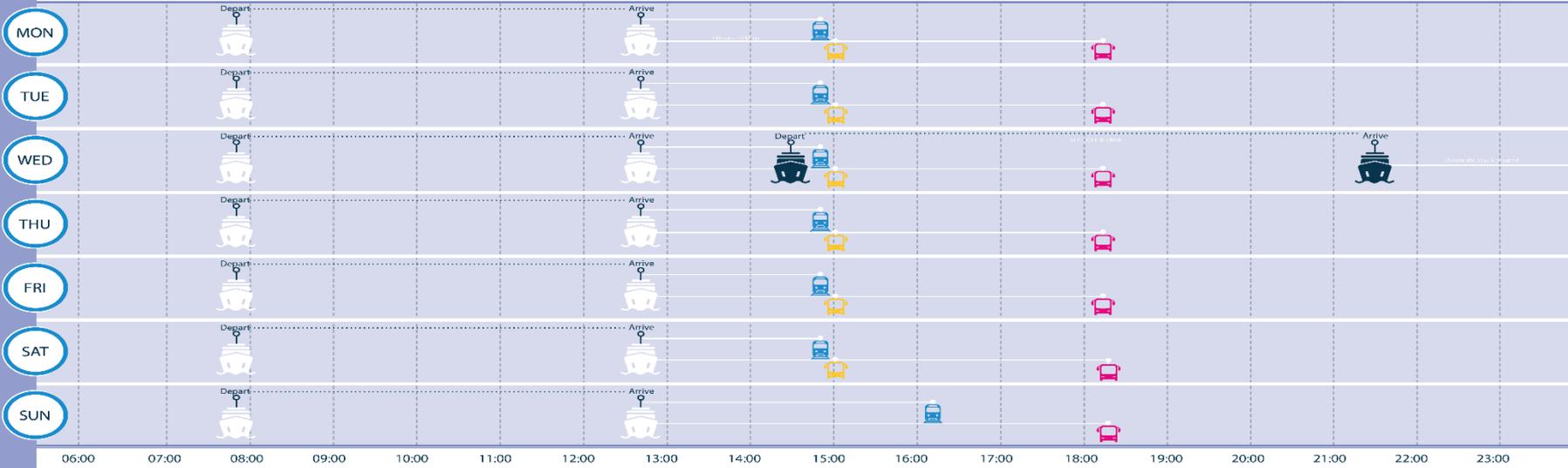
Castlebay Oban

BUS To Inverness To Glasgow  
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# Ferry Departures From Castlebay Summer

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Castlebay Departures





Oban Castlebay

BUS From Inverness From Glasgow TRAIN From Glasgow

### Ferry Departures From Oban Winter

10<sup>th</sup> November 2017 - 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and 8<sup>th</sup> February - 29<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Oban Departures



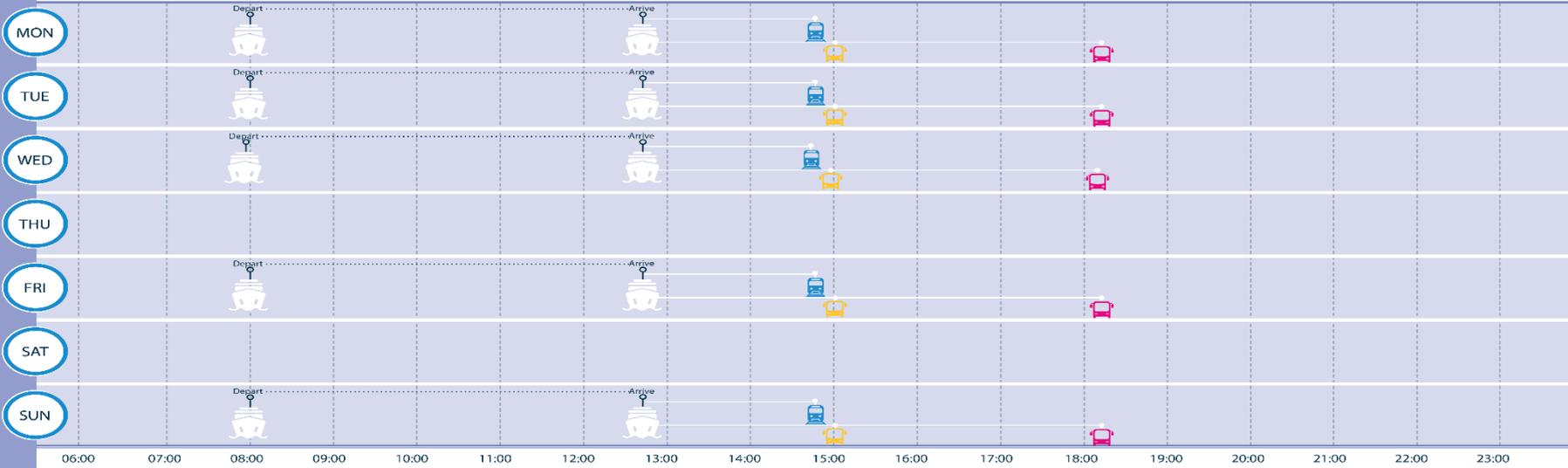
Castlebay Oban

BUS To Inverness To Glasgow TRAIN To Glasgow

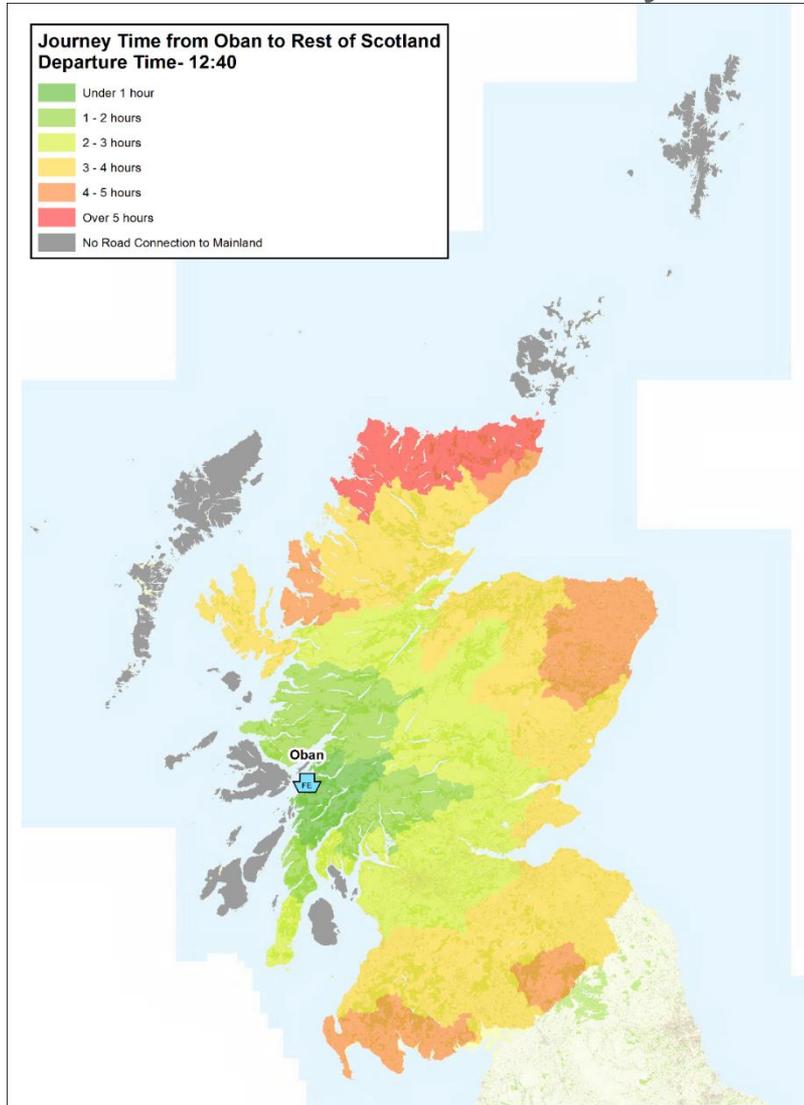
### Ferry Departures From Castlebay Winter

10<sup>th</sup> November 2017 - 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and 8<sup>th</sup> February - 29<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Castlebay Departures



# Car-Based Accessibility to Mainland Scotland



- The map shows typical travel times from Oban to all other areas of Scotland based on one hour time bands.
  - The map is based on observed traffic speeds collected from GPS devices
  - The graphic is based on the 12:40 ferry arrival from Castlebay
- Road-based journey times from Oban to Glasgow, Inverness and west Edinburgh are in the 2-3 hour banding

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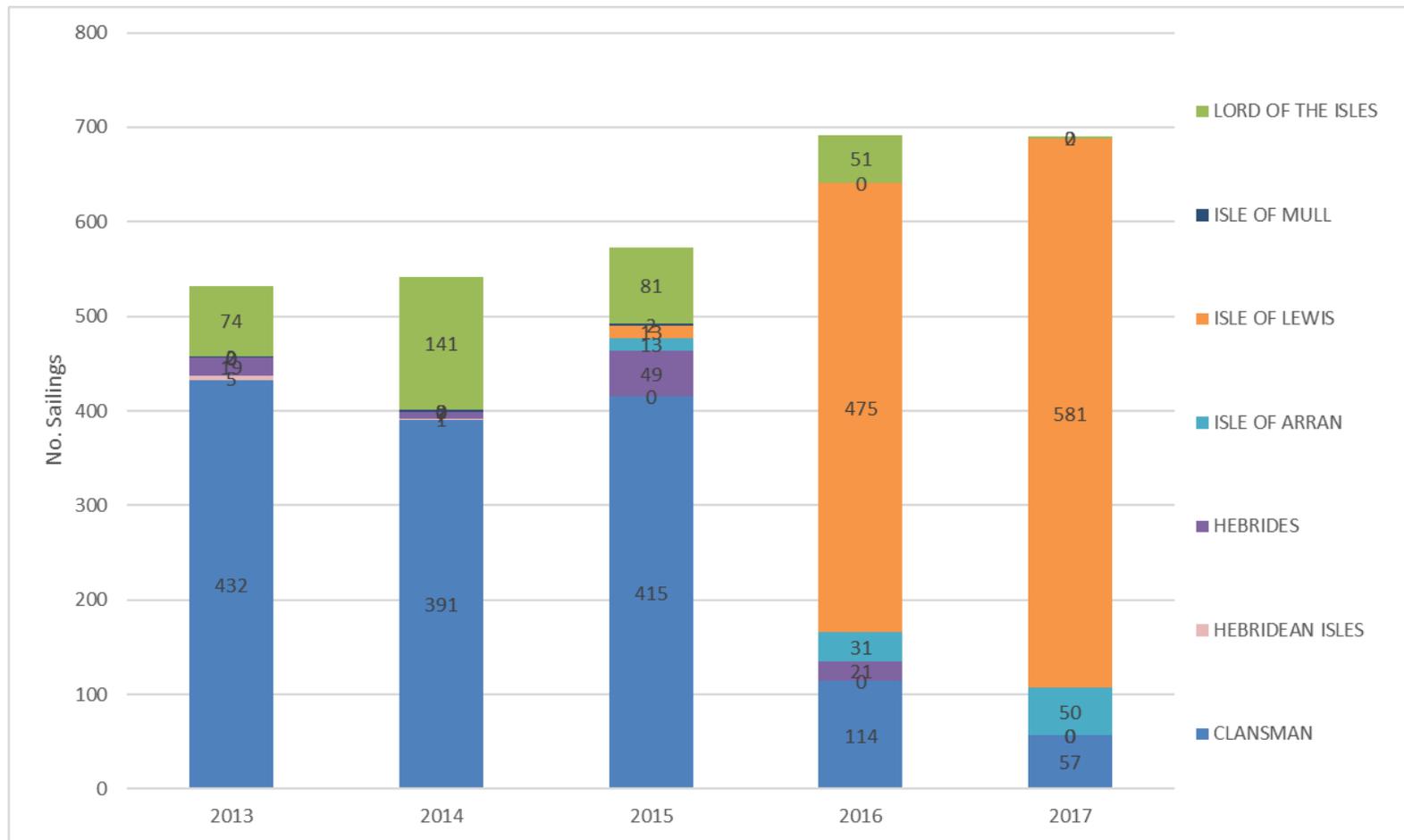
# Oban – Castlebay Punctuality & Reliability

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## Punctuality & Reliability

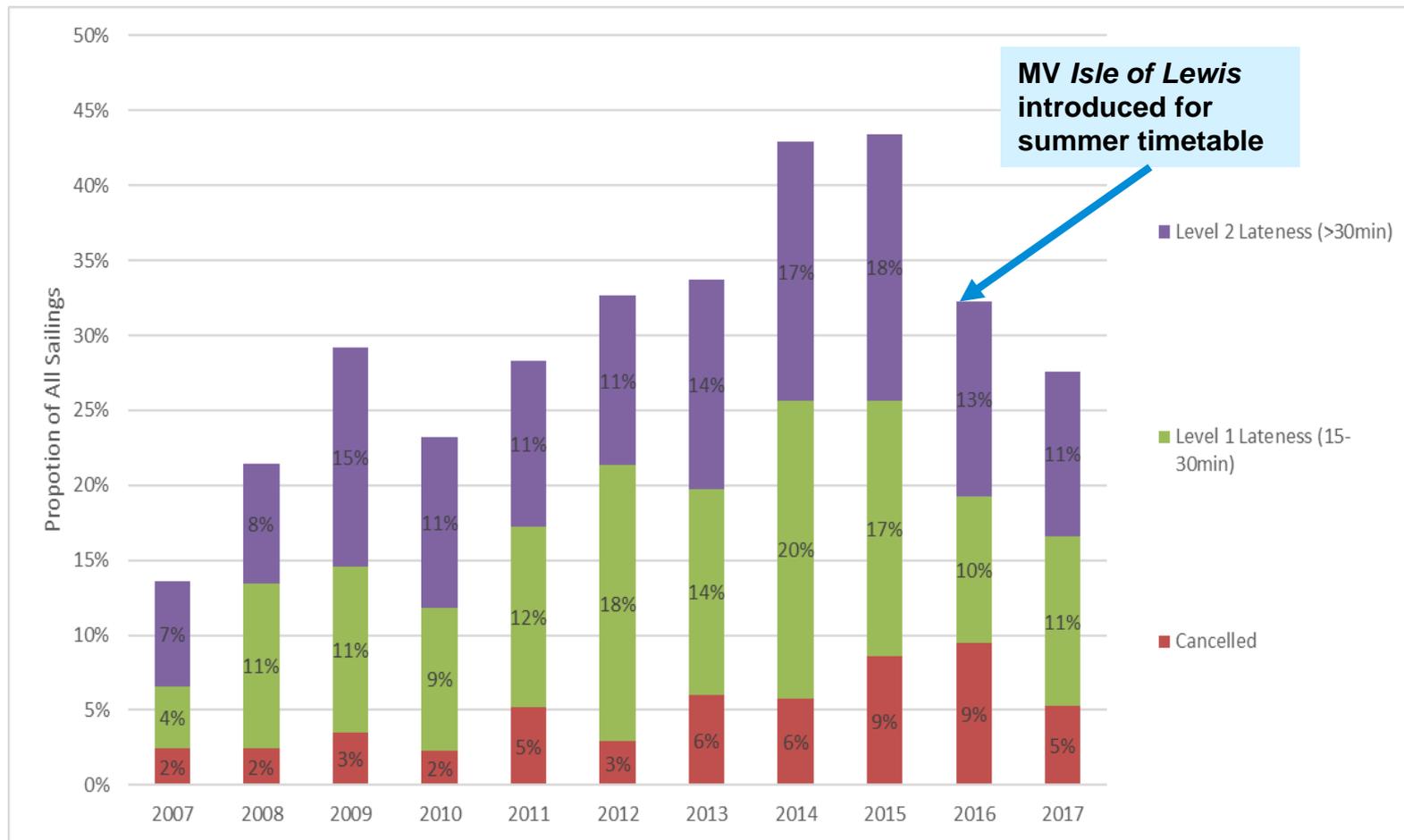
- Punctuality & Reliability are often cited as one of the most important characteristics of any public transport service, something which is particularly true of ferry services.
- CalMac has kindly provided performance data for **every sailing** undertaken on the Castlebay - Oban route between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 – the following boards therefore allow us to tell **the punctuality & reliability story of the route.**
- The boards cover the operation of Castlebay-Oban sailings on the former triangular route **and** the current direct route.

# How many sailings are made by each vessel each year?



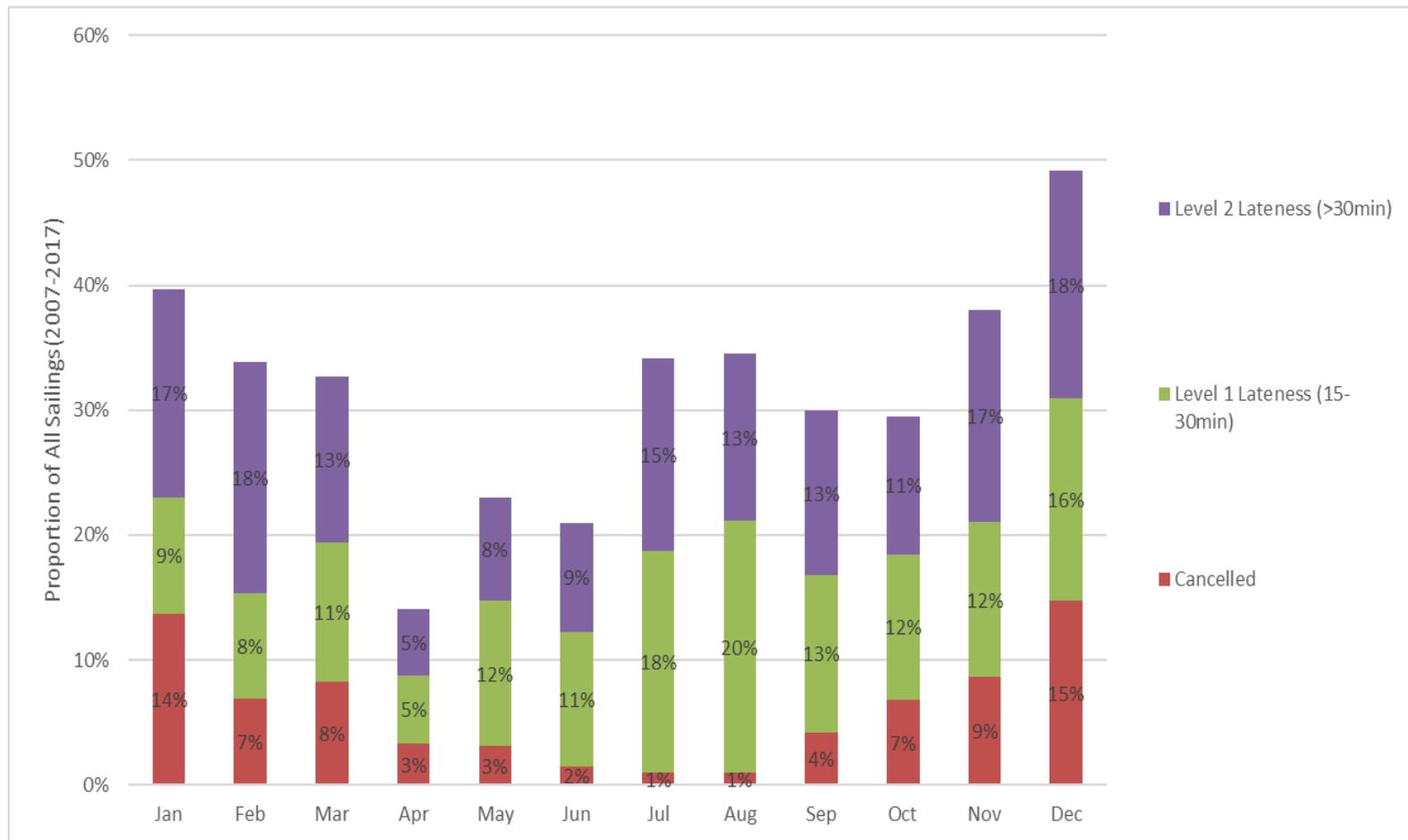
- Since 2016, the MV *Isle of Lewis* has operated all direct Castlebay - Oban services, except when she is in refit or covering the refit of the MV *Loch Seaforth* on the Stornoway – Ullapool route
- The MV *Clansman* operates the Oban-Castlebay route via Coll & Tiree on a summer Wednesday
- The overall number sailings undertaken increased in 2016 when the daily service was introduced

# How has punctuality & reliability changed over time?



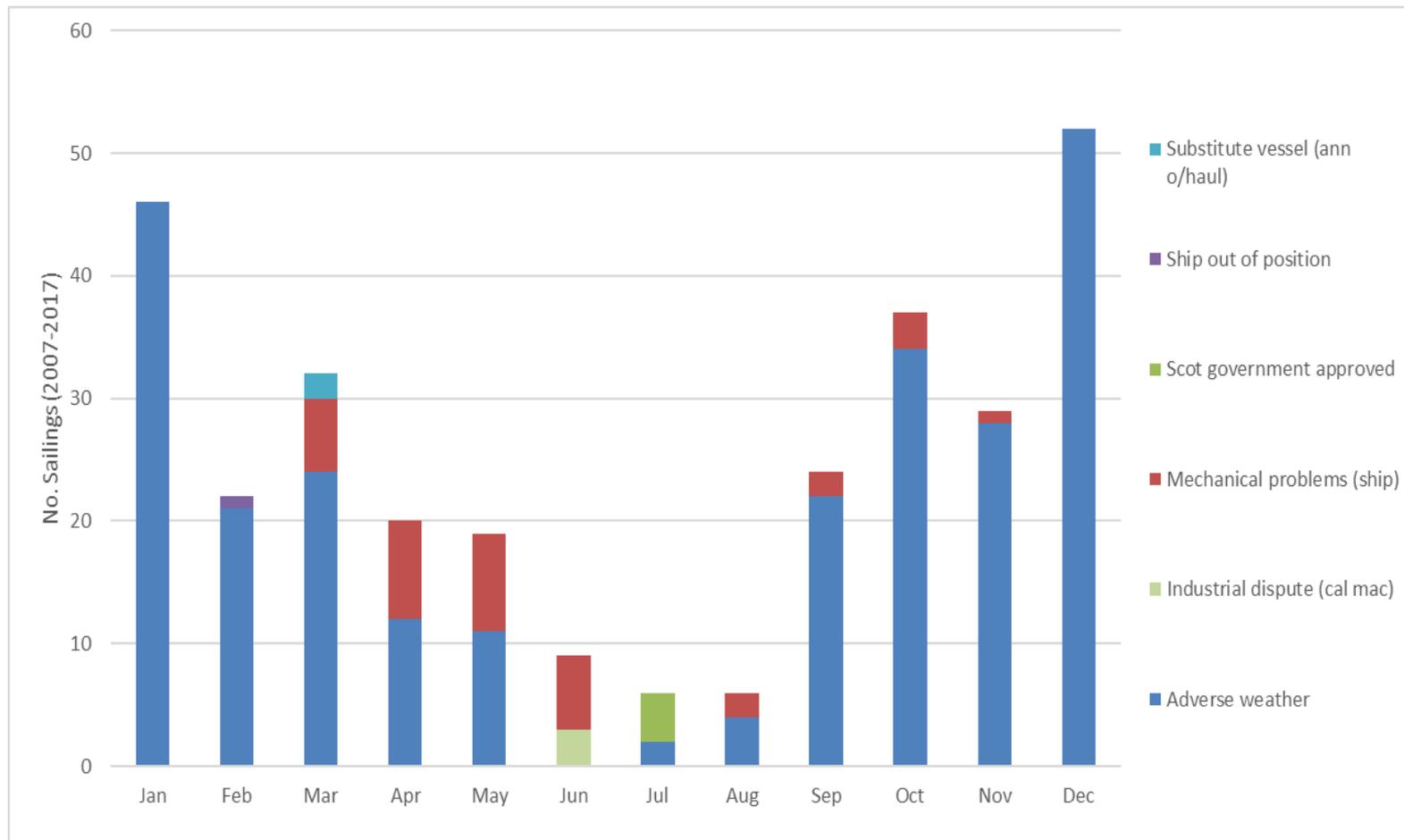
- The punctuality & reliability of the triangular route was steadily worsening between 2010 and 2015
- The rate of cancellation & delay has reduced since the MV *Isle of Lewis* was introduced

# How does reliability & punctuality vary across the year?



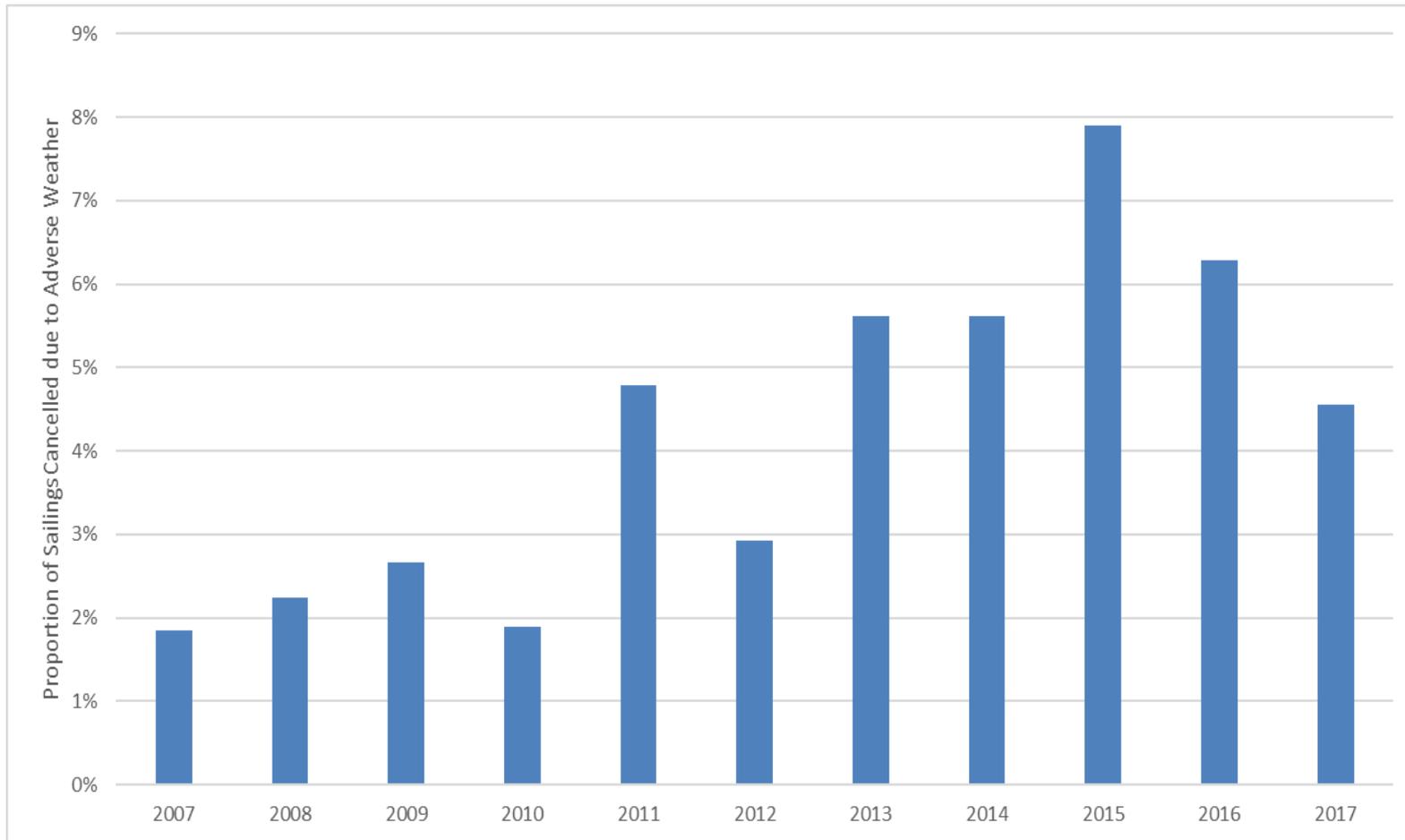
- As would be expected, cancellations are most frequent in deep winter (December and January) – the Castlebay-Oban route is exposed to prevailing south-westerly winds
- Punctuality issues are prominent in July & August compared to other summer months - may have been addressed to some degree by the introduction of the daily sailing and the MV *Isle of Lewis*

# Why are sailings cancelled?



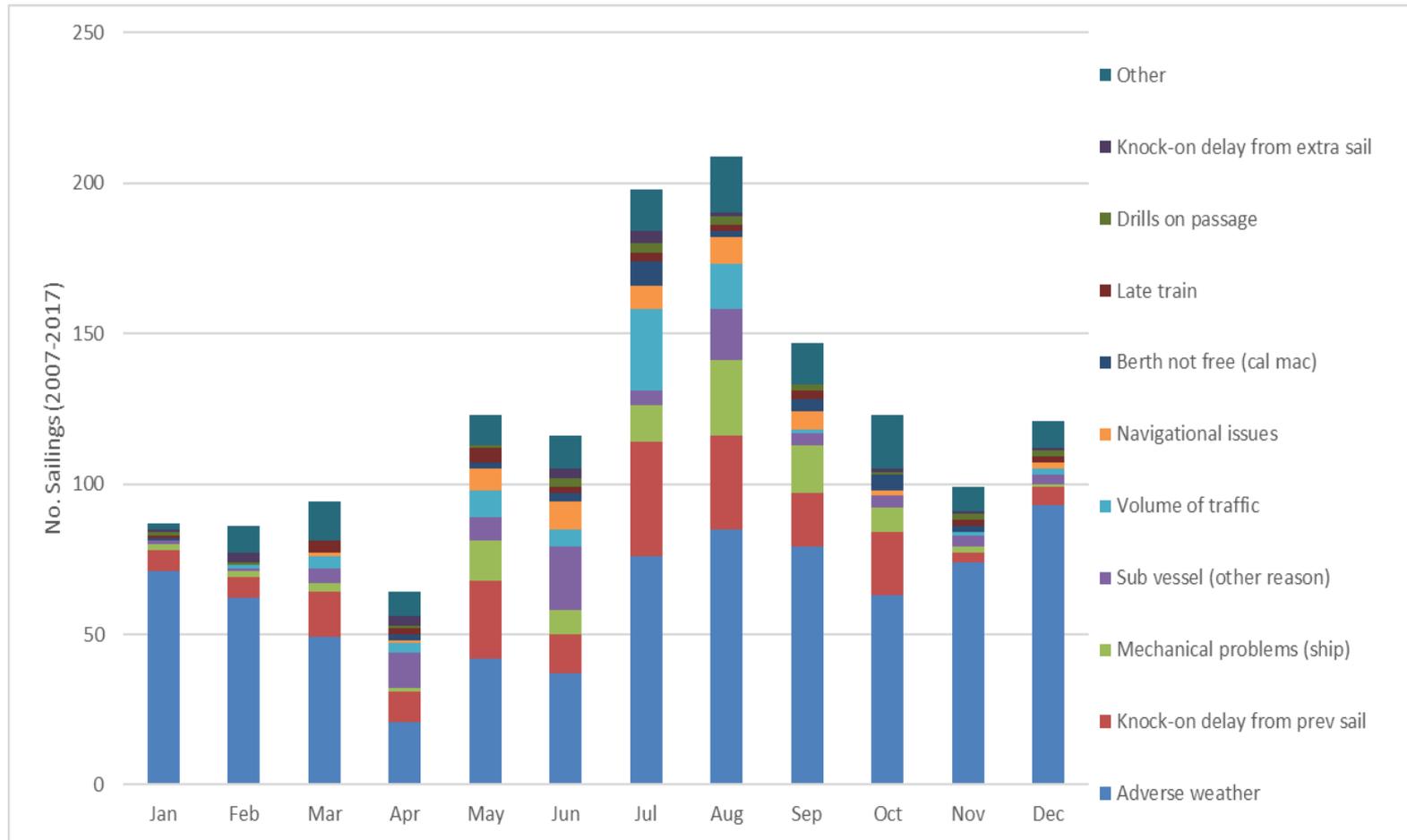
- Vast majority of cancellations on this route are weather related
- The second most common cause of cancellation is mechanical problems

# Is the weather getting worse?



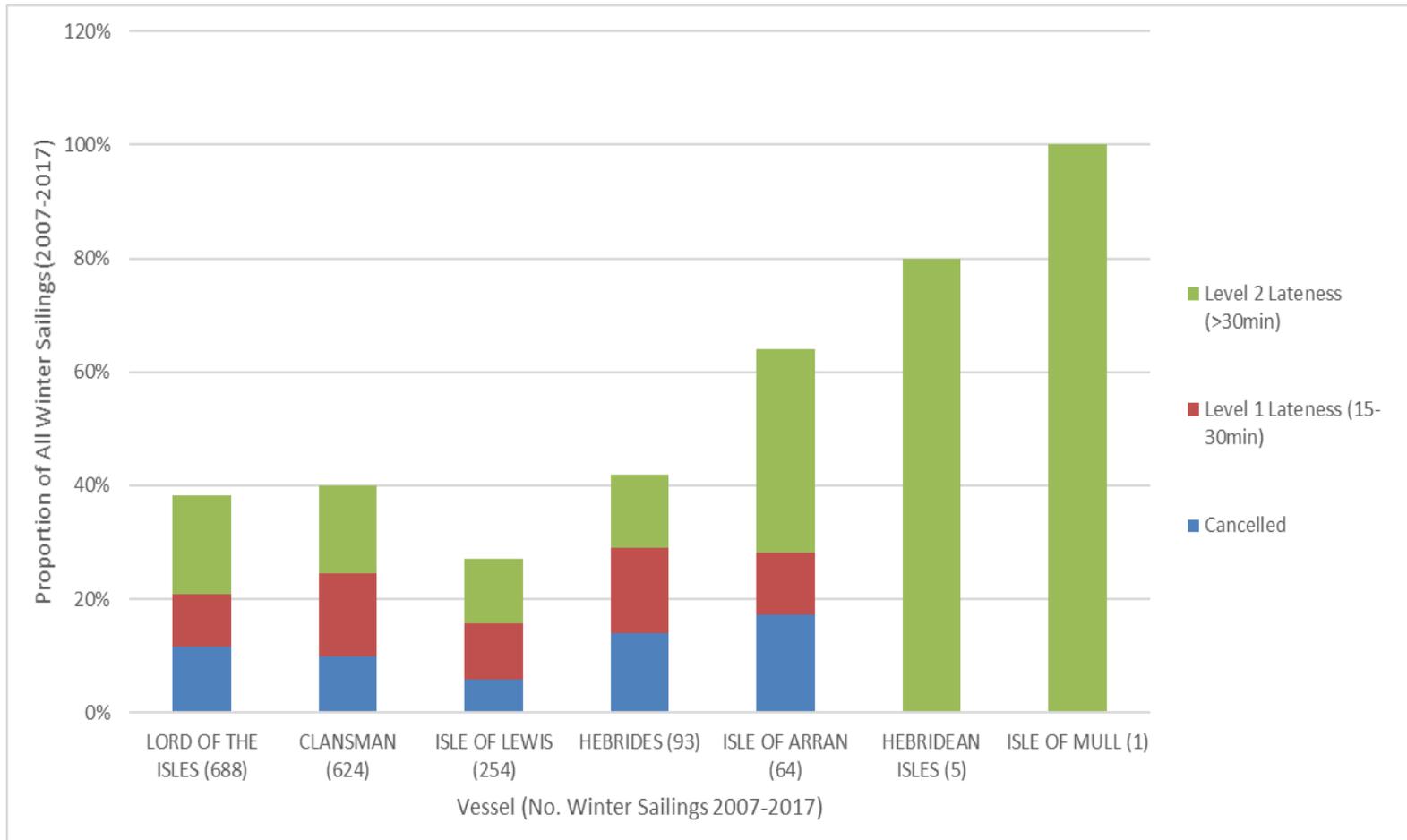
- 2015 and 2016 were 'bad weather' years across the Outer Hebrides
- 2017 – fewest weather related cancellations in five years, possibly in part due to the introduction of the MV *Isle of Lewis*

# Why are sailings delayed?



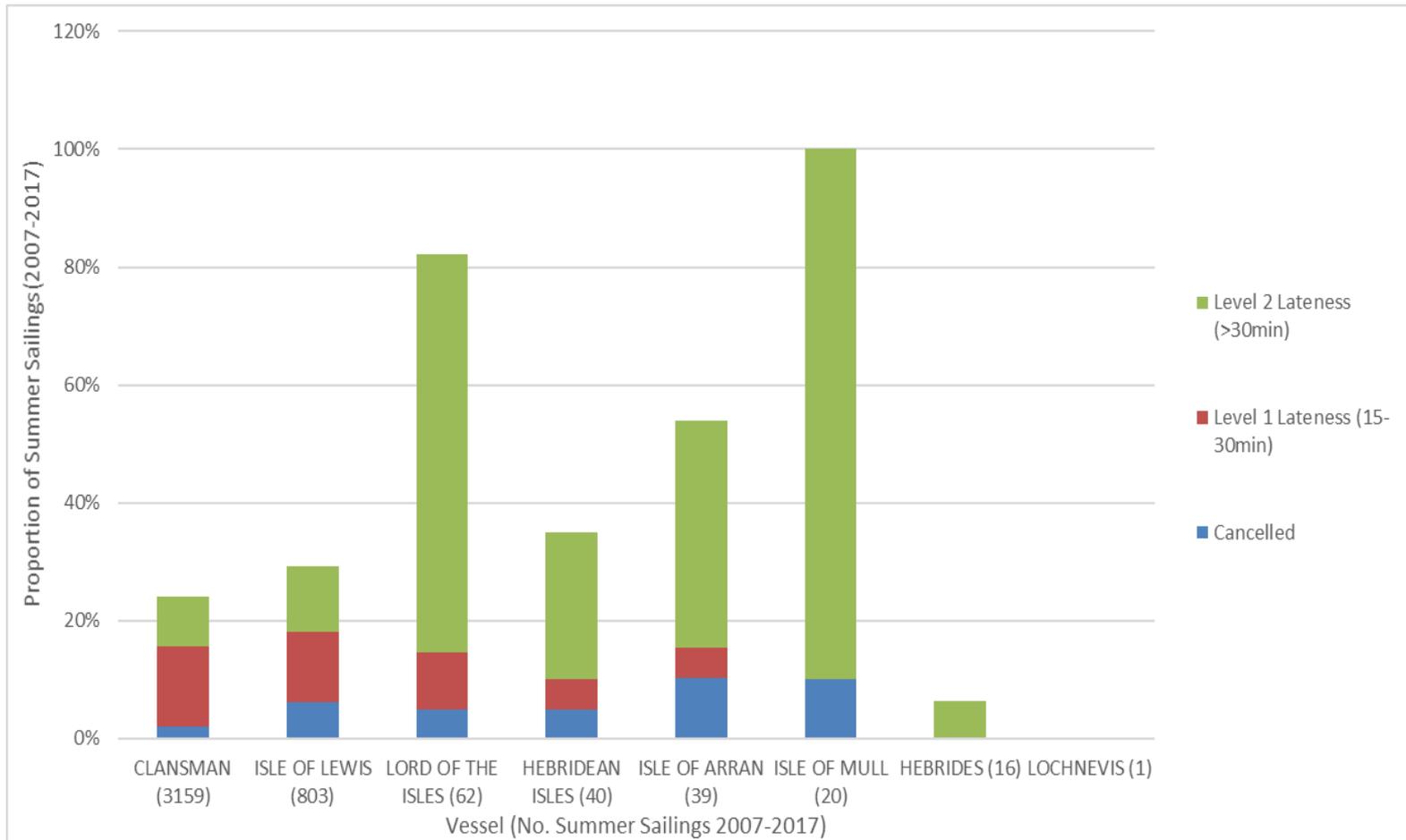
- Adverse weather & knock-on delays from previous sailings are the most common causes of delay across the year – this may be because the sailing is re-scheduled to take account of a weather window rather than being cancelled altogether
- Volume of traffic has also been a cause of delay in July and August

# Does the vessel used affect **winter** reliability & punctuality?



- MV *Isle of Lewis* has established a superior record to the MV *Clansman* and MV *Lord of the Isles* on this route in winter
- The current refit vessel, MV *Isle of Arran* performs less well – over 60% of the 64 winter sailings undertaken by her between 2007-17 were either cancelled or delayed

# Does the vessel used affect **summer** reliability & punctuality?



- MV *Isle of Lewis* has generally offered a slightly lower level of summer reliability and punctuality than MV *Clansman*, though still better than other vessels on the route

# Punctuality & Reliability

## Summary

- The long and exposed stretch of water between Castlebay and the Sound of Mull means that the route is vulnerable to prevailing south-westerly winds, which can impact on performance
- The introduction of the MV *Isle of Lewis* has improved overall reliability & punctuality
- The primary refit cover vessel (MV *Isle of Arran*), has posted a much poorer punctuality and reliability record

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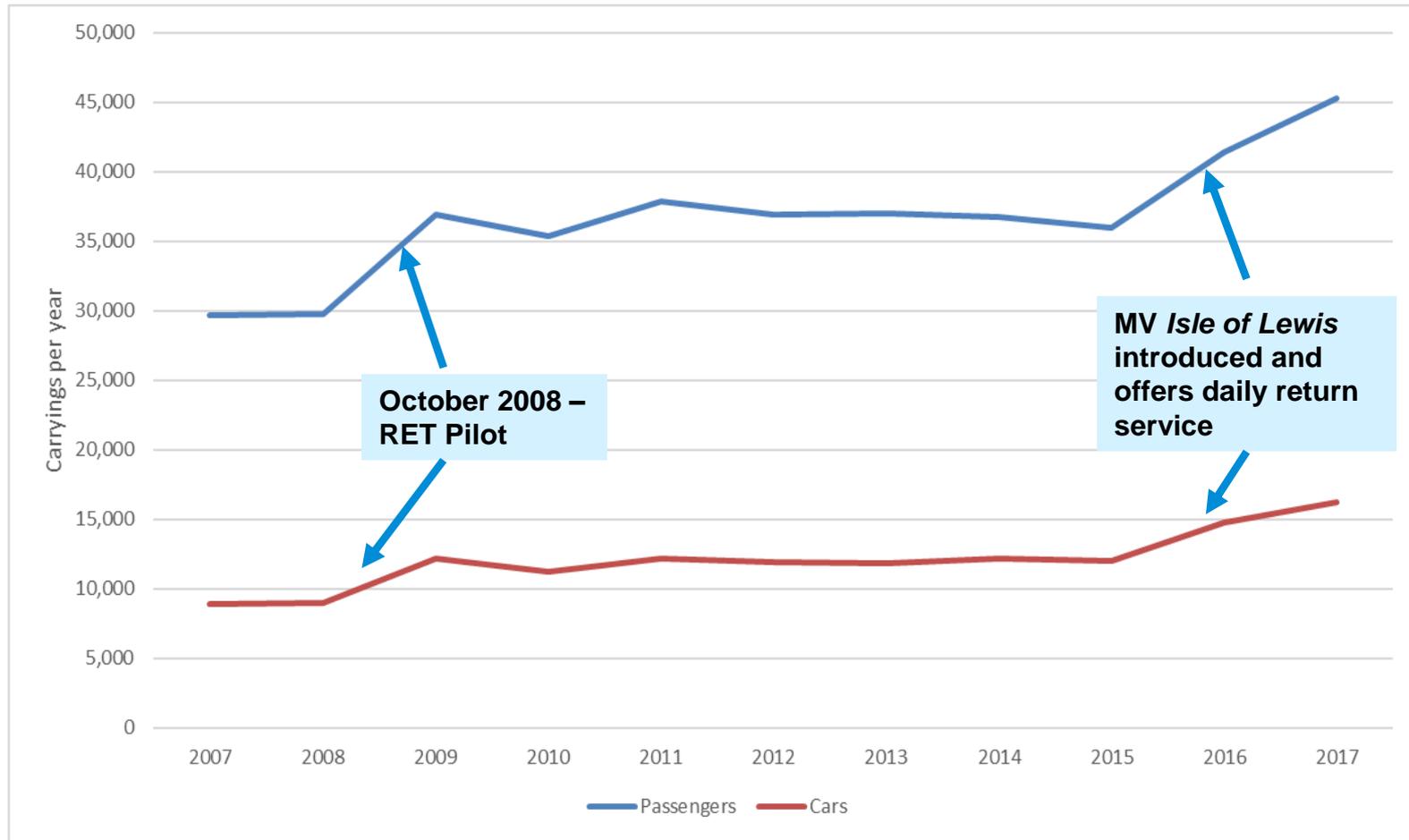
# Castlebay – Oban Carryings & Available Capacity

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## Carryings & Available Capacity

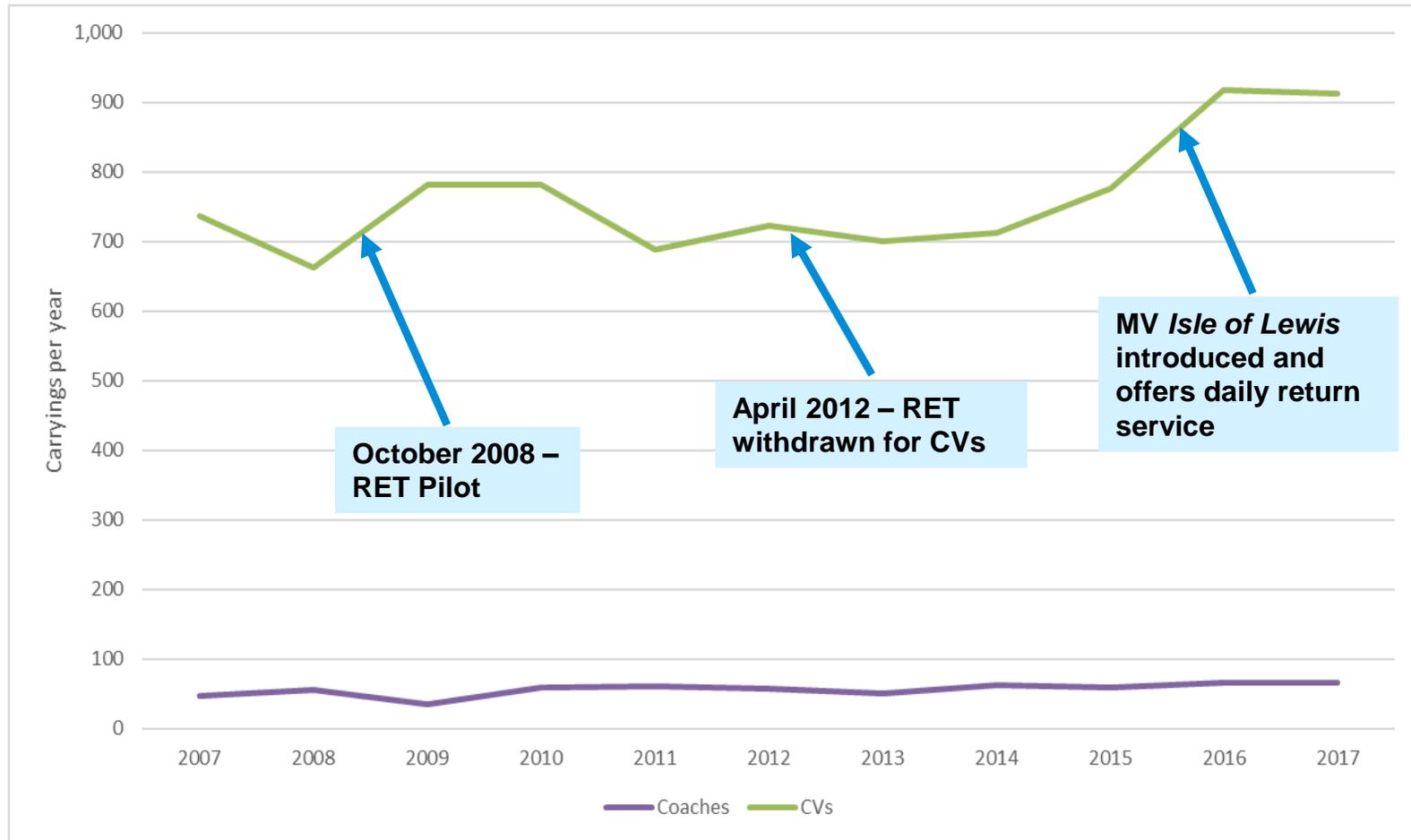
- The availability of capacity on the ferry on the days and at the times people wish to travel is of critical importance to the islands
  - This is particularly the case in terms of vehicle deck availability (the capacity to carry passengers is not generally an issue)
- CalMac has kindly provided sailing-by-sailing carryings data for **every sailing** undertaken on the Castlebay-Oban route between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 – the following boards therefore allow us to tell **the carryings & available capacity story of the route**
  - The boards cover the operation of Castlebay-Oban sailings on the former triangular route **and** the current direct route

# How have **passenger & vehicle** carryings changed over time?



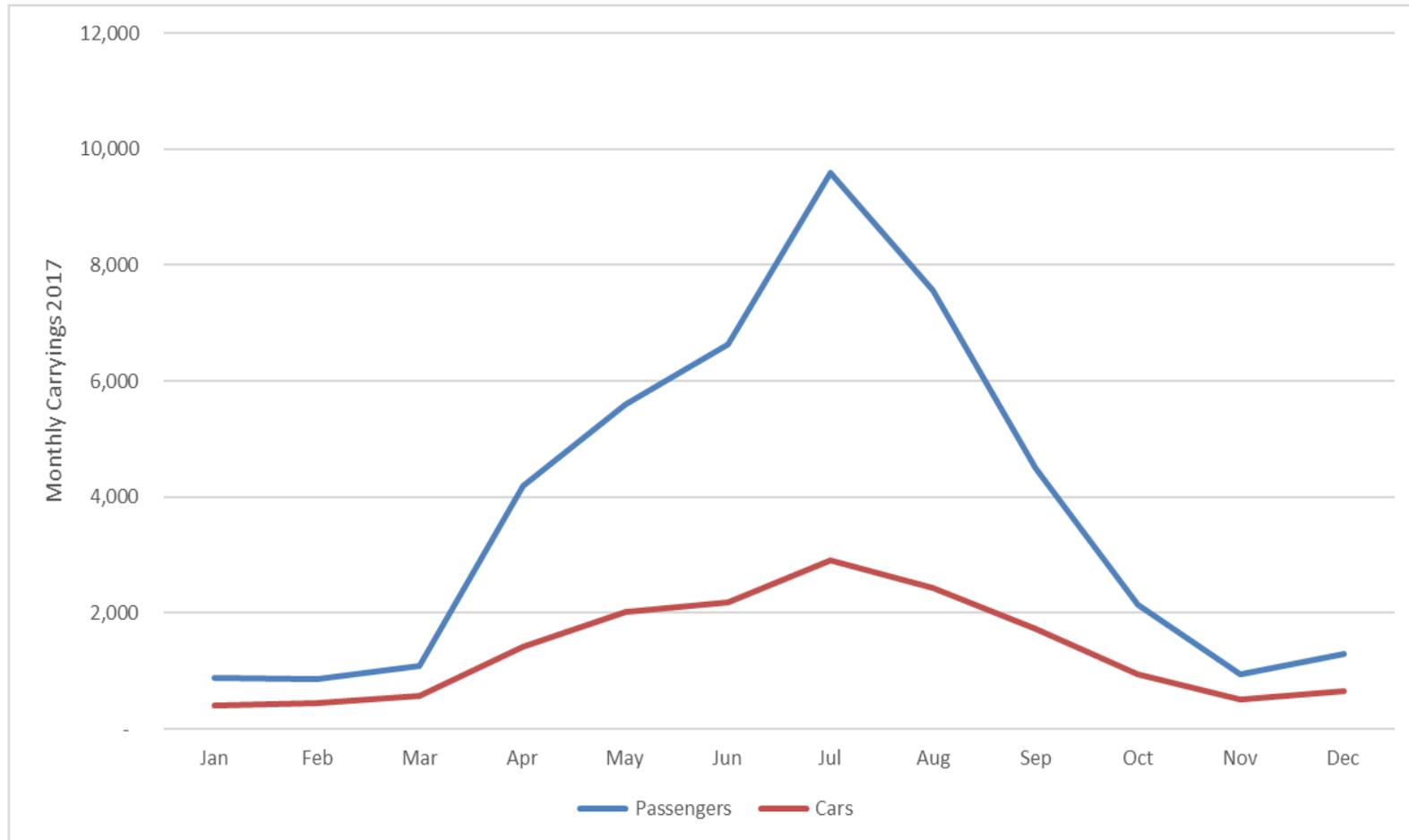
- Step change in carryings when RET was introduced – percentage growth in cars (35%) exceeded that of passengers (24%), which is largely due to previous foot passengers now taking a car
- Summer 2016 - introduction of MV *Isle of Lewis* and daily return sailing leads to sharp growth in carryings

# How have **coach & commercial vehicle** carryings changed over time?



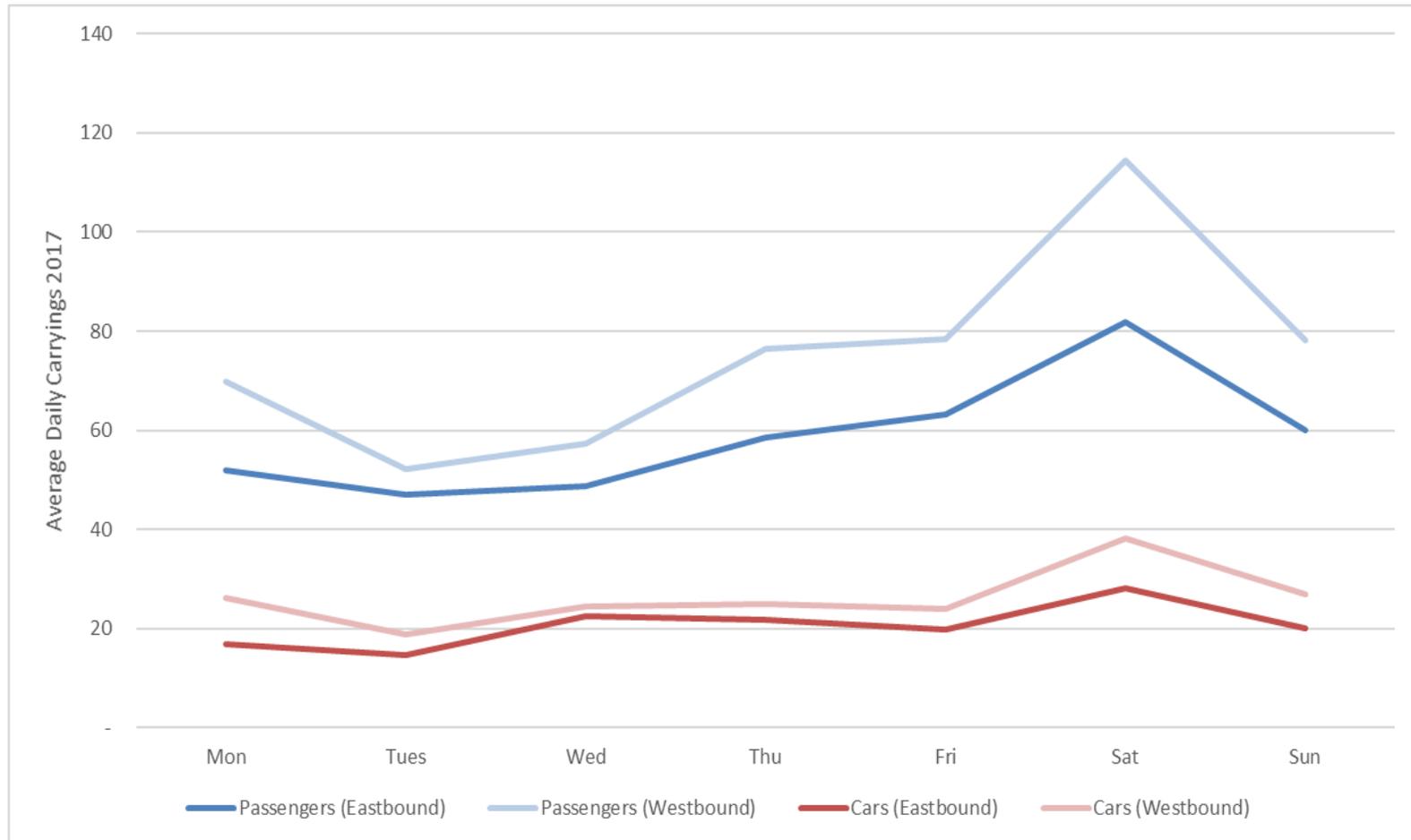
- CVs originally included in the RET pilot. There was an initial increase in CV carryings, but they declined to around pre-RET levels before RET for CVs was withdrawn
- Significant growth in CV carryings when the *MV Isle of Lewis* was introduced and daily return service commenced

# How do passenger & car carryings vary across the year?



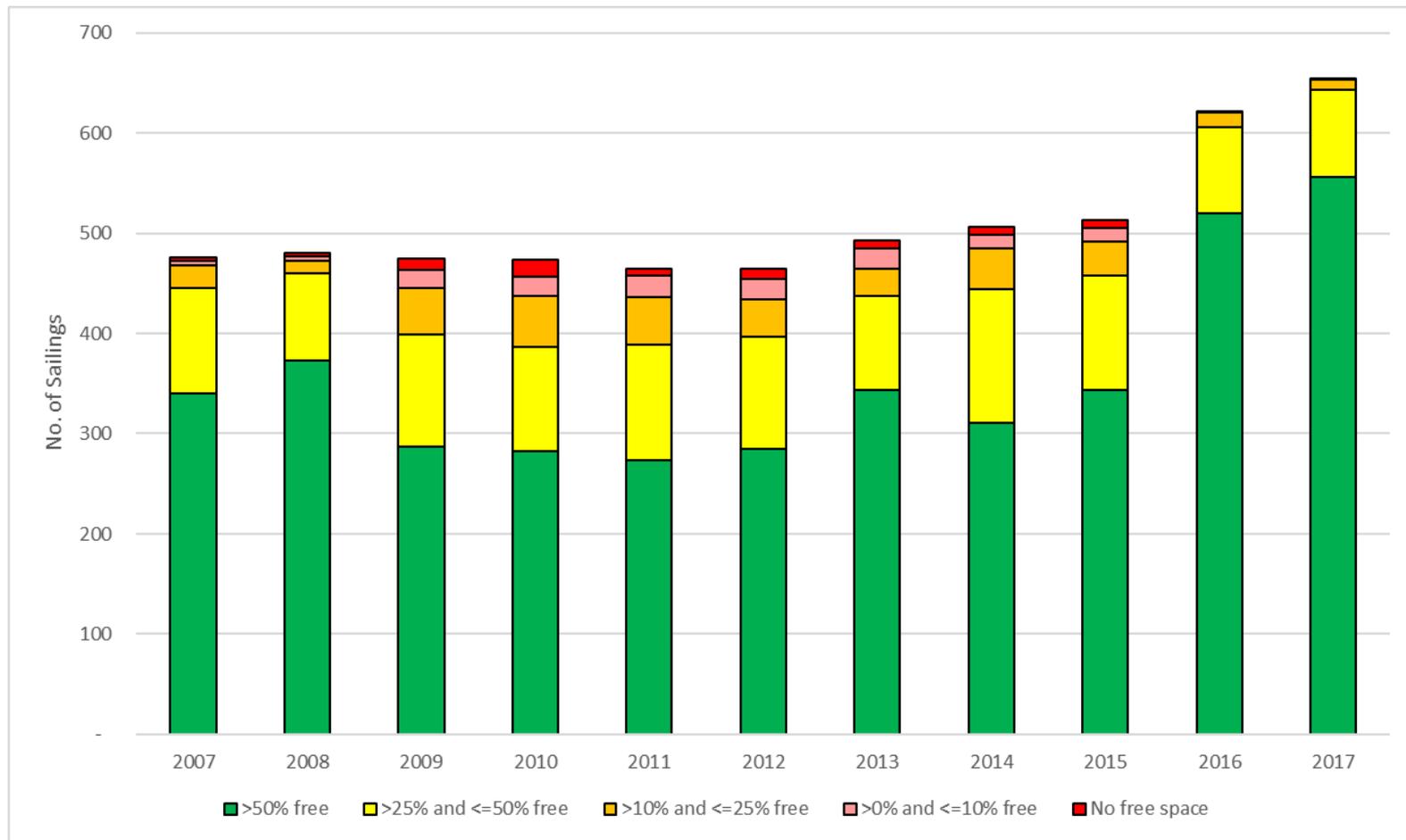
- July is by some distance the peak month on the route, although June & August are also busy
- Ferry demand, particularly on this route, displays a much bigger summer peak than general road traffic in the Highlands & Islands
- Whilst not shown on the graph, it should be noted that CV carryings are fairly flat across the year

# How do **passenger & car** carryings vary by day of the week?



- Saturday is the peak day for passenger and vehicle movements in both directions
- The **westbound** (i.e. to Barra) peak is much more pronounced on a Saturday

# How often has the vehicle deck been full or nearly full?



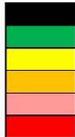
- Car deck availability has generally not been an issue on this route, outwith certain peak sailings
- The introduction of the MV *Isle of Lewis* and a daily return service from summer 2016 led to an increase in both the number of sailings and the available capacity on each sailing

# How much available capacity is there across the year? (Castlebay - Oban)

Oban to Castlebay Eastbound 2017

## Average Daily Free Capacity

Cancelled  
 >50% free  
 >25% and <=50% free  
 >10% and <=25% free  
 >0% and <=10% free  
 No free space



January						
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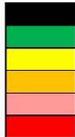
- There are no vehicle deck availability issues on the Castlebay – Oban service
  - Only one sailing in 2017 (Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September) had less than 25% of vehicle deck space available (which followed-on from a cancelled sailing the previous day)

# How much available capacity is there across the year? (Oban - Castlebay)

Oban to Castlebay Westbound 2017

## Average Daily Free Capacity

Cancelled  
 >50% free  
 >25% and <=50% free  
 >10% and <=25% free  
 >0% and <=10% free  
 No free space



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- Utilisation of the vehicle deck on the Oban – Castlebay leg was higher in 2017 than for services in the opposite direction (this suggests a strong tourist demand with potential onward island hopping)
- Nonetheless, there was available vehicle deck capacity on all days throughout the year

# Carryings & Utilisation

## Summary

- The introduction of RET in October 2008 led to a one-off step in passenger and vehicle demand in 2009. This demand was largely sustained thereafter
- The introduction of the MV *Isle of Lewis* as a dedicated vessel together with a daily return sailing in summer 2016 has led to a significant increase in passenger, car and CV carryings
- 2017 was a record year for both passenger and car carryings
- Saturday is the busiest day on the route with July being the busiest month.
- The Oban – Castlebay leg has more high utilisation sailings than Castlebay – Oban. This suggests that the route has a strong tourism demand, with potential onward island-hopping from Barra
- The availability calendars suggest that there are no pressing capacity issues on this route