

# Outer Hebrides STAG Appraisal

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South Uist & Eriskay Public  
Exhibition

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

Southend Community Hall,  
Daliburgh – South Uist

## 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 (**Lochboisdale – Mallaig / 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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# **Lochboisdale – Mallaig / Oban Vessels & Ports**

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# Primary Vessel

## *MV Lord of the Isles*

### Key Characteristics

- **Entered service:** 1989
- **Capacity:**
  - Approx. 49 vehicles
  - Can be varied between 250 or 506 passengers
- **Speed:** 15.0kts
- **Overnight berth:** Lochboisdale
- **Refit Cover:** *MV Isle of Arran* (vessel runs to Oban only during refit)
- **Other Points of Note:**
  - *MV Lord of the Isles* is the only 'Major Vessel' which can reliably access Mallaig – this creates a short and longer-term resilience issue for the route



# Ports - Lochboisdale

- There are a number of challenges associated with the port of Lochboisdale:
  - Elements of the existing ferry infrastructure are approaching life-expiry
  - There is no segregation between the ferry and other craft operating within the harbour resulting in a heightened marine risk (although a risk which is currently managed appropriately through the harbour Safety Management System)
  - The approach to the ferry berth, and in particular the vessel manoeuvring and turning area, is constrained by shallows in very close proximity. This creates a navigational safety risk which is exacerbated in unfavourable weather conditions and low tides
  - The relatively narrow & shallow approach to the berth, the lack of an escape route once an approach has been committed and the exposure to north through north-east winds all give rise to reliability issues at Lochboisdale
- Lochboisdale Development Limited commissioned a STAG Appraisal to consider future options for the redevelopment of the harbour
  - The appraisal reported in mid-2017, setting out costed options for developing new and future-proofed infrastructure in-situ or on the island of Gasay
  - The Lochboisdale Harbour STAG Appraisal will be drawn on when considering options for the harbour as part of this study



# Ports – Mallaig & Oban

- Mallaig

- The current Mallaig harbour is not well protected in strong westerly / northerly winds, has limited water depth and a challenging entrance channel. There are also limitations on the length of vessels which can operate to and from the port. In the short-term at least, this is likely to act as a constraining factor on the reliability and growth of the Mallaig – Lochboisdale route
- Mallaig Harbour Authority has published a masterplan which seeks to grow and develop the current harbour. The masterplan acknowledges that the flexibility of future ship deployment and growth in ferry services and volumes is constrained by current Ro-Ro ferry infrastructure, which cannot accommodate vessels larger than MV *Lord of the Isles*
- The key ferry related proposal in the masterplan is the construction of a new breakwater, which would accommodate a multi-user quay to enable Mallaig Harbour to exploit existing and future markets, including Ro-Ro ferries up to 105m in length
- The proposal for new ferry infrastructure is included in 'Phase 3' of the masterplan, 6-8 years after plan commencement in 2017 but has no committed funding

- Oban

- The current berthing arrangements at Oban meet the operational needs of the fleet at present

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# Lochboisdale – Mallaig / Oban Connectivity

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# South Uist & Eriskay – Recent Service Changes

- Until the commencement of the summer 2016 timetable, South Uist & Eriskay were predominantly served by the triangular Oban – Castlebay / Lochboisdale route
  - This service did not offer a daily connection to Oban and on occasions operated via Castlebay
  - 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 local community had long lobbied for the re-establishment of the route between Lochboisdale and Mallaig
  - This was reintroduced in 2013 as a three year winter only pilot, with services on a Tuesday and Saturday
  - The pilot service operated alongside the Oban – Castlebay / Lochboisdale route
  - From the commencement of the summer 2016 timetable, The MV *Lord of the Isles* became available, allowing the Lochboisdale – Mallaig route to be made a year-round permanent service, with an enhanced timetable
  - The triangular services were discontinued, although two return sailings per week are operated between Lochboisdale and Oban in winter
    - All other services operate to and from Mallaig
- The boards presented here focus predominantly on the Lochboisdale – Mallaig/Oban route but reference key information from the former triangular route where appropriate

# Timetable – Key Points

- Summer Timetable
  - Largely consistent departure times from both ends of the crossing across the week
  - This service is subject to a tidal timetable, which is operating on 14 out of 206 timetabled days in the 2018 summer timetable period
  - There is a lengthy gap between the morning arrival into Mallaig and the evening departure for Lochboisdale. This is because the MV *Lord of the Isles*, operates services on the Mallaig – Armadale route during the summer months
  - The timetable does not align particularly well with railway services to or from Mallaig (except for arrivals from Lochboisdale on a Friday to Sunday)
  - There is a connecting bus service to / from Fort William which is timed to meet arrivals and departures from Lochboisdale
- Winter Timetable
  - The winter timetable involves operation to Oban on a Monday & Friday, and Mallaig on a Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday
  - There is no service on a winter Tuesday or Thursday
  - As with the summer timetable, there is a connecting bus to / from Fort William which meets with Mallaig – Lochboisdale services. There is however no bus service connecting with the Sunday evening Mallaig – Lochboisdale sailing
  - Ferries from Oban to Lochboisdale in the winter do not align particularly well with inbound public transport, although there is a connecting bus from Glasgow for the Friday morning departure (whilst the train from Glasgow Queen Street arrives before the ferry, this is only by a matter of minutes and does not allow for a connection to be easily made)



Mallaig Lochboisdale

**BUS**  
From Fort William

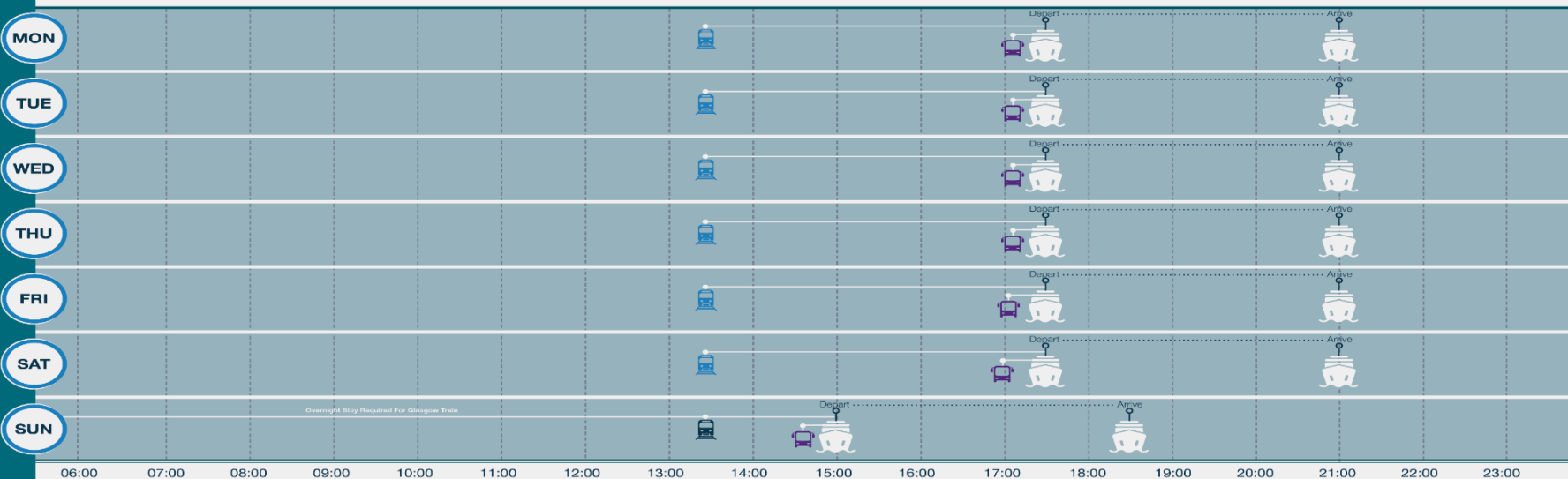
**TRAIN**  
From Glasgow  
From Fort William

\*Note - Times may vary according to tidal conditions and in some circumstances may differ from the published timetable

## Ferry Departures From Mallaig Summer

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

Mallaig Departures



Lochboisdale Mallaig

**BUS**  
To Fort William

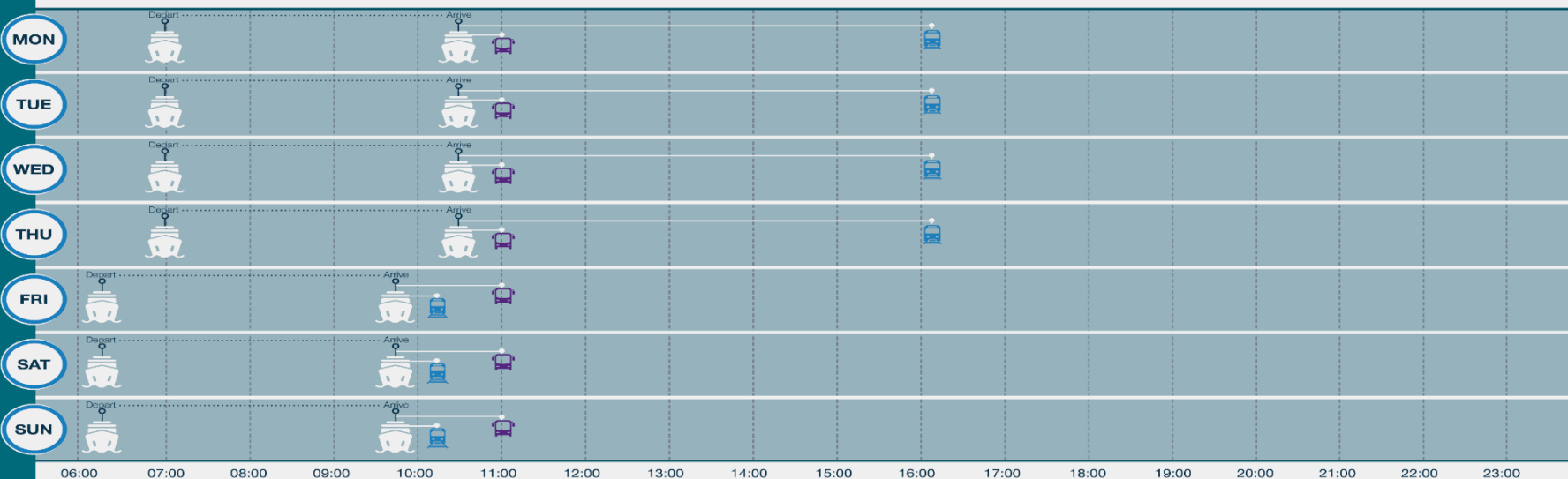
**TRAIN**  
To Glasgow

\*Note - Times may vary according to tidal conditions and in some circumstances may differ from the published timetable

## Ferry Departures From Lochboisdale Summer

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

Lochboisdale Departures





Mallaig/Oban Lochboisdale

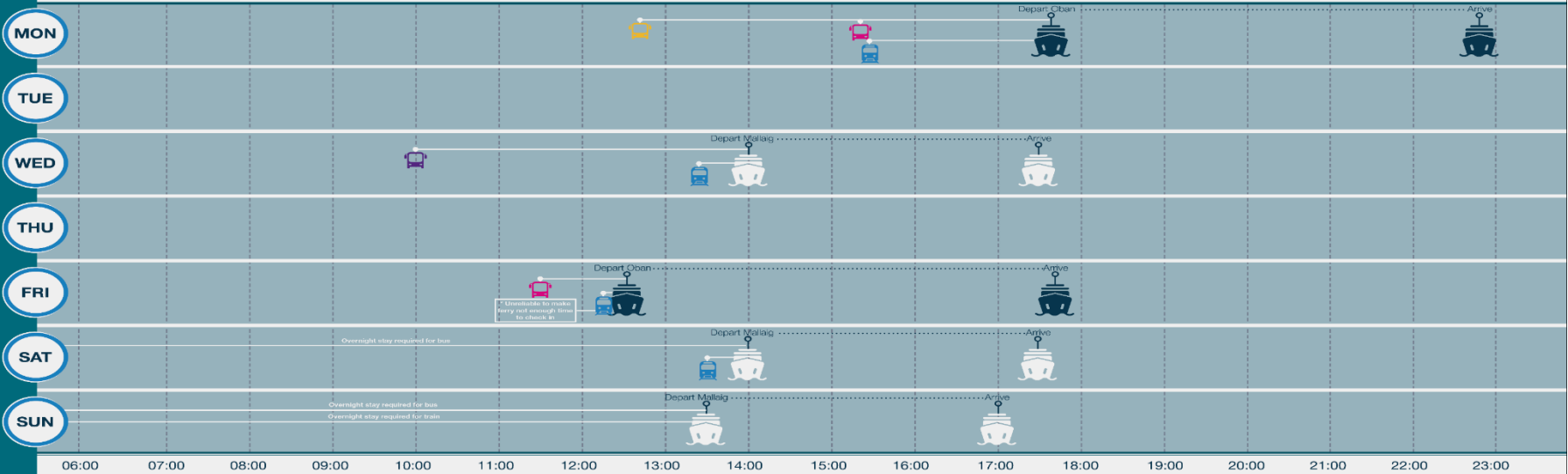
**BUS**  
 To Fort William  
 To Inverness  
 To Glasgow

**TRAIN**  
 To Glasgow

## Ferry Departures From Mallaig/Oban Winter

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

Mallaig/Oban Departures



Lochboisdale Mallaig/Oban

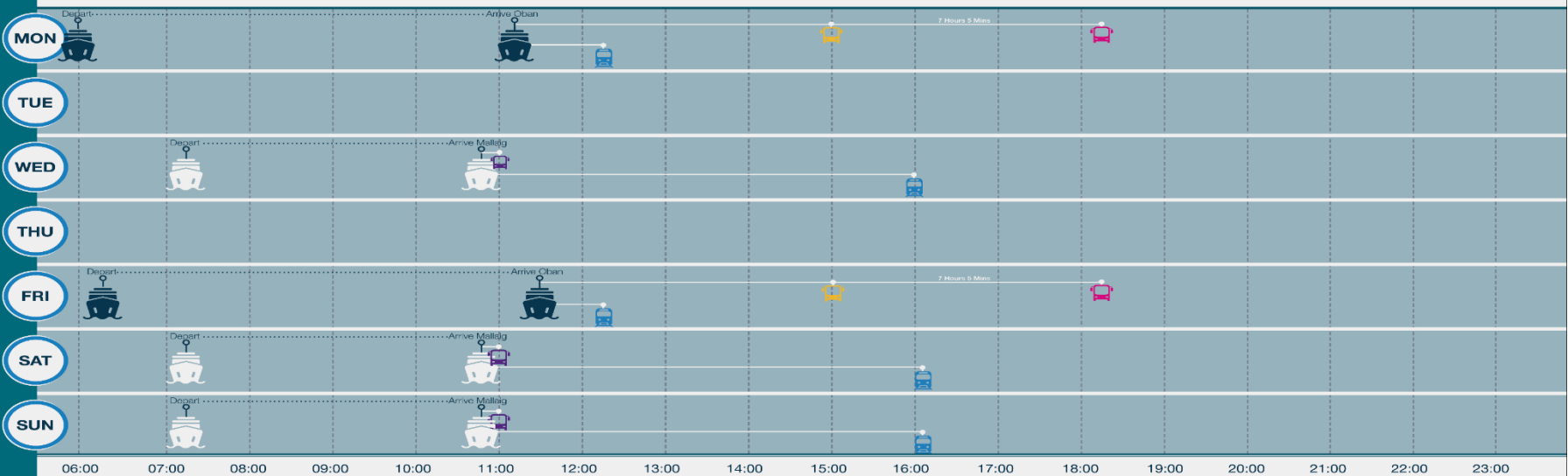
**BUS**  
 To Fort William  
 To Inverness  
 To Glasgow

**TRAIN**  
 To Glasgow

## Ferry Departures From Lochboisdale Winter

23<sup>rd</sup> October - 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and 27<sup>th</sup> November 2017 - 29<sup>th</sup> March 2018

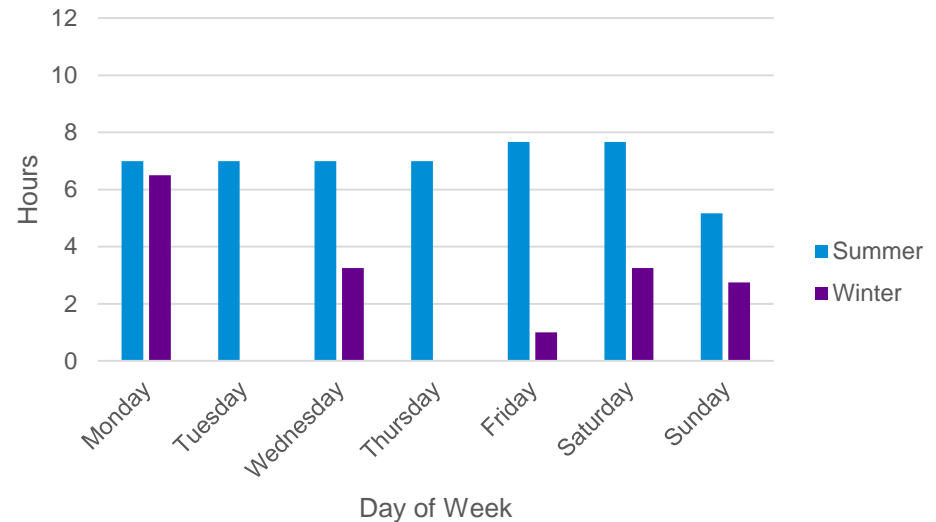
Lochboisdale Departures



# Time on Mainland / Time on Island

## Time on Mainland

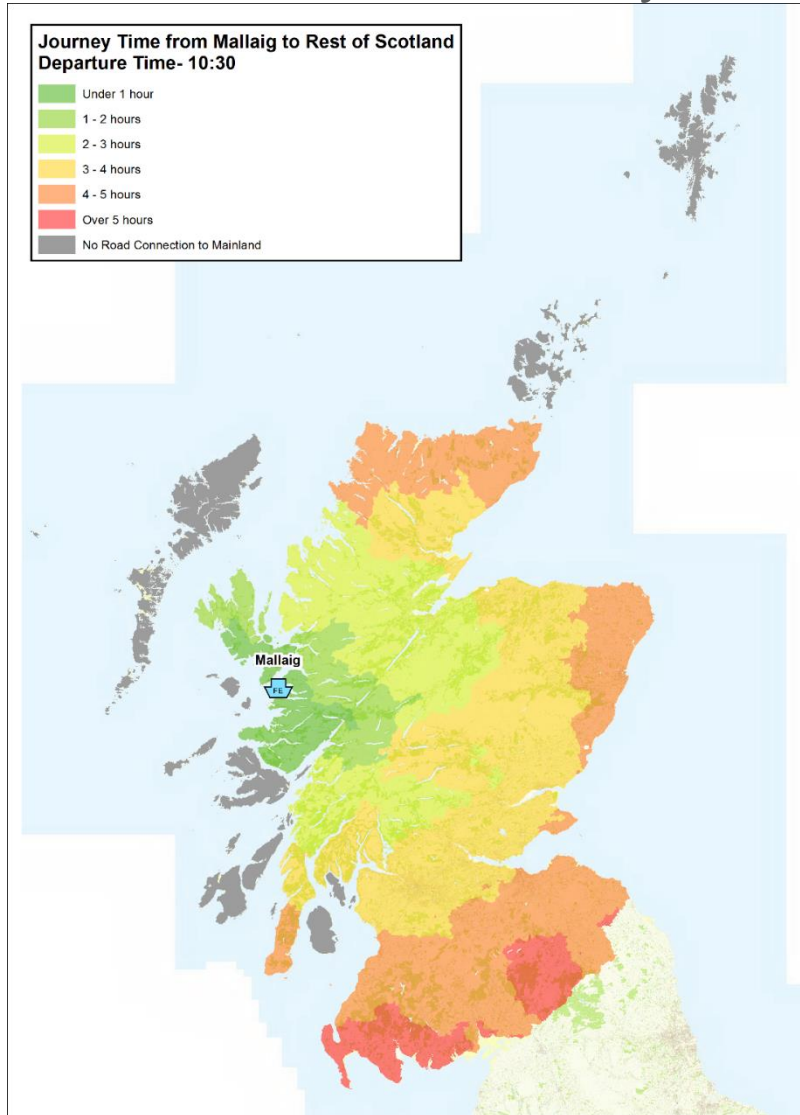
- There is a significant summer / winter differential in terms of available hours on the mainland.
  - From Monday – Saturday in the summer months, there is generally a minimum of seven hours available on the Scottish mainland, which would allow a return trip to Fort William to be made by car or bus for e.g. personal business, leisure etc.
- Time on mainland drops off in the winter months, with no service at all on a Tuesday or Thursday. A winter Monday provides the longest time ashore, with six and a half hours in Oban (although the sailing either side of this is over five hours, so it would make for a lengthy day trip).
- Time ashore is also available on a Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday but would not allow for activity to be undertaken beyond Mallaig.



## Time on Island

- It is not possible to make a day return trip from the Scottish mainland to South Uist on this route in either the summer or winter timetable.

# Car-Based Accessibility to Mainland Scotland



- The map shows typical travel times from Mallaig 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 10:30 ferry arrival from Lochboisdale
- Road-based journey times from Mallaig to Fort William, the principal service centre in the area, are in the 1-2 hour bracket (generally much closer to 1 hour). Journey times to Inverness are in the 2-3 hour bracket and Glasgow & west Edinburgh in the 3-4 band.
- Assuming drive time of just over one hour to Fort William, this would mean that a car driver would be able to spend around 4-5 hours in Fort William before returning on the 17:30 to Lochboisdale (16:45 check-in).
  - This would allow for attending hospital appointments, business meetings, shopping etc.
  - A day return trip to other major service centres would not be possible using the Lochboisdale – Mallaig ferry.



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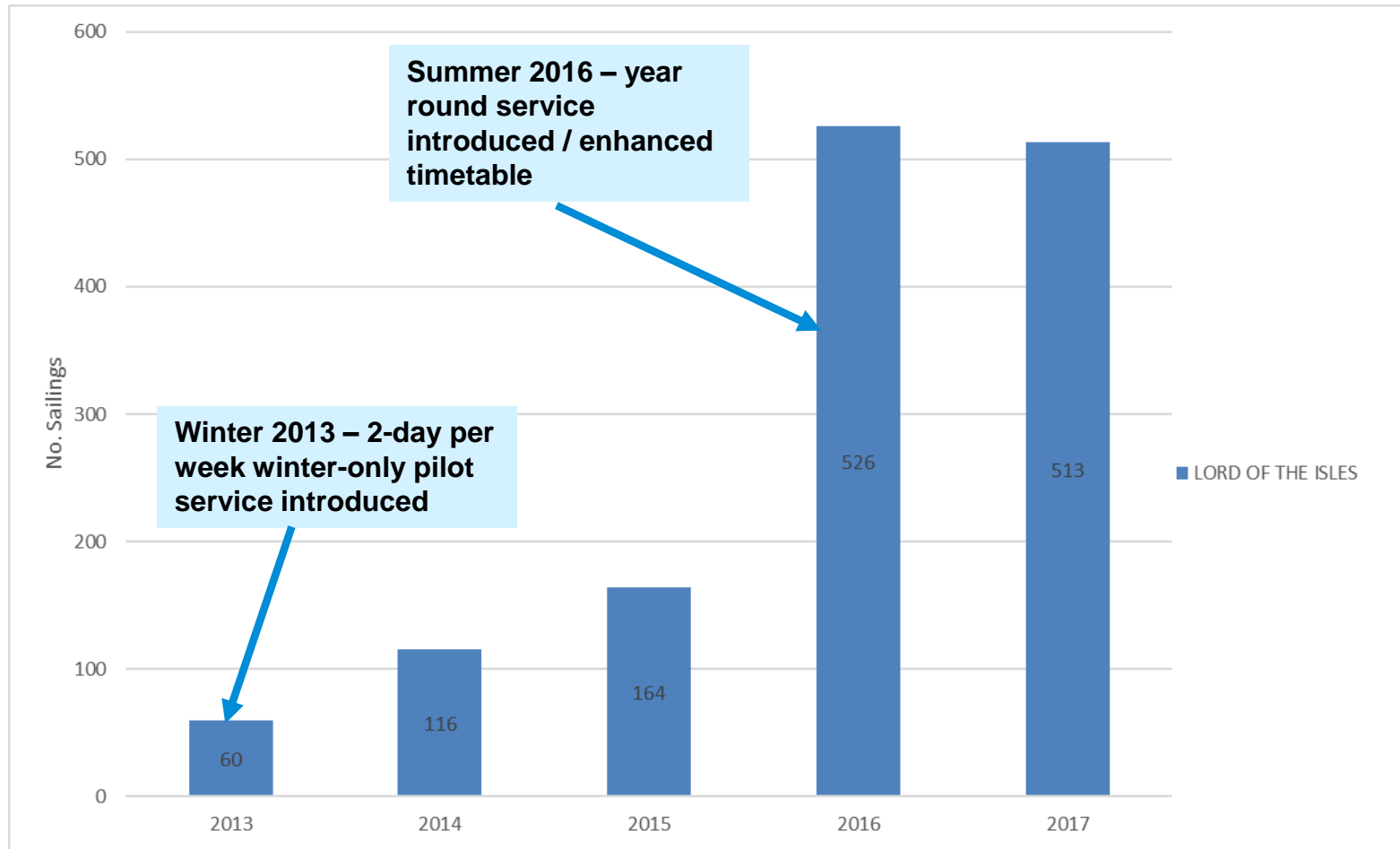
# **Lochboisdale – Mallaig / Oban Punctuality & Reliability**

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## Punctuality & Reliability

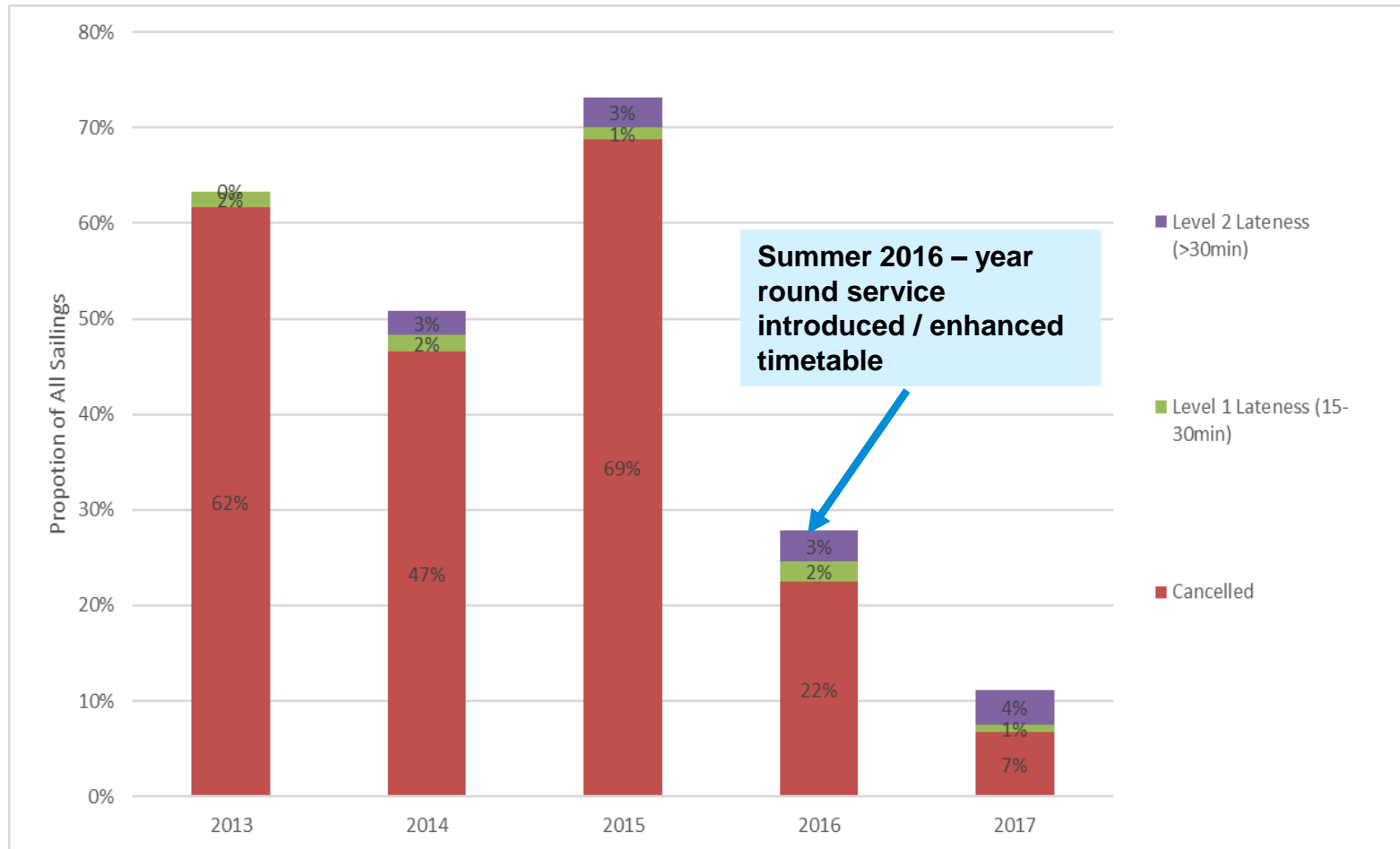
- Punctuality & Reliability are often cited as one of the most important characteristics of any public transport service, something which is particularly true of ferry services.
- CalMac has kindly provided performance data for **every sailing** undertaken on the Lochboisdale – Mallaig/Oban route since its commencement as pilot in 2013 – the following boards therefore allow us to tell **the punctuality & reliability story of the route**
  - *All boards refer to the Lochboisdale - Mallaig component of the route unless otherwise stated*

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



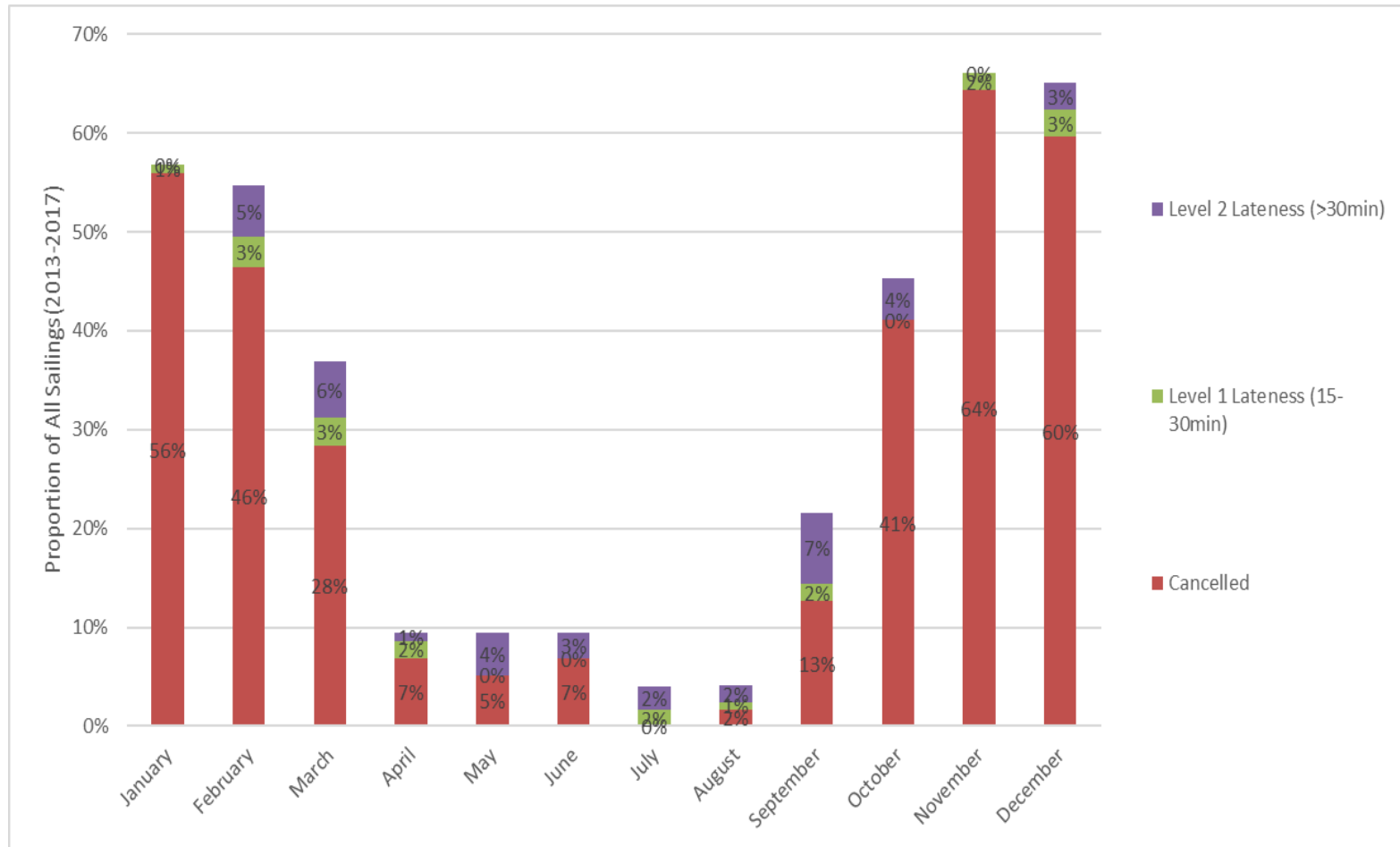
- The MV *Lord of the Isles* is a Lochboisdale based vessel and thus operates all sailings on the Lochboisdale – Mallaig route and most sailings on the Lochboisdale – Oban route (not shown)
- When the MV *Lord of the Isles* is not available (e.g. during refit), the service operates to Oban only
- We note that there has been recent concern in the community about the withdrawal of the MV *Lord of the Isles* to assist in covering the breakdown of MV *Clansman* (and thus the temporary suspension of the Mallaig route)

# How has punctuality & reliability changed over time?



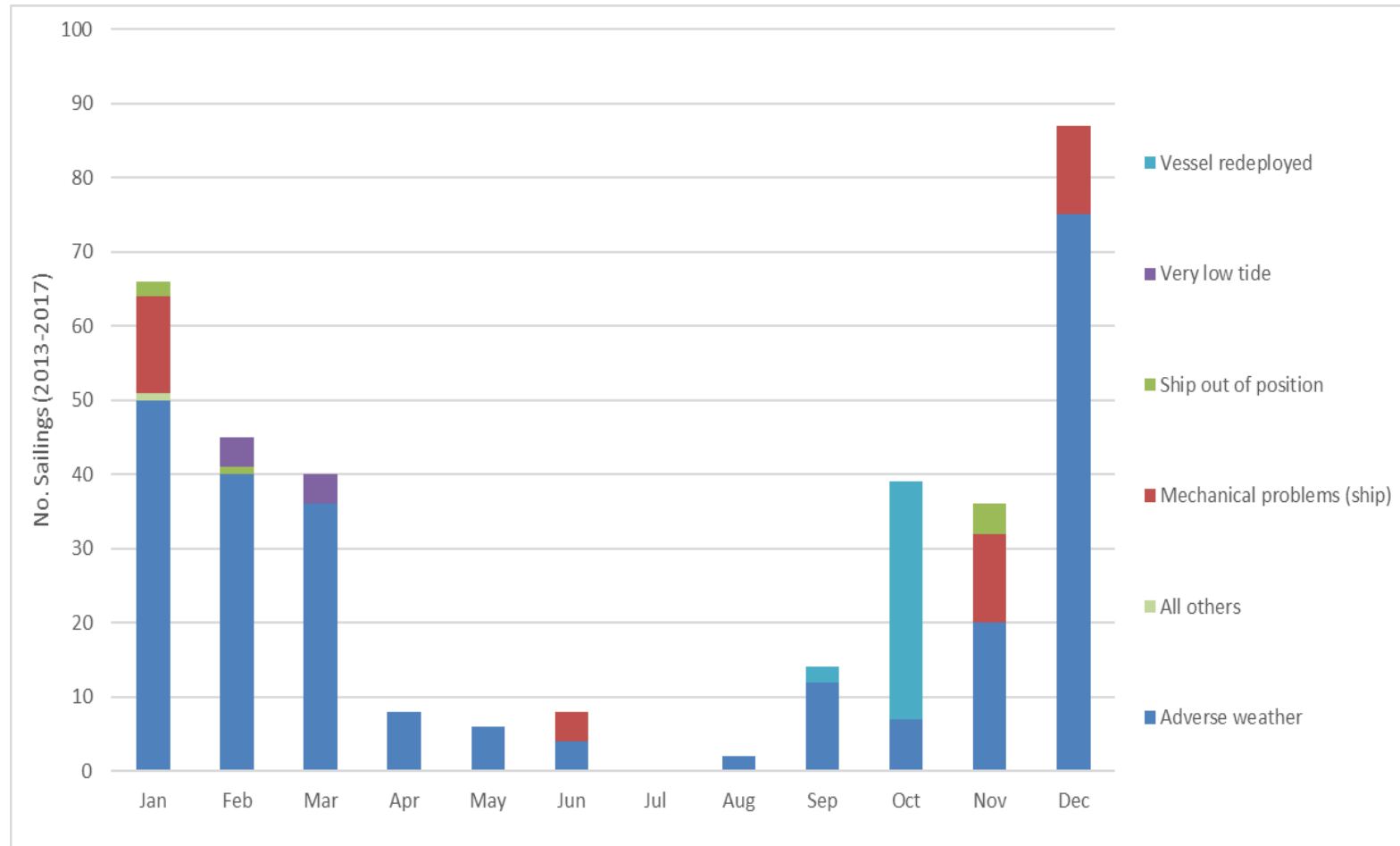
- Reliability was a key issue during the pilot, with a majority of sailings cancelled over the winter pilot period
- Reliability improved significantly (although cancellations remain above the network average) when the service was introduced on a year round basis and the MV *Lord of the Isles* modified to improve her resilience

# How does reliability & punctuality vary across the year?



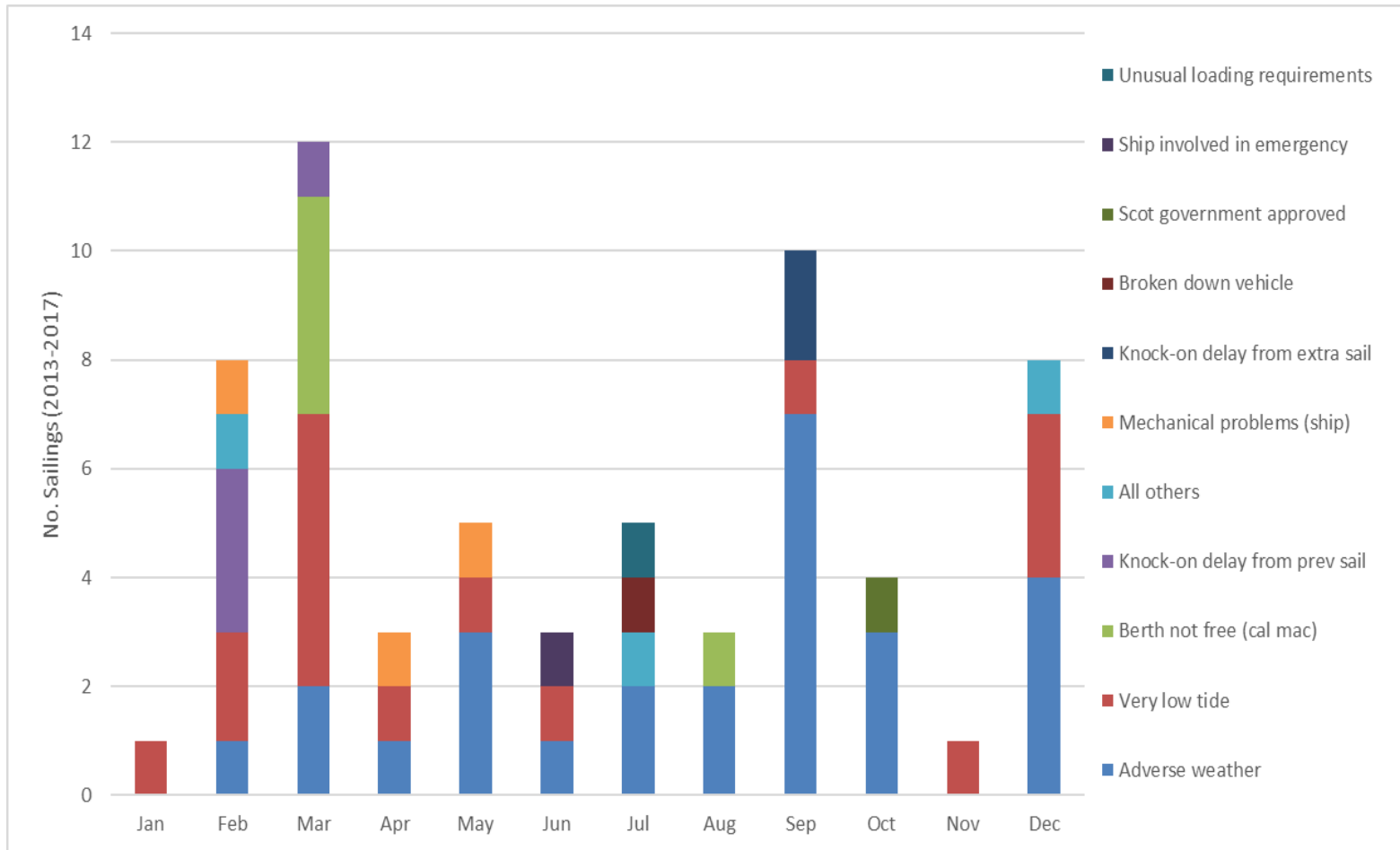
- The winter cancellation rate is very high and extends throughout almost the full winter timetable period. There are far fewer cancellations in the summer timetable period
- Equivalent 2007-17 data for the Oban – Castlebay / Lochboisdale route shows a similar distribution of cancellations, but a much lesser number
- Punctuality is not generally a significant issue

# Why are sailings cancelled?



- Vast majority of cancellations on this route are weather related
- There are a number of instances (e.g October) where cancellations are due to the redeployment of the vessel.

# Why are sailings delayed?



- A combination of adverse weather and very low tides account for the majority of delays to the service
- It is understood that, in winter, when the MV *Lord of the Isles* is dedicated to the route, departure times may be amended to work around weather windows (rather than cancelling the service)

# Punctuality & Reliability

## Summary

- The Lochboisdale – Mallaig / Oban route suffers from relatively poor reliability, particularly in the winter months. Whilst reliability has improved significantly since the winter pilot period (2013/14 – 2015/16), there remain a significant number of cancellations
- The challenges associated with operating into the constrained port of Mallaig are the primary cause of the reliability issues
- Adverse weather and very low tides are the main causes of delay on the route
- There have been a number of instances (most recently April & May 2018) when the MV *Lord of the Isles* has had to be withdrawn to cover vessel shortages elsewhere in the fleet. As no other 'major vessel' can operate into Mallaig, the service is suspended and all sailings are diverted to Oban when this happens



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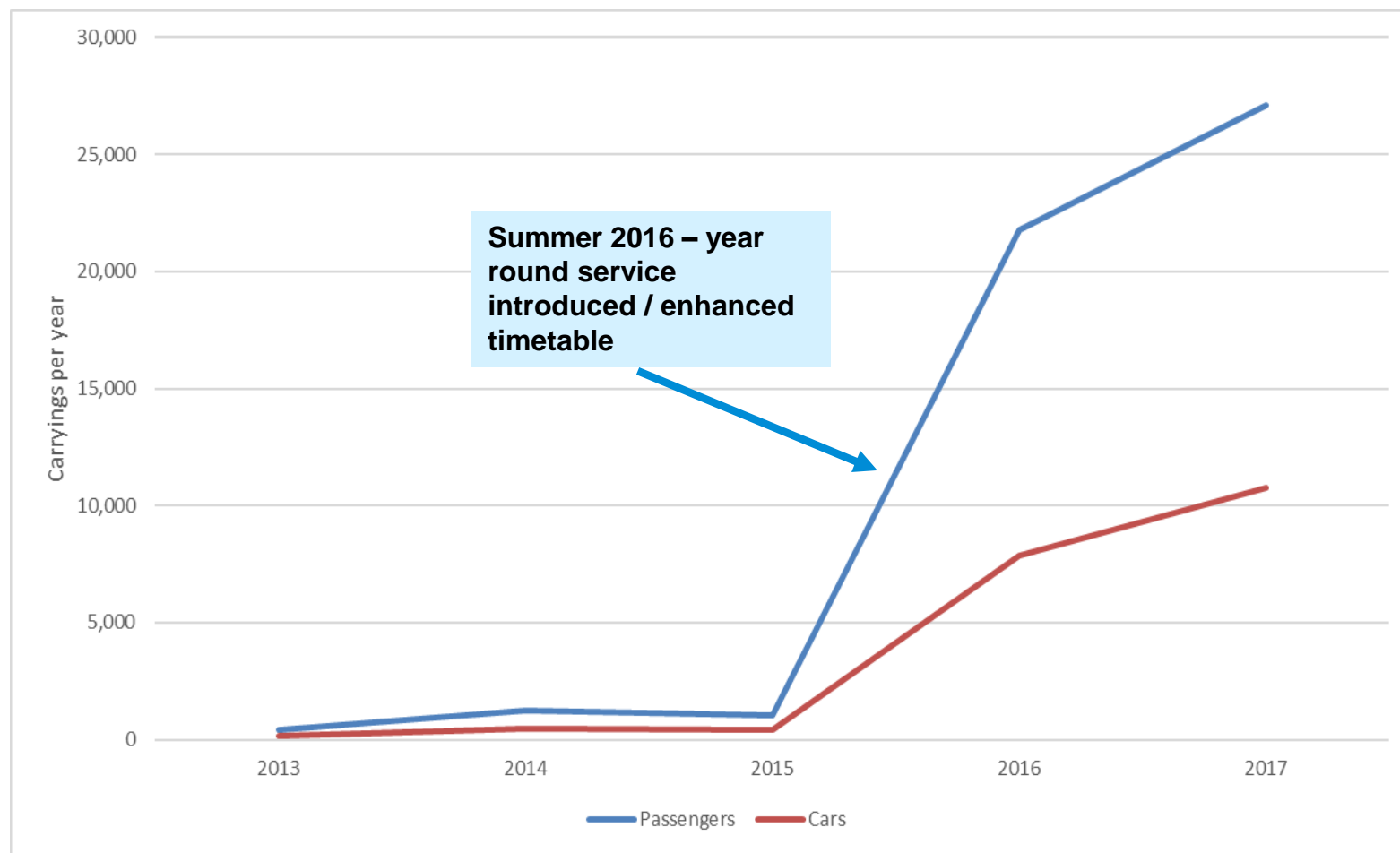
# **Lochboisdale – Mallaig / Oban, Carryings & Available Capacity**

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# Carryings & Available Capacity

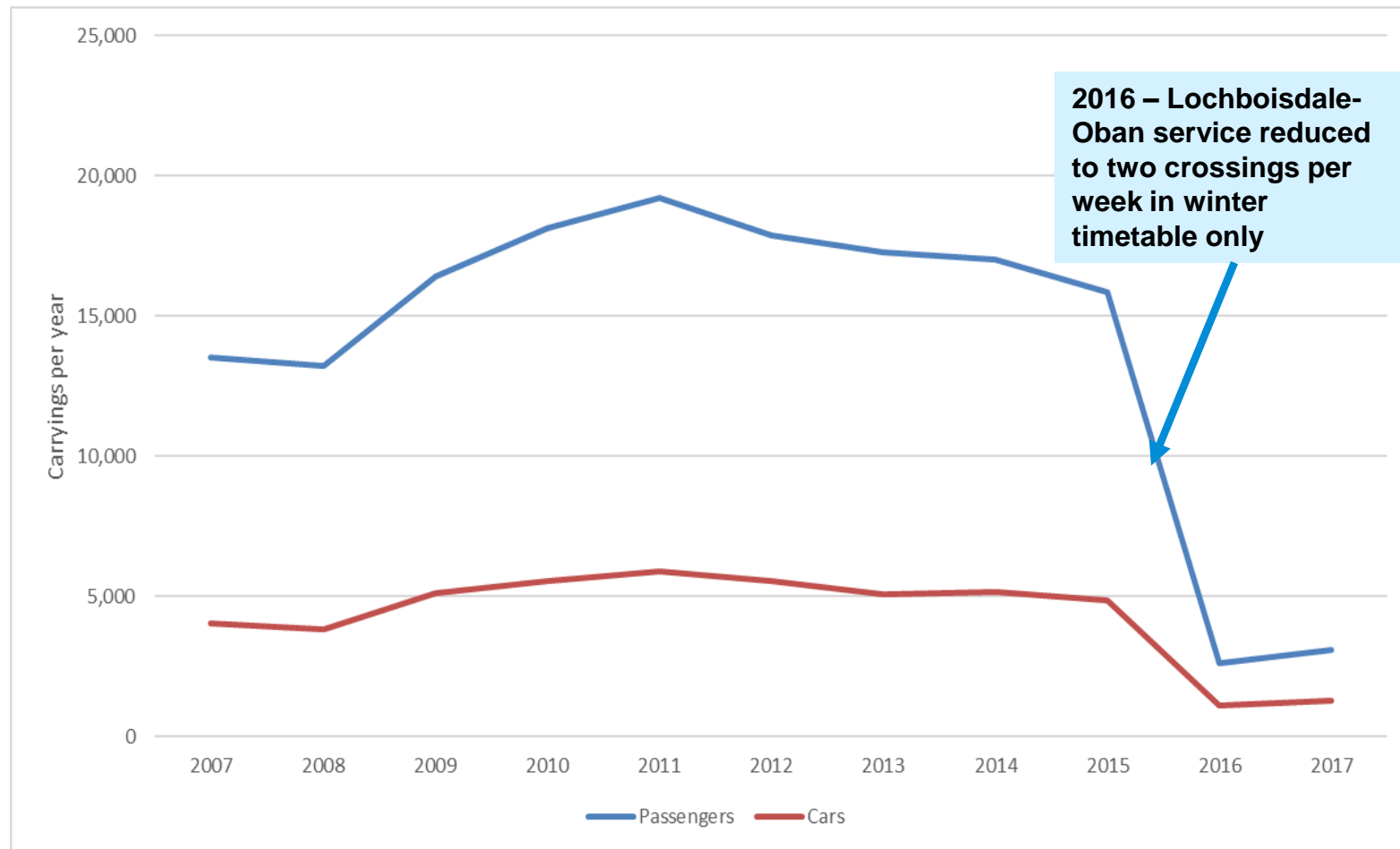
- The availability of capacity on the ferry on the days and at the times people wish to travel is of critical importance to the islands
  - This is particularly the case in terms of vehicle deck availability (the capacity to carry passengers is not generally an issue)
- CalMac has kindly provided sailing-by-sailing carryings data for **every sailing** undertaken since the commencement of the service – the following boards therefore allow us to tell **the carryings & available capacity story of the route**
  - *All boards refer to the Lochboisdale - Mallaig component of the route unless otherwise stated*

## How have **passenger & vehicle** carryings changed over time - *Lochboisdale - Mallaig*



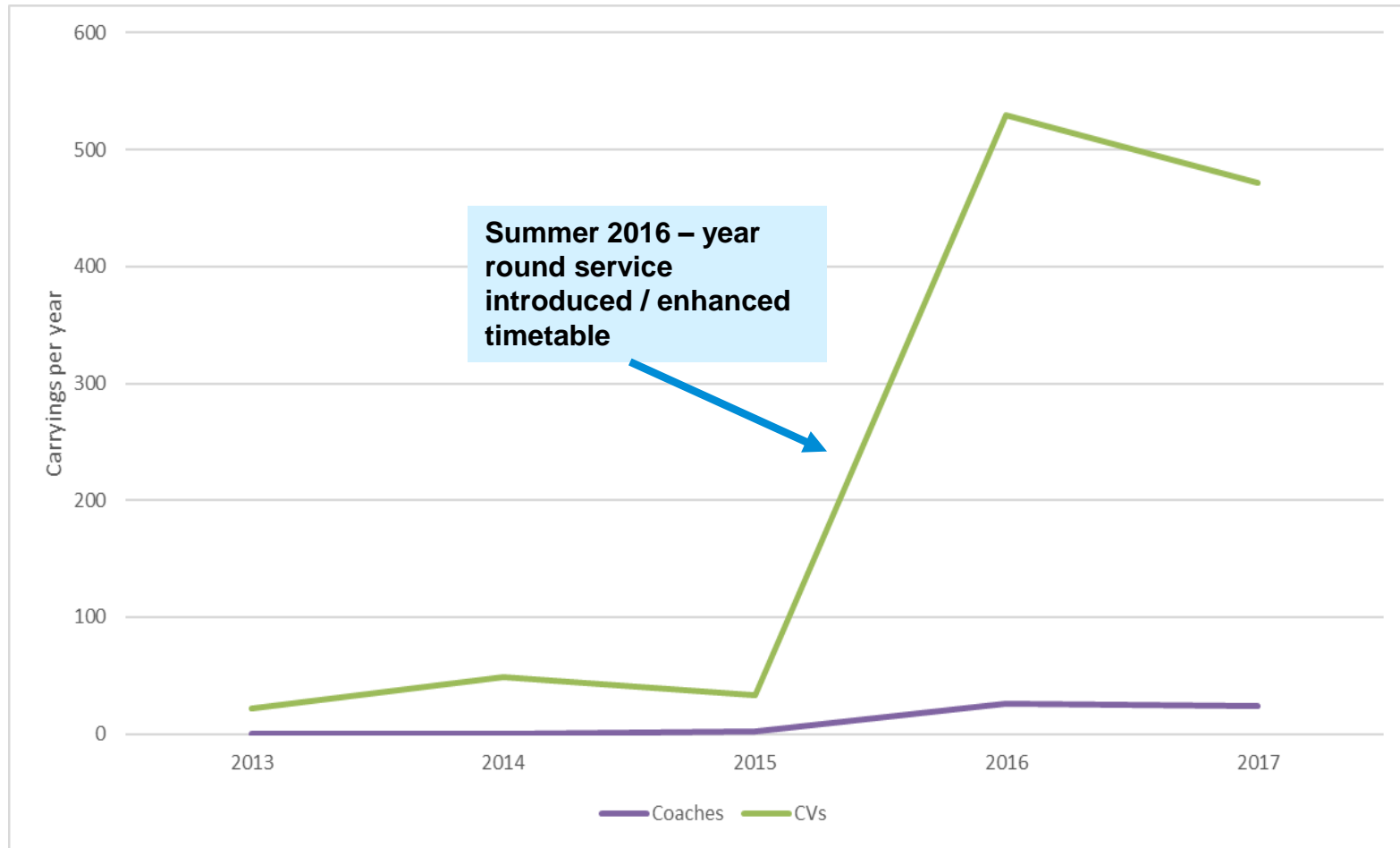
- Carryings were very low during the pilot period due to the infrequent service and poor reliability (and the pilot was winter only)
- There has been a rapid growth in carryings since the introduction of the year round service and higher frequency timetable
- Growth in passenger & car carryings on the Lochboisdale – Mallaig route has outstripped the corresponding decline on the Lochboisdale – Oban route, which suggests that additional journeys have been generated

## How have **passenger & vehicle** carryings changed over time - *Lochboisdale - Oban*



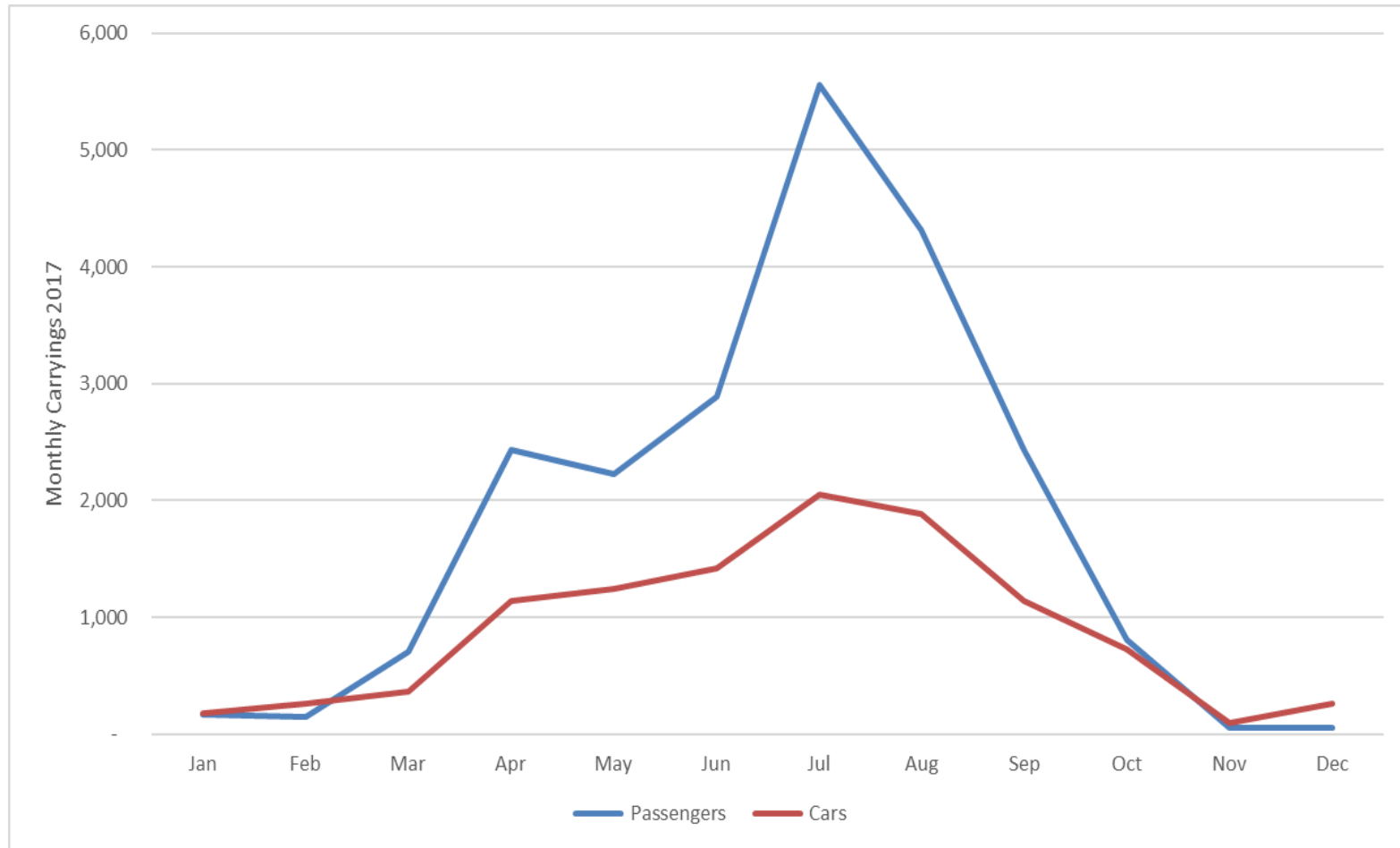
- After an initial increase in carryings when RET was introduced in 2008, passenger and vehicle carryings had been gradually declining on the Lochboisdale – Oban route
- The introduction of the year round Lochboisdale – Mallaig route and enhanced frequency in 2016 (with offsetting reductions in the Oban service) substantially reduced passenger and vehicle carryings on the Lochboisdale – Oban route

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



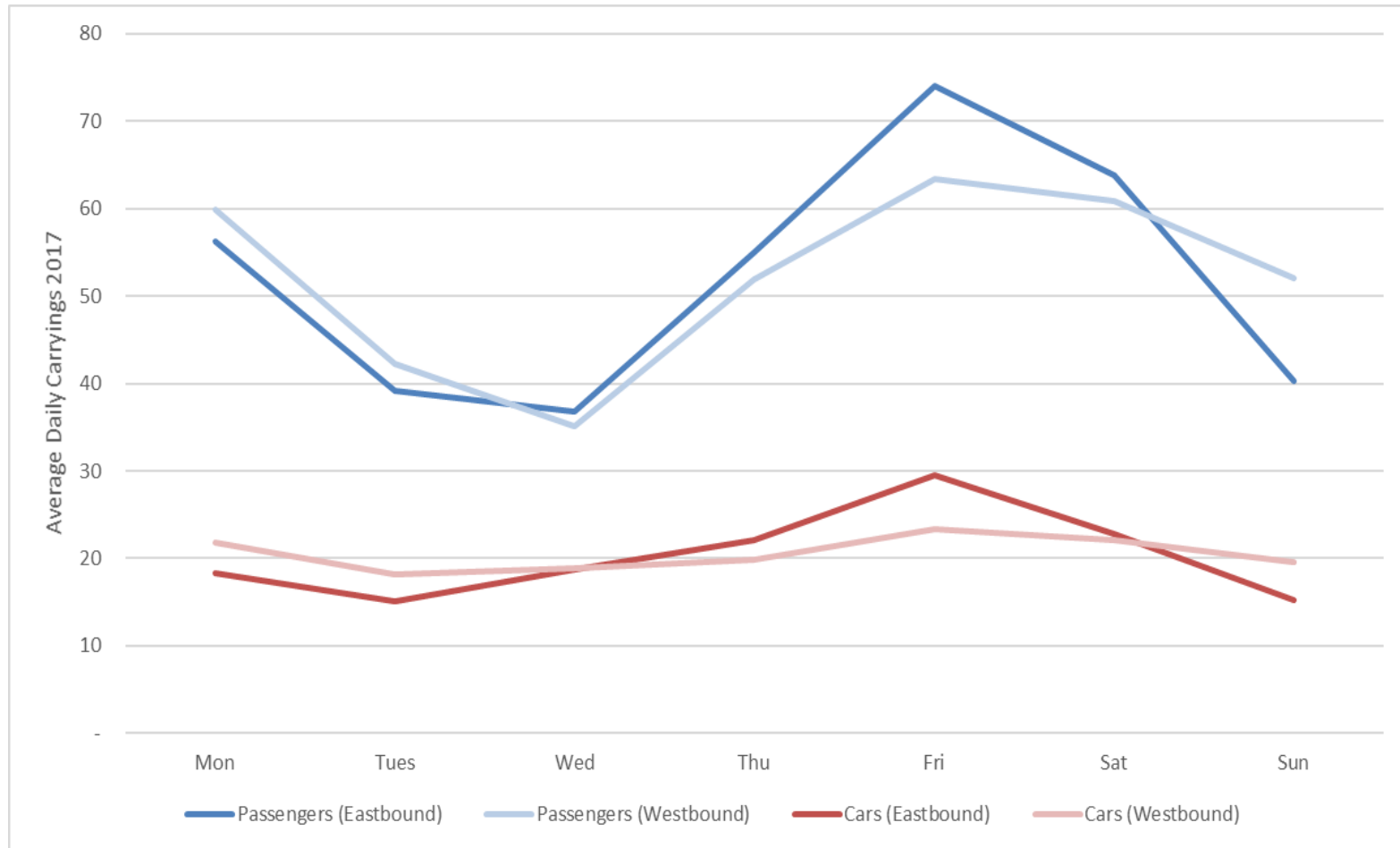
- The pattern for coaches & CVs is similar to passengers and cars – the low frequency service and poor reliability meant that the Lochboisdale – Mallaig route was not a viable option for most businesses during the pilot period
- There has been a rapid growth in carryings since the introduction of the year round service and higher frequency timetable
- There is a height restriction on the A830 between Mallaig & Fort William, which does represent a constraint for parts of the CV market

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



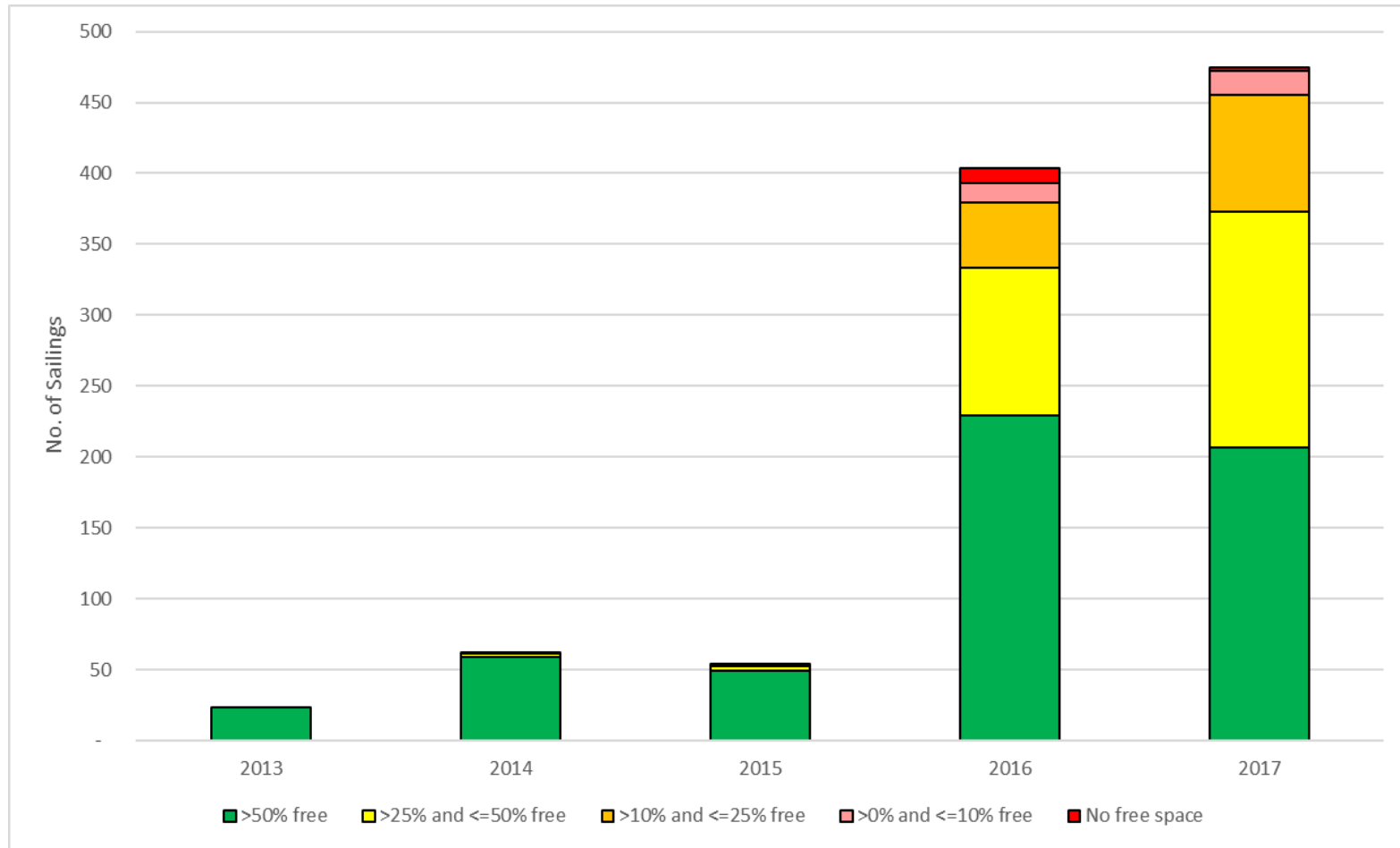
- June, July & August are the peak months on the route – July is by far the busiest month of the year
- Ferry demand displays a much bigger summer peak than general road traffic in the Highlands & Islands

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



- Friday and Saturday are the peak days in both directions. Monday is also a busy day
- **Eastbound** passenger numbers are higher on a Friday and **westbound** on a Monday – this is likely caused by the long-weekend market amongst island residents

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



- Average vehicle deck utilisation was higher in 2017 than in 2016, which may represent growth due to the route becoming more established

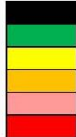


# How much available capacity is there across the year? (Lochboisdale - Mallaig)

Mallaig to Lochboisdale 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						
M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
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30	31					

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27	28					

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June						
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July						
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August						
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30	31					

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December						
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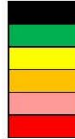
- Vehicle deck capacity is pressured in July & August in particular – indeed there were two days in August with no free car deck space recorded
- Fridays and Saturdays are peak days throughout the summer timetable period
- Vehicle deck capacity is generally less of an issue in the winter timetable period (including on the Oban leg, which is not shown in the above calendar).

# How much available capacity is there across the year? (Mallaig - Lochboisdale)

Mallaig to Lochboisdale 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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February						
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27	28					

March						
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
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April						
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

May						
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

June						
M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
			1	2	3	4
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

July						
M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August						
M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

September						
M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

October						
M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

November						
M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

December						
M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

- The pattern of vehicle deck availability is similar to the eastbound direction
- Saturday is the peak day throughout the summer timetable period, with all Saturdays in the school summer holidays offering limited spare vehicle deck capacity
- Monday westbound tends to display a higher level of utilisation than in the eastbound direction

# Carryings & Utilisation

## Summary

- The introduction of the year round and higher frequency Lochboisdale – Mallaig service in the summer 2016 timetable led to a significant increase in all carrying types
- The increase in carryings on Lochboisdale – Mallaig was greater than the decline in carryings on Lochboisdale – Oban, which suggests a net growth on the route
- Friday and Saturday are the peak days in both directions
- Eastbound passenger numbers are higher on a Friday and westbound on a Monday – this is likely caused by the long-weekend market amongst island residents
- The availability calendars suggest that there is some scope for growth in vehicle carryings, although capacity pressures are beginning to materialise on peak days (e.g. Fridays and Saturdays in the summer timetable period)