

Report to Partnership Meeting 25th April 2025

CONSULTATION

Consultations Round up

Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with an overview on a number of live consultations. These include the .

Little Minch Timetable Consultation

HITRANS have undertaken research to understand the case for three sailings per day by new vessels between Uig and Tarbert and between Uig and Lochmaddy during the summer timetable.

The research comprised:

- Desk research, including the review of the specimen draft timetables produced by CalMac.
- Consultations with a range of businesses and other organisations based in Uist or Harris or operating in one of those areas.

A copy of the report is attached as Appendix A to this report and can also be found on the HITRANS website at <https://hitrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/HITRANS-Little-Minch-Ferry-Rep-2025-1.pdf>

The report sets out the case for change in favour of 3 daily return services to operate the Little Minch ferry services that link Lochmaddy in North Uist with Uig, Skye and Tarbert, Harris with Uig. The report will be published and has been developed with valuable input with stakeholders in Uist, Harris and Lewis.

The tight consultation timescale meant it was not possible to undertake a wider public consultation. Those that were consulted are listed at the end of the report.

In responding to the consultation, HITRANS outlined our support for a final timetable that will allow the communities of Uist, Harris and Lewis to enjoy a step change in timetable frequency from the services introduced in 1964 when the old MV Hebrides entered service on the then Triangular network linking Uig to Lochmaddy and Tarbert.

This increase in frequency would bring significant benefits to the residents of the Western Isles, the local economy, and the tourism sector. These benefits include:

1. Increased Accessibility and Convenience for Residents
2. Economic Growth and Cost of Living Reduction for Local Businesses
3. Benefits to the Visitor Economy
4. A More Resilient and Sustainable Future
5. Public Transport Connectivity and the Islands Connectivity Plan

PUBLIC BODIES' CLIMATE CHANGE DUTIES

The Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero recently wrote to all Public Bodies to highlight their responsibilities in relation to climate change duties. The first of these duties is to contribute to national emissions reduction targets. In the context of the duties, 'targets' includes both the Governments' final 2045 target, and its five-year carbon budgets. Bodies must, therefore, work to reduce emissions over each budget period, as well as aiming to finally achieve net zero.

A consultation on new Statutory Guidance has recently opened. The guidance aims to support public bodies in putting the climate change duties into practice and will replace the previously published guidance. The consultation document can be found here - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/climate-change-duties-draft-statutory-guidance-public-bodies-consultation/documents/>. The deadline for responses is 23rd May 2025. HITRANS officers will look to submit a response on behalf of the Partnership. Members are invited to consider any issues that we would like to see contained within this response.

The letter also highlights the publication of the [Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-29](#) (SNAP3) that was published in September last year. Under the climate change duties, public bodies must help contribute to the delivery of SNAP3. All public bodies must identify the national adaptation objectives from SNAP3 relevant to their functions and act in a way that supports the delivery of these objectives.

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – The policies outlined in these key policy document will underpin the prioritisation of the projects within the RTS Delivery Plan

Policy

Impact - Positive

Comment – These policy documents provide a detailed and coordinated framework of policies at a national level

Financial

Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – No direct impact but the policies and priorities will provide a focus for future Business Plans

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – Reducing Inequalities is one of the key priorities of the updated National Transport Strategy .

Members are invited to;

1. Note the report
2. Homologate HITRANS response to the Little Mich Timetable consultation
3. Approve the preparation of draft responses by Officers to the Climate Change Duties Draft Statutory Guidance
4. Delegate responsibility for submitting HITRANS final responses to HITRANS Chair and Partnership Director.

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