

ARDROSSAN TASKFORCE

Eleventh Meeting –16 December 2020

Note of meeting

Attendees

Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands
Chris Wilcock– Transport Scotland
Caroline Connelly - Transport Scotland – Secretariat
Graeme McGinty – Project Manager - CMAL
Ruairidh Campbell – CMAL Liaison Officer
Kevin Hobbs – CMAL CEO
Bill Calderwood – Arran Ferry Committee (AFC)
Iain Thomson – Arran Ferry Committee (AFC)
Louise Kirk – North Ayrshire Council (NAC)
Alasdair Laurenson – North Ayrshire Council (NAC)
Cllr Joe Cullinane – North Ayrshire Council (NAC)
Karen Yeomans – North Ayrshire Council (NAC)
Doug Coleman – Peel Ports Group (PPG)
Gary Hodgson – Peel Ports Group (PPG)
Kenneth Gibson MSP
Pauline Blackshaw – CalMac
Danielle Neutgens- CalMac

Apologies

Frances Pacitti – Transport Scotland
Susan Malcolm – Transport Scotland
James Anderson – CMAL
Robbie Drummond - CalMac
Craig Hatton – NAC
Andy Crossan – CMAL

Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

1. Mr Wheelhouse welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted.
General Housekeeping on MS Teams noted

Item 2 – Last Meeting Overview and matters arising

2. The Minutes from the 25 February 2020 Task Force were agreed and published on the Transport Scotland website. Actions arising from the previous meeting, Funding and Service Continuity Planning would be covered in today's meeting as outlined in the accompanying papers.

Item 3 –Ardrossan Steering Group Update

3. Chris Wilcock and Caroline Connelly introduced the presentation with input from steering group members on their respective sections: Funding, Marine & Landside, Service Continuity and Communications. The update and discussion also covered:
 - Arran Ferry Committee paper – service continuity and use of the Irish Berth during construction period.
4. Mr Wheelhouse acknowledged community frustration with the delays encountered in reaching an agreed position, but noted that there had been significant progress in recent months on the legal and funding agreements with these now expected to be concluded early in the new year. Some discussion followed on the likely timescale to conclusion of agreements and commitment of all parties to conclude matters as soon as possible.
5. AFC presented their paper and confirmed that the island community view was that with the programme of works now expected to be in 2023/24, with the ageing infrastructure at Ardrossan, and concerns over the economic impact on the island that the use of the Irish Berth for services during the construction period was no longer practical and would not provide a resilient service, given it was not well-suited to the prevailing weather conditions. Therefore they recommended that the service be operated from another port, likely to be Troon.
6. AFC added that as the MV Glen Sannox was due to be delivered during the construction period this was also a factor to consider and that the service as whole with all vessel be operated from Troon. This being in their opinion the most logical option.
7. The Task Force proposed that full consideration, underpinned by analysis, will be undertaken on whether Ardrossan will continue to operate during the period of construction works, or whether Troon is used as the mainland port for a temporary period. This analysis will consider issues such as service reliability given the potential for increased cancellations when vessels operate from the Irish Berth at Ardrossan, the passenger experience given variations in time and public transport connections, economic impact and cost. The final decision on this will be made by the Task Force at its next meeting in February with the views of the community a key element in this process.
8. Mr Wheelhouse welcomed the Task Force's decision to give consideration to whether Ardrossan will continue to operate during the construction works and the communities' part in this. The Minister acknowledged that the views of AFC and the island community have shifted substantively on this issue and that a clear plan is required for service continuity going forward with the Minister noting AFC's priority being service resilience and predictability during the construction works.
9. NAC and PPG provided an update on the marine and landside elements of the project.
10. PPG outlined the programme, taking account of all parts still to be undertaken such as Tender/procurement and evaluation, Contract Award and mobilisation and delivery of a 21 months construction period – that delivery of the works is expected to be completed 2023/24.
11. NAC confirmed that good progress was being made on the landside design, and that a public consultation on the Landside Infrastructure would be issued in 2021.

12. Post completion of the upgrade works, the Task Force confirmed that Ardrossan would remain the mainland port for the Ardrossan-Brodick/Campbeltown Service.
13. Both TS and NAC confirmed that a project update had been finalised and was expected to be issue out w/c 21 December – thus giving the public and the island communities an update of what the steering group members had been working on since the last public engagement event in 2018. This would be published on the TS and NAC webpages including a press release.
14. CalMac advised they have completed all operational analysis to inform the service continuity plan which was issued to the Steering Group in March 2020. CalMac advised they are now dependent on the other decisions being made to enable a formal transition plan to be developed.
15. CalMac stated that they continue to engage with all parties, and key stakeholders such as AFC, with more public engagement planned for the new year, following NAC's landside consultation.
16. On a separate issue CMAL confirmed that the Gourock linkspan works are expected to be completed by January 2021.

Item 4 –Vessel Update

17. Mr Wheelhouse re-affirmed the Scottish Government's commitment to ensure Ferguson Marine Port Glasgow's completion of the new vessel for the Ardrossan to Brodick route, MV Glen Sannox (Hull 801). Everyone at the yard is working timeously to deliver the vessels per the expected completion date in Q1 2022 and, subject to sea trials, an anticipated delivery date to CalMac of April-June 2022

Item 5 –Next Steps

18. The Task Force agreed the following work be taken forward –
 - Analysis of mainland port options during construction period
 - Communications – Project Update & Landside Consultation
 - Service Continuity planning
 - Funding discussions between TS and PPG
 - Funding discussions between TS and NAC
 - Next Task Force meeting to be earlier than planned for February 2021

Item 6 - AOB

19. None

Item 7 – Date of next meeting

20. Date of next meeting - February 2021.