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# **Islands Connectivity Plan**

**The Vessels and Ports Plan for  
the Clyde and Hebrides and  
Northern Isles networks (2025  
– 2045)**

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## Executive Summary

The Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP) sets out the Scottish Government's long-term objectives and policies for ensuring necessary and sustainable transport links for our islands. It comprises an overarching Strategic Approach supported by a number of delivery plans, of which this is one.

This Vessels and Ports Plan provides detail on the Scottish Government's objectives for the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) and Northern Isles Ferry Services (NIFS), for which the Scottish Ministers are directly responsible.

Engagement with key stakeholders during the development of this Vessels and Ports Plan indicated that **reliability** and **resilience** are their key priorities for vessel and port investment.

Meeting objectives to address these priorities will primarily be realised by upgrading existing infrastructure and replacing the existing vessels with an efficient and sustainable modern ferry fleet. This Plan sets out the recommended investment programme needed to maintain and safely operate lifeline ferry services, including measures to:

- renew the fleet and upgrade ports in response to asset age and condition;
- improve weather resilience and technical reliability when investing in new vessels and port upgrades;
- improve accessibility in the fleet and ports;
- improve resilience through an expansion in the major vessel fleet and through increased inter-operability and standardisation of vessels and ports;
- retain a major vessel in the fleet to operate on a resilience basis until at least 2030.

This Plan outlines the need for significant and sustained investment to achieve its delivery as an integral part of progress towards establishing a secure and sustainable long-term financial foundation for our ferry networks, as set out in our Strategic Approach. It will inform transport investment in Scotland for around the next 20 years (2025-2045) by providing evidence-based recommendations on which Scottish Ministers can base future ferry investment decisions.

Delivery of this Plan will also require decisions to be taken as part of annual budget reviews going forward. The Plan proposes an objective and transparent approach to "investment prioritisation", that will guide those difficult prioritisation decisions.

To ensure this Plan remains up to date, we intend to refresh it every two to three years and fully update it every five years. This will enable it to be shaped in light of

consultation responses and the outcomes of the refreshed needs assessments that we intend to undertake for each community served by CHFS and NIFS services.

# Introduction

## The Islands Connectivity Plan

The Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP) replaces the Ferries Plan 2013-2022 but is wider in scope, taking account of ferry services, aviation, and fixed links, as well as onward and connecting travel. The ICP comprises an overarching Strategic Approach paper supported by a number of delivery plans of which this is one.

The ICP Strategic Approach provides guidance and direction to the delivery of island transport connectivity. It sets out how island transport connectivity aligns with the ambitions of the Scottish Government and contributes towards meeting Scottish Government objectives as set out in the National Islands Plan and the National Transport Strategy.

The Clyde and Hebrides and Northern Isles Ferry Services (CHFS and NIFS) play a key role in supporting the economic, social and cultural development of those peninsula and island communities. This document sets out the Plan for the vessels and ports used by the CHFS and NIFS services and represents a key delivery plan for those services.

Other ferry services in Scotland are the responsibility of local authorities and some others are operated commercially by private operators. Although not covered by this Plan, local authority ferry fleets face similar challenges to those facing the CHFS and NIFS networks. Consultation feedback reported that replacement of ageing ferry infrastructure run or contracted by Argyll and Bute Council, The Highland Council, Orkney Islands Council (OIC) and Shetland Islands Council (SIC) is one of the most pressing transport infrastructure issues for those councils. Those local authorities have undertaken, or are undertaking, similar appraisal and planning work in support of their own vessel and port investment cases.

The Scottish Ministers are working closely with those councils, in particular with OIC and SIC through Task Forces led by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government. This constructive engagement has led to the commitment to provide £3 million funding to OIC for development of the business case for fleet replacement and infrastructure upgrades, design for a new vessel for the inter-island services to the Orkney north isles and to pilot two electric ferries on other Orcadian inter-island routes. Responsibility for funding replacement infrastructure does remain wholly with the councils, however, we are committed to ongoing discussions and to providing support where we can, in what is a very challenging financial position for all: in the Scottish Government Budget for 2025-26, OIC and SIC will each receive a one-off grant of £10 million funding for inter-island transport connectivity projects.

Transport Scotland developed this Plan in consultation with Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) and the ferry operators – CalMac Ferries Ltd (CFL) and Serco NorthLink Ferries (SNF). Engagement with a range of key stakeholders including local authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) and the Ferries Community Board for CHFS also took place. A pre-consultation draft of this Plan was published on 30 December 2022 and shared with key stakeholders. An updated version of this Plan was published on 1 February 2024 having been updated in accordance with comments and views received from a number of these stakeholders.

Public consultation, supported by community engagement, on the draft Strategic Approach paper and this updated Vessels and Ports Plan took place from 1 February to 6 May 2024. An independent consultation and engagement [analysis report](#) was published on 3 September 2024 along with our [Initial Responses](#). This final version of the Vessels and Ports Plan takes account of that feedback.

## The Vessels and Ports Plan

The Scottish Government's [Infrastructure Investment Plan](#) (IIP) (February 2021) stated that:

**“We will produce and maintain a long-term plan and investment programme for new ferries and development at ports to improve resilience, reliability, capacity, and accessibility, increase standardisation, and reduce emissions to meet the needs of island communities and give confidence on our ongoing commitment supported by investment of at least £580 million during the next five years [April 2021 to March 2026]”.**

In addition, a further £115 million has been allocated for the construction of two new vessels to enhance the provision for the ‘Little Minch’ services.

The second [Strategic Transport Projects Review](#) represents the strategic case for investment by the Scottish Government in vessels and ports, in particular in two specific recommendations:

Recommendation 24 - Ferry vessel renewal and replacement, and progressive decarbonisation

Recommendation 42 - Investment in port infrastructure to support vessel renewal and replacement, and progressive decarbonisation

Stakeholder feedback has indicated the priority of reliability of vessels and resilience of services, a point reinforced in the 2023 report by the [Scottish Parliament's Net Zero Energy and Transport \(NZET\) Committee](#). This Plan, therefore, focuses on improving reliability by replacing vessels and renewing port assets based on age and condition. In addition, resilience will be improved through fleet modernisation and greater flexibility of the fleets. This Plan sets out the programme and projects needed to maintain and safely operate CHFS and NIFS services. In implementing this Plan, we will aim to deliver vessel replacements and port redevelopments before these reach the age when there is a high risk of reduced reliability due to asset life. In that way, services that are currently reliable and resilient should remain that way through asset management, including timely replacements and rebuilds.

Delivery against the Plan will require investment decisions to be taken as part of annual and longer-term budget reviews going forward. The Plan also proposes an objective and transparent approach to “Investment Prioritisation” to guide those difficult prioritisation decisions within the annual budget setting process.

## Context

There are currently 40 vessels deployed on the CHFS and NIFS services. Around half of the 53 ports on the CHFS network are owned by CMAL with the others owned by local authorities, trust ports and private companies. The five ports used by NIFS are owned by either local authorities or trusts. This Plan will support co-ordination with third-party port owners in the forward planning and delivery of investments. Please refer to Annexes A, B, C and D for further details. [To add Annex E with lists of local authority services, vessels and ports – prior to publication.]

Every route is unique and provides an essential link for the community it serves. The shortest crossing on the CHFS network is between Colintrave and Rhubodach, a distance of less than half a kilometre. The longest crossing, from Castlebay to Oban, covers over 140 km and takes around five hours to traverse. Aberdeen-Lerwick on the NIFS network is the longest route overall at 348 km and takes at least 12 hours, which necessitates the provision of overnight accommodation options.

The carryings on individual routes vary markedly, from very busy routes like Ardrossan-Brodick carrying 725,000 passengers in 2023, served by two major vessels in the summer months, to small passenger only or predominantly passenger routes like Gallanach – Kerrera and Gourock – Kilcreggan with 67,000 and 49,000 passengers respectively.

Four of the 30 routes across the CHFS network – Ardrossan-Brodick, Largs-Cumbrae, Wemyss Bay-Rothesay, and Oban-Craignure – together accounted for over half of the total passenger and car carryings in 2023. Three routes combined



carried 50% of commercial vehicle lane metres: Kennacraig-Islay (20%), Ullapool-Stornoway (20%) and Ardrossan-Brodick (10%).

The NIFS network consists of four routes and in 2023, 51% of passenger carryings and 63% of car carryings were on the Stromness-Scrabster route to Orkney. The Aberdeen-Lerwick route accounted for 35% and 28% of passenger and car carryings respectively, with the remainder accounted for by Aberdeen-Kirkwall and Kirkwall-Lerwick. In terms of freight on NIFS, the Aberdeen-Lerwick route accounted for 57% of commercial vehicle lane metres, followed by Aberdeen-Kirkwall with a 23% share.

The mix of carrying types also varies markedly between routes with some routes on CHFS carrying very high freight volumes such as Kennacraig-Islay. Other busy routes such as Largs-Cumbrae have much lower freight volumes but similar levels of passenger and car carryings to Ardrossan-Brodick.

The needs of each route will be reviewed through Community Needs Assessments (CNAs), which will identify options to address transport connectivity problems and opportunities for changes to current services by engaging with communities and other stakeholders. Both demand for the service and the role the ferry service plays in the life of the island will be considered, as well as the current services in terms of carryings, capacity utilisation, punctuality and reliability. The CNAs will enable consideration of a range of service and investment options for each community and provide the opportunity for considering options for the number and size of vessels.

The findings of the CNAs will further strengthen the evidence base for investment projects and inform subsequent investment decisions, subject to Value for Money and affordability.

As well as demand, the unique physical characteristics of the seas around Scotland also have implications for vessel design; the seas are relatively rough and, particularly on the west coast, are relatively shallow, which has its own challenges. As part of project design development, all issues are considered, such as wind and wave modelling data, potential vessel type, size and approachway. Swell and berthing forces are also considered, to ensure that both vessel and infrastructure interfaces at ports and harbours provide an optimum solution for ferry services to island communities. We will continue to work closely with all port owners to ensure that climate change adaption is an integral part of the design and delivery of all infrastructure projects.

## Objectives

This Plan reflects our ambition to replace the fleet and enhance reliability and resilience as quickly as possible, but this will only be possible as the necessary funding becomes available. Individual investments will still be subject to Value for Money tests, with each project developed and assessed through detailed business cases.

The ICP Strategic Approach has identified 12 key themes needing to be addressed. The following themes were the most pertinent of those to help develop an understanding of the key challenges in relation to vessel and port investment:

- Resilience and reliability
- Vessels and Ports
- Capacity and demand
- Accessibility
- Environmental impact and low carbon
- Freight services

Based on the Vision and Priorities set out in the ICP Strategic Approach paper, and the challenges discussed, the Vessel and Ports Plan will work to achieve the following objectives:

- to maintain and safely operate ferry connections for CHFS and NIFS communities, continuing to take opportunities through vessel and port investment to enhance services in support of the sustainability and growth of island populations and economies whilst protecting local environments and heritage;
- to improve reliability associated with both weather and technical issues;
- to reduce the average age of the total fleet (across both CHFS and NIFS networks) to around 15 years by the end of this decade;
- to improve resilience through an expansion in the CHFS major vessel fleet by the end of 2026 and through increased interoperability and standardisation of vessels and ports within the major and small vessel fleets;
- as part of that fleet expansion, to retain a major vessel in the fleet for resilience purposes until at least 2030;
- to improve accessibility for transport users through vessel and port design, informed by the proposed Accessibility Standard, once available;
- to provide additional vehicle-deck capacity to address identified “pinch points”, where this is practical, beneficial and affordable, and alongside other measures consistent with the Sustainable Investment Hierarchy;
- to progressively decarbonise both vessel fleet and port operations by 2045, taking the opportunities of a modernised fleet and port infrastructure to reduce air and

noise pollution, and take measures to safeguard biodiversity, water quality and natural and historic heritage during construction.

## How we will deliver our Objectives

### Vessel Replacement and Port Renewal

The Investment Plans section below propose investment across four phases up to 2045 in vessels and ports in order to deliver these objectives. Phase 1 consists of a series of vessel and port projects outlined in the Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP), published in February 2021. These projects are being taken forward between April 2021 and March 2026, and will also include the completion of vessels 801 (MV Glen Sannox) and 802 (MV Glen Rosa).

Since the publication of the IIP in 2021, decisions have also been taken:

- to purchase the second-hand vessel, MV Loch Frisa;
- to procure two new vessels rather than one new vessel for Islay;
- to procure two more "Islay class" vessels to enable a 2 vessel service on the Little Minch routes, between Uig-Tarbert/Lochmaddy, in the summer;
- to deploy both MV Glen Sannox and MV Glen Rosa to the Arran routes;
- to initiate a Port Ellen (Islay) redevelopment project;
- to retain an additional Major Vessel in the CHFS fleet to provide additional resilience and support overhaul until at least 2030;
- to charter the MV Alfred to add resilience to the CHFS major vessel fleet;
- to procure seven small CHFS vessels as phase 1 of the Small Vessel Replacement Programme (SVRP).

The information below outlines the expected dates of new vessels which are being delivered or require investment decisions over the short to medium term. These are subject to funding approval and procurement. In addition, given the long time period of the Plan, some reprioritisation and flexibility may be required, particularly for the later phases, as the availability of funding will ultimately determine the programme of delivery.

Vessels under contract (dates shown indicate delivery of vessels, not actual deployment):

- MV Isle of Islay – anticipated Q3 2025
- MV Glen Rosa – anticipated Q3 (September) 2025 (subject to update from FMPG)

- MV Loch Indaal – anticipated Q1 2026
- MV Lochmor – anticipated Q3 2026
- MV Claymore – anticipated Q4 2026
- SVRP Phase 1 (seven vessels) – from Q3 2027

Note: All vessel delivery dates are subject to ongoing monitoring and review with updates provided to NZET Committee at quarterly intervals.

Proposed vessel replacements where the outline business case is nearing completion:

- MV Lord of the Isles – earliest estimate for delivery end 2028
- Northern Isles freighter replacement vessels – earliest estimate for delivery 2029

Proposed vessel replacements where the outline business case is currently being drafted:

- Gourock-Dunoon/Kilcreggan vessels

Proposed Vessel replacements where the outline business cases are in early development:

- MV Isle of Mull
- Small Vessel Replacement Programme (Phase 2)

## Standardisation

Given the wide variety of communities and routes served by these fleets, increased standardisation does not need to mean identical vessels but should allow for increased interoperability of vessels and ports.

CMAL is striving to standardise its ports across the network, where possible, with a view to reducing the constraints on the vessels that can operate from each, hence increasing flexibility and ultimately resilience. This will include items such as dredging for vessels with a deeper draught, ensuring piers and fendering can accommodate heavier vessels, and providing linkspans that are wider to accommodate vessels with a larger beam, for example. Development at ports will also take into account the need to make them more resilient as a result of climate change and will also consider opportunities for improved integration with public transport and active travel as part of onward connection in overall journeys. In some cases, progressive expansions of ports may have already reached a natural limit. Individual project business cases will

need to weigh resilience and other benefits against the financial and environmental costs and impacts.

For CHFS and NIFS, we aim to work with CMAL and the operators towards a “menu” of vessel options:

- The “Islay vessel” design or a variant will become the standard for major vessels where possible on CHFS, with the exception of Ardrossan-Brodick and Stornoway-Ullapool routes (given existing vessels being constructed or deployed on these services) and Mallaig-Lochboisdale. This will require upgrading of some ports on routes identified for these vessels. Where this would represent a disproportionate cost or poor Value for Money, or the costs are currently unaffordable, an adapted vessel design can be deployed. The Islay vessel was designed to respond to a high freight usage and a relatively low passenger demand – other routes may require a higher passenger capacity but lower freight (and therefore lower deadweight) but the objective will be to manage these modifications within the current design to promote inter-operability and retain a high level of standardisation.
- The first phase of the Small Vessel Replacement Programme has been designed to bring consistency in vessel certification, hull form and on-board engineering, bridge and safety equipment. This will allow inter-operability of vessels and crew where required and also help with maintenance and retaining spare parts. We will seek to replicate as much of this as possible in the second phase of the SVRP, noting that these vessels are likely to require consideration of some more bespoke elements given the characteristics of the routes being served.
- Between these two standardised designs there is the potential requirement for a medium sized vessel. This will be considered as we take forward proposals for replacements for Mull – see “Replacement of ‘Medium’ sized vessels”, below.
- Also, additional designs solutions are needed including for the Small Isles and the passenger vessels operating on Gourock/Dunoon/Kilcreggan.
- For the Northern Isles Vessels, the current work being undertaken by CMAL, Northlink and Transport Scotland is focused on replacement of the two freight vessels including a “Freight Flex” option that would allow greater resilience in poor weather as well as improved timetables with higher operating speeds. This design will also provide the option of operating in passenger mode with the provision of cabins, lounges and other facilities to help meet demand in peak season and improve resilience across the NIFS fleet. The current intention is that the hull form being considered will also be standardised and could be used as the basis for the replacement of the three RoPax (Roll-on Roll-off and Passenger) vessels. Again, on-board systems and equipment would also be intended to be standardised as much as possible.

## Second hand vessels

Second hand tonnage will continue to be explored and may present opportunities to accelerate benefits to communities by meeting an interim need when longer-term tonnage is being developed or may represent a more appropriate provision for the fleet/route. It may also contribute to improved reliability, accessibility and other key objectives. Each case will be considered on its own merits and the Plan adjusted accordingly if appropriate. The need for, and benefits of, second hand vessels, should reduce as more new replacements enter the fleet. Affordability and Value for Money would be key considerations.

## Environmental Impact and Low Carbon

The substantial investment required in vessels and ports set out in this Plan has environmental as well as financial costs. Recognising this means that environmental protection can be considered from the outset and opportunities for mitigation and enhancement measures can be considered through the business case process. This applies to both short-term construction impacts and potential longer-term impacts from ongoing vessel and port operation.

Scottish Ministers intend to explore all options and take action to decarbonise the ferry fleets going forward. The process of decarbonisation is already underway and will be built upon in the coming years; this will be reflected in future versions of this Plan, as the commercialisation of alternative technologies allow further milestones and targets to be set. This includes the SVRP where these vessels will operate on a fully electric basis.

The Scottish Government is, and remains, committed to Net Zero Targets. Our long-term goal is to reduce ferry carbon emissions very substantially by 2045 and, ideally, to eliminate them, as a contribution towards reaching net zero. Achieving this is highly dependent on low carbon fuels and suitable distribution infrastructure becoming commercially available. Investment planning will also need to take account of frequency and the cost of replacement batteries, and the recycling of these.

Challenges remain across the wider shipping industry around the ability to decarbonise the major vessel fleets given the current technology available. We will continue to explore opportunities to do so as technology develops, including potential options that may allow vessels to be retrofitted as solutions emerge. CMAL has already incorporated measures around more efficient hull forms and more efficient propulsion systems in the development of the most recent Islay Class vessels currently under construction and this will form a key consideration around the development of new vessel proposals.

As set out in the Strategic Approach, we are adopting the principle that all new ferries for CHFS and NIFS should be designed with potential for upgrade to utilise future zero emission propulsion where possible. Local authorities are encouraged to consider this principle for their own ferry fleets.

To support decarbonisation of the ferry fleets work to provide shore power connections at ports has already commenced, this will allow vessels to connect to the electricity network while at berth to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in ports.

Other initiatives at ports are site specific adoption of appropriate low and zero carbon technologies and materials responding to the local environment and its demands. Such location-specific projects delivered include air source heat pumps and photovoltaic panels on a number of terminal buildings, smart building management systems, low-maintenance, low-carbon composite cladding, EV charging points, low energy lighting and use of recycled materials. Future options will include nature based infrastructure solutions such as rain gardens, sustainable drainage systems and swales and reed bed filtration.

As recognised in the National Transport Strategy, in addition to minimising the future impacts of transport on our climate, our transport system, including our ferry system, needs to adapt to climate change impacts. Climate change directly affects the transport sector through the increasing number of more severe and frequent extreme weather events and the disruption they cause, such as erosion of our coastal areas, landslides and rising water levels.

We are taking action, such as through CMAL, where we have been actively monitoring the effects of climate change on rising sea levels to inform the design or improvements to port infrastructure.

These impacts may alter our investment prioritisation in later versions of this Plan.

## Outputs

Based on the Objectives and Inputs set out within this Plan it is envisaged that the following Outputs will be realised. In turn these Outputs will lead to meeting the outcomes defined within the ICP Strategic Approach:

- sustainable transport connectivity for island and peninsula communities on the CHFS and NIFS networks;
- increased reliability of the fleet due to ongoing vessel renewal and upgrading ports in response to asset age and condition;



- increased resilience of the network as a whole due to upgrading of ports, vessel renewal and fleet expansion, with increased standardisation leading to greater flexibility across the fleets for the operators;
- reduction in average age of the combined fleets due to ongoing vessel renewal;
- improved accessibility for passengers across the network due to fleet and port modernisation and increased standardisation;
- reduction in emissions across the vessel fleets due to vessel modernisation, optimal vessel and hull design, adoption of alternative fuels, and an increase in provision of shore power.

## Engagement and Consultation

The lead for each investment project – normally CMAL or a third party port owner – is responsible for consulting, engaging and communicating throughout the life of projects to ensure that vessel and port designs respond to operator, user and community needs. This should include consideration of how to target identified “hard to reach” groups. This engagement will be supported by Transport Scotland and the relevant operator as part of the wider governance around the development of these projects.

For projects led by CMAL, the CMAL Project Manager will agree with Transport Scotland and the relevant operator, and publish, a Communications and Engagement Plan which will follow a consistent pattern, typically:

- a series of public events (in-person and/or online) at key stages of the project or programme to inform and seek views with careful consideration of the timing, location and publicising of these opportunities;
- a “reference group” of key stakeholders for more detailed consultation and engagement on the development of the project or programme;
- a dedicated project page on the CMAL website to host updates and information;
- a log of all stakeholder comments and how these have been responded to;
- direct engagement with trade unions representatives of crew and staff;
- a report detailing all communications and engagement undertaken during the project, including “lessons learned” for other and future projects.

An Islands Communities Impact Assessment is also being carried out to inform the development of the overall Islands Connectivity Plan including this Vessels and Ports Plan. This process aims to ensure that the impacts on island communities are captured and considered in the development these proposals.



## Funding and Affordability

It is important that Scotland's ferry services are based on a sustainable long-term financial foundation and remain affordable. This Plan requires significant and sustained investment for its successful delivery. This Plan reflects and reports on the priorities of the current Infrastructure Investment Plan (2021-2026) and builds on that progress by recommending an investment programme from 2025 and over the longer term. In the context of constrained public finances now and in the years ahead, we must ensure that investments achieve Value for Money and are affordable.

Individual investment proposals are developed in line with Transport Scotland guidance and based on robust business cases which make the case for multi-annual budget commitments. Investment proposals need to cover not just one-off capital costs but also ongoing operating costs of the crew, fuel, harbour dues and other costs of operating a vessel and the staffing, maintenance and other costs of operating a port. In addition, the current and prospective revenues from customers, and other revenue generation opportunities, will inform each business case, particularly where proposed investments will lead to increased patronage.

The Scottish Public Finance Manual and HM Treasury Green Book both suggest that Value for Money can be assessed either by looking at the costs and benefits of an option (generally when it is a new intervention) or by looking at the cost-effectiveness of options in achieving or maintaining existing outcomes. In both cases, this is informed by the Scottish Government's aims as set out in the National Islands Plan and the National Transport Strategy.

We will capture Value for Money by taking a holistic view of the benefits and costs of the investment where appropriate. There are a number of costs and benefits associated with ferry services that cannot be easily quantified or monetised such as integration, accessibility and social inclusion and looking at the cost-effectiveness of options where appropriate. We will work with operators and stakeholders to improve our identification of the wider societal value of ferries as essential public services, in order to provide decision makers with robust justifications for public investment.

In both cases, assessing Value for Money ensures that recommended proposals meet objectives and strategic goals, where value includes the social, economic and environmental benefits of public investment, including where there is an opportunity through a vessel replacement or port renewal to make service enhancements which address identified transport connectivity needs.

The cost of investment in vessels, ports and ferry services is partly funded by fares revenue. This Vessels and Ports Plan, therefore, cannot be delivered in isolation

from the other elements of the ICP, including renewed CNAs of services and a holistic review of future ferry fares options as part of progress towards the financial sustainability of ferry services.

Affordability is confirmation, at the time of the investment decision, that the necessary funding is, and will be available, in the financial years covered by the construction project.

The investment programme set out in this draft Plan, informed by initial stakeholder engagement, represents the recommended programme needed to maintain and safely operate the current network of ferry services. It is important to highlight that although funding has been made available, subject to individual project decisions, for the initial years of the Plan (2021-2026), the full programme of investment identified for future years falls into the decision-making responsibility of future Parliaments and Governments and, therefore, does not currently have allocated funding. Given the long time period of the Plan, reprioritisation and flexibility is required, particularly in later phases of the Plan, as the availability of funding will ultimately determine the pace of delivery.

Individual investment decisions will be taken in the context of budget allocations and market conditions prevailing over time. When difficult decisions within the overall programme need to be taken due to affordability challenges, these will be guided by the approach to “Investment Prioritisation” described below.

Transport Scotland normally uses capital (CDEL) loans and grants for vessels and ports projects. Grants to the operators to support ongoing ferry services provided through the CHFS and NIFS contracts use resource funding (RDEL). Given the challenging financial context, the programme proposed in this Plan, and the approval of investment projects for the replacement or renewal of current vessel and port assets, will consider the impact on operating cost on a whole-life cost basis. This will start from the presumption that, unless there is an exceptional case with a strong Value for Money justification, capital investment will not lead to an increase in the costs of operating those assets. Furthermore, projects should seek to reduce the operating costs where possible and reasonable. This will enable savings to be reinvested in services and help towards the long-term financial sustainability of our ferry networks.

## Investment Prioritisation

In line with the National Transport Strategy’s Sustainable Investment Hierarchy, this Plan is focused on vessel and port assets to allow the existing network of routes and services to be maintained and operated safely. Accordingly, it recommends investments to achieve reliability and resilience improvements within the fleet and

achieve a target average vessel age of around 15 years by the end of this decade. However, when individual projects reach key decision points, the necessary funding may not be available. An objective and transparent approach to prioritisation is needed.

Available funding and investment should be prioritised to ensure that communities dependent on ferries retain these essential services. We, therefore, propose that, in such circumstances, the approach to investment prioritisation would be to firstly ensure that the fundamentals for sustainable services and the socio-economic sustainability of communities, particularly in terms of reliability and resilience, are in place. In cases where affordability requires difficult decisions to be taken, the following three elements would be prioritised (these are not in order and would all be considered together):

- the sustainability of ferry services by maintaining and increasing reliability and resilience, including consideration of whether there are alternative means for maintaining essential transport connectivity for communities by ferry, air or road during times of disruption to the infrastructure associated with a primary ferry route;
- those ferry routes and services that provide the primary transport connection for people, goods and services required for the sustainability of each community;
- those communities recognised as at greater risk of depopulation and economic decline and where assessment has identified investment in ferry assets as a preferred option in addressing that risk. This Plan does not identify those communities – this will be based on analysis and advice from the Scottish Government and local authorities in each case.

A large majority of consultation respondents agreed with the proposed approach and this will therefore be integrated into forward planning and investment decision-making. The factor of “communities identified as at greater risk of depopulation and economic decline” is retained and we recognise the concern expressed by some consultation respondents at what this could mean for vessel and port projects serving growing islands and where there has been an identified requirement for additional capacity. These projects will continue to be developed and reported on. This Plan also emphasises planning ahead to replace vessel and port assets as they approach asset life expiry, supporting the aim of achieving a fleet average age of 15 by the end of this decade and reducing the risk of reactive remedial works being required at ports.

## Monitoring and Review

Although this is the “final” version of the Plan, the intention is that it is reviewed and fully updated every five years so that there is always a 20-25 year forward look.

However, it also intended that the Plan is refreshed every two to three years to reflect changes – recognising that the investment programme is dynamic, not static. The first refresh will therefore take place during 2027 and a fully updated Vessels and Ports Plan published by the end of 2029.

The overall programme set out in the Plan will be kept under regular review, and the proposals within it prioritised, in the light of the financial environment and progress towards the financial sustainability of our ferry networks. This would reflect:

- progress with project implementation;
- changes arising from decisions made during project / programme implementation;
- outputs of mid-life reviews and refreshed needs assessments;
- results of regular vessel and port condition assessments.

Monitoring of the implementation of this Plan will also be ongoing through regular reporting from individual projects and programmes, primarily through the project pages on the [CMAL website](#).

## Investment Plans

### Asset Renewal

This Plan sets out the investment programme recommended to maintain and safely operate the current network of ferry services, in particular by:

- renewing the fleet and upgrading ports in response to asset age and condition;
- improving technical and weather reliability when investing in new vessels and port upgrades;
- improving resilience through an expansion in the major vessel fleet and through increased interoperability of vessels and ports within the major and small vessel fleets.

The objective for vessels is to bring the average fleet age down to around 15 years whilst making necessary improvements in reliability and resilience.

The intention is for CMAL and the relevant operator to undertake reviews of assets at their approximate mid-life – this will inform decisions on planned life extension projects, redeployment of vessels and the planned timing of replacement or disposal. Such reviews would be part of asset management and the results will feed into future versions of this Plan. Longer-term forward planning will also assist all parties, and

the services operators in particular, with workforce planning, recruitment and training.

## Delivery Phases

This Plan is broken down into 4 broad time phases:

- Phase 1 – projects listed in the IIP for initiation or delivery 2021-2026.
- Phase 2 – projects recommended for initiation or delivery 2026-2031.
- Phase 3 – projects recommended for initiation or delivery 2031-2036.
- Phase 4 – projects recommended for initiation or delivery 2036-2045.

The level of uncertainty increases for later phases. The pace and timing of delivery in practice will depend on a number of factors including the outcomes of CNAs, stakeholder feedback, availability of funding, capacity of suppliers and updated reviews of asset condition. To ensure this Plan remains up to date, it is intended to refresh it every two to three years and fully update it every five years.

## Phase 1 – 2021-2026

### Fleet and Port enhancements

As stated previously, the Scottish Government's IIP published in February 2021 set out a series of vessel and port projects that would be taken forward during the five years of the IIP from April 2021 to March 2026, in addition to the completion of the MVs Glen Sannox and Glen Rosa.

The projects listed in that Plan were:

Replacement vessel projects for:	Major harbour development projects at:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Islay</li> <li>• Gourock-Dunoon-Kilcreggan passenger services</li> <li>• Up to 7 small vessels for the Clyde and Hebrides network</li> <li>• Craginure-Oban</li> <li>• Mallaig-Lochboisdale</li> <li>• Northern Isles freighters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ardrossan</li> <li>• Little Minch: Uig, Tarbert and Lochmaddy</li> <li>• Gourock</li> <li>• Lochboisdale (Gasay)</li> <li>• Armadale</li> <li>• Kennacraig</li> <li>• Oban</li> </ul>

Given the long lead-times for vessel and port projects, it was always known that a number of these projects would require further funding for construction beyond the five-year period of the IIP.

The current status of these projects, including MVs Glen Sannox and Glen Rosa, and some additional major projects added since the publication of the IIP, is set out below:

## Completed

- Tarbert port
- Lochmaddy port
- MV Glen Sannox

## Underway

- MV Glen Rosa
- Uig Port
- Islay Vessel 1 (MV Isle of Islay)
- Small Vessel Replacement Programme (Phase 1)

## In Development

- Ardrossan port
- Gourock port
- Gourock-Dunoon/Kilcreggan vessels
- Northern Isles freighters
- Mallaig-Lochboisdale vessel
- Lochboisdale (Gasay) port
- Craignure-Oban vessel
- Armadale
- Oban – berth 1 upgrades

## Additional since IIP Publication

- Islay vessel 2 (MV Loch Indaal)
- Islay vessel enabling port works (Kennacraig/Port Askaig/Colonsay)
- Little Minch vessels 1 and 2 (MV Lochmor and MV Claymore)
- SVRP port works
- Port Ellen terminal development
- SVRP Phase 2
- Mallaig overnight ferry berth
- Cumbrae slipway and landside improvements

In addition, a number of other third party port projects are in development, notably:

- Craginure – Argyll & Bute Council (ABC) are working towards an Outline Business Case for a major redevelopment of the existing port which is reaching asset life expiry;
- Dunoon and Kilcreggan – As part of the replacement vessels project being led by CMAL, ABC is developing designs to accommodate future vessels for services to Gourock.
- Iona and Fionnphort – ABC is undertaking design and statutory approvals work for the upgrading of these ports which will improve reliability of the crossing.

## Increased Fleet Resilience – CHFS Major Vessels

The delivery of new vessels during Phase 1 will also enable an increase in the resilience of the major vessel fleet through:

- the retention of a major CHFS “resilience vessel” as a priority following the delivery of new tonnage to provide network resilience until at least 2030. Although remaining part of the CHFS fleet, this increased fleet size should also provide a potential option for responding to an unplanned outage on the NIFS network.
- The deployment of two vessels, in summer, on the Uig-Tarbert/Lochmaddy services (“Little Minch”). This will strengthen resilience of the services to the Outer Hebrides as a whole (in case of disruption to the services to Stornoway or Barra, for example) and to the wider CHFS and NIFS networks.

These two decisions increase the size of the current CHFS major vessel fleet from 10 to 12.

The future need for the “resilience vessel” will be reviewed around 2030, once the major vessel fleet has been renewed and the improvement in resilience from a fleet of modern vessels can be assessed. The “resilience vessel” will be one in the current fleet retained for that purpose – it does not need another new vessel to be procured.

Replacements (newbuild or second hand) for 8 of the other CHFS major vessels (excluding the “resilience vessel”) are envisaged in Phases 1 and 2. The replacements for MVs Finlaggan and Loch Seaforth are not due until Phase 4.

Major vessel replacement projects (CHFS) already at various stages in the investment programme are:

- 801 (Glen Sannox) – delivered November 2024
- 802 (Glen Rosa) – under construction;
- two new vessels for Islay – under construction;
- two additional “Islay class” vessels for the “Little Minch” – under construction;



- replacement vessel for Mallaig-Lochboisdale – project in development but not currently funded, and;
- replacement vessels for Craignure-Oban – project in development but not currently funded.

The introduction of new vessels will enable the re-deployment of some major vessels. Whilst deployment plans remain under review, the working assumptions informing current planning are:

- following entry into service of MVs Glen Sannox and Glen Rosa, MV Caledonian Isles will be redeployed to Craignure-Oban services pending procurement and delivery of new vessels for that route, and releasing MV Isle of Mull for disposal;
- following entry into service of the 2 new Islay vessels, MV Finlaggan will become the “resilience vessel”, releasing MV Isle of Arran for disposal;
- following entry into service of the 2 new Little Minch vessels, MV Hebrides will be redeployed to the Oban-Coll/Tiree and Oban-Colonsay services with MV Clansman redeployed to the Oban-Castlebay service, and releasing MV Isle of Lewis for disposal.

The successful delivery of all these projects will, therefore, leave two further CHFS major vessels during Phase 2.

## Small Vessel Replacement Programme (SVRP)

The IIP includes a commitment to SVRP, reflecting the age of many of this type of CHFS ferry.

The Outline Business Case (OBC) for the first phase of SVRP, recommended the number of vessels to be replaced, the type of vessel replacements and the timing of procurements and was completed in 2024 with procurement launched in July 2024. A contract was awarded in March 2025 for replacements for 7 of the oldest vessels in the fleet. Proposed deployment of new and current vessels, associated port works including shore power requirements and vessel redeployments and disposals have been developed and will be shared through that programme. The small vessel fleet already benefits from the resilience provided by additional vessels - currently MV Loch Linnhe and MV Loch Bhrusda. We aim to retain these resilience benefits through the SVRP.

It is recommended that the proposal from the Ferries Plan (2012) to work towards a single passenger and vehicle crossing from Point to Port Appin, which is the shorter of the two crossings to Lismore, is carried forward. Any business case to support this proposal will be informed by discussions with stakeholders, the CNA and engagement with the communities of Lismore and Appin.



The SVRP is continuing with the recent commencement of Phase 2, with the objective of replacing further vessels, including those serving the Sounds of Harris and Barra and including consideration of future vessels for Mallaig-Armadale.

## Gourock-Dunoon/Kilcreggan

The IIP also included a commitment to replacement passenger ferries for services from Gourock to Dunoon and Kilcreggan, reflecting the reliability and condition of the former rather than strict vessel age. This vessel replacement OBC is also advancing. The [CNAs for Cowal \(Gourock-Dunoon passenger ferry\) and Rosneath \(Gourock-Kilcreggan passenger ferry\)](#) were published on 11 September 2024 and, on 13 March 2025, the [Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity announced that services would be reduced to reflect identified community need](#) noting that focus could now turn to the vessel replacement project, ensuring a more reliable service between Gourock and Dunoon.

## Northern Isles freight vessels

A CMAL-led project to replace the two Northern Isles freight vessels with an improved design, adding capacity and reducing passage time, and potentially adding some flexible passenger-carrying capacity, is now at the design stage and an Outline Business Case is being considered.

## Ports and Harbours

A number of major port projects are expected to conclude or significantly progress during Phase 1: Tarbert (completed), Lochmaddy (completed), Uig, Troon enabling works (available for use) and Islay enabling works. Other CMAL port projects are under development but not funded: the most significant of these projects in terms of scale are Port Ellen terminal redevelopment and Gasay (Lochboisdale) port construction.

The Ardrossan project is currently undergoing a business case review and cost exercise, which is of vital importance in defining the scope of works, allowing greater certainty of the project costs and the financial packages required from each of the funding partners to deliver an improved service for the Arran community. This was paused in February 2025 to explore an alternative approach to delivery through the potential purchase of the port by CMAL from Peel Ports.

## Additional developments

During Phase 1 we also propose to commence work to develop business cases for a number of other projects, in addition to those already underway, to ensure that later phases of this draft Plan are on track:

- Small Isles vessel replacement project and associated port works;
- CHFS major vessel replacement project for MVs Clansman and Hebrides, and;
- NIFS replacement project for MVs Hrossey, Hjaltland and Hamnavoe.

## Phase 2 – 2026-2031

### Fleet and Port enhancements

Phase 2 will require significant further investment planning and delivery of vessels and ports on the CHFS and NIFS networks. Based on an assumed vessel operating life of 30-years on these networks, recommendations include:

- completion of Phase 1 and much of Phase 2 of the CHFS Small Vessel Replacement Programme;
- replacement of the two NIFS freighters (not before 2029);
- completion of the renewal of the CHFS major vessel fleet including vessels for Craginure-Oban and Mallaig-Lochboisdale;
- new tonnage for the Small Isles (before 2030/2031);
- completion of port enabling works associated with the above vessel projects;
- significant progress on CMAL port project(s) at Gourrock;
- construction and completion of CMAL port projects at Cumbrae, Lochboisdale (Gasay), Port Ellen and Oban 1 berth;
- initiation of CMAL port projects at Armadale, Oban, Castlebay and Kennacraig in addition to the completion of the majority of the projects commenced during Phase 1;
- development/procurement of replacements for the 3 NIFS RoPax vessels;
- planning for the replacement of CHFS “medium” vessels (see below);
- replacement of the current Kerrera vessel, MV Carvorra.

### Northern Isles passenger services

Two large vehicle and passenger vessels, MVs Hrossey and Hjaltland, serving Shetland and Orkney from Aberdeen, will both be 30 years old in 2032 and the MV Hamnavoe, serving Orkney across the Pentland Firth, will reach that age a year later. Work on planning for and procuring their replacements will commence during

the later part of Phase 1 with a view to the delivery of new tonnage in the early part of Phase 3. This will include engagement with the Orkney and Shetland communities and liaison with the 4 port owners.

## Small Isles

The Small Isles vessel, MV Lochnevis, was built in 2000 and, therefore, is expected to be replaced by the end of Phase 2. There is an outstanding proposal in the Ferries Plan for a change to the number and type of vessels serving the Small Isles which was not taken forward following further engagement with the communities. Work on replacement tonnage will follow the conclusion of a refreshed CNA. This project is therefore scheduled for initiation in Phase 1 and will include engagement with the four Small Isles' communities and liaison with the port owners.

## CHFS Major Vessel network

As noted above, the MV Hebrides will be redeployed to serve Coll, Tiree and Colonsay. Based on asset life, she will be due for replacement at the end of Phase 2. As set out in the 'Standardisation' section above, this would ideally be another "Islay vessel" design or a variant. However, this would require port enabling works at for Coll and Tiree that are expected to be extensive.

The working assumption is therefore that major port works by CMAL at Coll and Tiree, identified as a future requirement in line with asset life, will be undertaken after the delivery of a replacement major vessel for those services planned for Phase 2. The replacement vessel will therefore need to be a design that can serve those ports and communities reliably. There will also need to be suitable tonnage retained within the fleet that can provide overhaul cover for Coll and Tiree.

However, it would be appropriate for the business case process for the new vessel to consider the timing, feasibility and affordability of accelerating the major port investment foreseen at Coll and Tiree so that it would take place in parallel with the vessel replacement project during Phase 2. Given the planned timescales, this option would need early consideration.

Due to port assets reaching life expiry, a number of major renewal projects are being led by CMAL with business cases being developed, notably Lochboisdale, Armadale, Kennacraig and Oban. The funding decisions whether to support these projects will consider affordability and Value for Money as this work progresses.

Mallaig Harbour Authority (MHA) has indicated that significant works will be required to the port assets supporting current ferry services;

## Replacement of ‘Medium’ size vessels

During Phases 2 and 3, replacements for a number of “medium” CHFS vessels will require consideration for:

- Mallaig-Armadale, currently served by MV Loch Fyne (1991) and MV Coruisk (2003);
- Wemyss Bay – Rothesay, current served by MVs Bute (2005), Argyle (2007) and (winter relief) Coruisk;
- MV Loch Frisa (2015, into service on CHFS 2022) recently introduced to the Craignure-Oban service alongside the major vessel MV Isle of Mull (1988).

These three routes share some characteristics that distinguish them from both the major vessels and small vessels used on CHFS both now and as planned for the future. They are all in more sheltered waters, which is reflected in the vessel classification requirements, and are also relatively short crossings of less than an hour with high volumes of passenger and vehicle traffic particularly in summer. Whilst future service requirements for each of these routes will be examined through CNAs under ICP, the potential for a class of vessel suitable for these routes, but potentially with wider resilience benefits beyond these locations, is one we consider worth exploring.

The initial decision point for this will be the replacement tonnage for Craignure-Oban during Phases 1 and 2. This project is currently developing a business case proposal for two new vessels for this route which would free up the MV Loch Frisa, although options for her redeployment on the CHFS network are currently limited.

## Phase 3 – 2031-2036

### Fleet and Port enhancements

The five years from 2031-2036 will require continued significant investments, again based on an assumed operating life of 30 years on these networks.

Recommendations include:

- delivery of replacements for the three NIFS passenger and vehicle vessels;
- replacement of CHFS “medium” vessels including replacement tonnage for the Wemyss Bay-Rothesay route to Bute;
- replacement of the MV Loch Shira, currently serving Cumbrae, potentially as part of a third phase of the Small Vessel Replacement Programme;
- CMAL port projects are scheduled to be initiated for Colonsay, Tiree and Coll;
- construction and completion of port projects commenced during Phase 2;

- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has indicated that works are anticipated to be required to the port infrastructure supporting the Sound of Barra and Sound of Harris services around this time, subject to a fuller assessment;
- consideration of “life extension” projects.

MHA has also published ambitious proposals for the future development of the port which would include improved facilities for ferry services.

As they approach normal working life expiry, replacements should be procured to replace the MV Loch Shira serving Cumbrae and the 3 hybrid vessels introduced in the last decade (MVs Hallaig, Lochinvar and Catriona).

Other CMAL major ports recommended for major investment due to advancing age during Phases 3 and 4 are Coll, Tiree, Colonsay and Wemyss Bay. The planning and delivery of these projects will need to be considered alongside vessel replacement plans and also to support network resilience through the interoperability of the future fleets.

During Phases 3 and 4 of this Plan, we will explore vessel life extension projects to smooth the future investment programme and also, in line with commercial and technical feasibility, enable the conversion of vessels to zero/low emission technology.

## Phase 4 – 2036-2045

Recommendations for the final decade of the proposed plan could see:

- continued replacement of vessels as they reach operational life expiry, including MVs Finlaggan and Loch Seaforth;
- the construction and completion of projects commenced during Phase 3;
- CMAL review of mid-life port assets and development of life extension options;
- Lerwick Port Authority has indicated that the main port assets used by the NIFS ferry service will be required to be upgraded during this Phase;
- life extension options planned in for mid-life of vessels;
- decarbonisation requirements ahead of 2045 – including those vessels delivered and/or procured in the 2020s;
- the commencement of planning for the replacement of the vessels now due for delivery in the early 2020s.

Phase 4 would see the replacement of MV Finlaggan (2011) and MV Loch Seaforth (2014). Alongside this – although subject to analysis and decisions closer to the time – we envisage a number of the major vessels (from either or both networks) delivered in the 2020s undergoing “life extension”. This would help smooth the future investment programme and also provide the opportunity for retrofitting of zero emission propulsion – subject to technical and commercial feasibility.

## Additional Options

While the plan above recommends a core investment programme, there are a number of opportunities to enhance the networks during the life of this Plan that have been identified for further consideration. Some have already been confirmed:

- resilience vessel for the CHFS major vessel fleet;
- two-vessel summer service for the Little Minch

Other potential changes to services, with implications for the future investment programme set out in future versions of this Plan, are expected to be identified through CNAs. The first refresh of this Plan in 2027 would therefore reflect the outcomes arising from the full round of assessments of CHFS and NIFS routes and services.

Any proposed changes will be subject to Value for Money and affordability. Due to the scale of investment needed to deliver the plan, the opportunity to implement some of these outcomes is likely to come in the longer-term, once the significant investment identified for the next decade to maintain the current network of services has been secured – see section on Investment Prioritisation, above.

## Annexes

### Annex A – Vessels – Clyde and Hebrides

Vessel	Year entered service	Proposed replacement	Owner	Type	Primary route (Summer)	Primary route (Winter)
Isle of Cumbrae	1977	Phase 1	CMAL	Small	Tarbert – Portavadie	Relief cover
Isle of Arran	1984	Phase 1	CMAL	Major	Ardrossan-Brodick / Campbeltown	Relief cover
Hebridean Isles	1985	Retired November 2024	CMAL	Major	Islay	Islay / Relief cover
Loch Linnhe	1986	Phase 2	CMAL	Small	Spare	Relief cover
Loch Riddon	1986	Phase 2	CMAL	Small	Largs - Cumbrae	Relief cover
Loch Striven	1986	Phase 2	CMAL	Small	Oban - Lismore	Lismore
Loch Ranza	1987	Phase 2	CMAL	Small	Tayinloan - Gigha	Gigha
Isle of Mull	1988	Phase 2	CMAL	Major	Oban-Craignure	Oban-Craignure
Lord of the Isles	1989	Phase 2	CMAL	Major	Mallaig – Lochboisdale	Mallaig / Oban – Lochboisdale; Oban - Colonsay
Loch Dunvegan	1991	Phase 2	CMAL	Small	Colintraive- - Rhubodach	Colintraive- - Rhubodach
Loch Fyne	1991	Phase 2	CMAL	Small	Mallaig – Armadale	Relief cover
Loch Buie	1992	Phase 2	CMAL	Small	Fionnphort - Iona	Fionnphort - Iona



Vessel	Year entered service	Proposed replacement	Owner	Type	Primary route (Summer)	Primary route (Winter)
Loch Tarbet	1992	Phase 2	CMAL	Small	Tobermory - Kilchoan	Tobermory - Kilchoan
Caledonian Isles	1993	Phase 1	CMAL	Major	Ardrossan - Brodick	Ardrossan - Brodick
Isle of Lewis	1995	Phase 1/2	CMAL	Major	Oban- Castlebay / Relief Cover	Oban- Castlebay
Loch Bhrusda	1996	Phase 2	CMAL	Small	Spare / Relief	Relief cover
Loch Alainn	1997	Phase 2	CMAL	Small	Sound of Barra	Sound of Barra
Clansman	1998	Phase 2	CMAL	Major	Oban – Coll / Tiree / Colonsay	Oban – Coll / Tiree / Colonsay
Lochnevis	2000	Phase 2	CMAL	Small	Mallaig - Small Isles	Small Isles  Mallaig - Armadale
Hebrides	2001	Phase 2	CMAL	Major	Uig – Tabert / Lochmaddy	Uig – Tabert / Lochmaddy
Loch Portain	2003	Phase 2	CMAL	Small	Sound of Harris	Sound of Harris
Coruisk	2003	Phase 2/3	CMAL	Medium	Mallaig – Armadale	Wemyss Bay – Rothesay Relief cover
Bute	2005	Phase 3/4	CMAL	Medium	Wemyss Bay - Rothesay	Wemyss Bay - Rothesay
Loch Shira	2007	Phase 3/4	CMAL	Small	Largs - Cumbrae	Largs - Cumbrae
Argyle	2007	Phase 3/4	CMAL	Medium	Wemyss Bay - Rothesay	Wemyss Bay - Rothesay
Ali Cat	2000	Phase 1	DML	Passenger	Gourock- Dunoon	Gourock- Dunoon

Vessel	Year entered service	Proposed replacement	Owner	Type	Primary route (Summer)	Primary route (Winter)
Argyll Flyer	2001	Phase 1	DML	Passenger	Gourock-Dunoon	Gourock-Dunoon
Chieftain	2007	Phase 2	CMS	Passenger	Gourock-Kilcreggan	Gourock-Kilcreggan
Finlaggan	2011	Phase 4	CMAL	Major	Kennacraig - Islay	Kennacraig - Islay
Hallaig	2012	Phase 4	CMAL	Small	Sconser - Raasay	Sconser - Raasay
Loch Seaforth	2014	Phase 4	CMAL	Major	Stornoway – Ullapool	Stornoway – Ullapool
Lochinvar	2013	Phase 4	CMAL	Small	Fishnish - Lochaline	Fishnish - Lochaline
Loch Frisa	2015	Phase 4	CMAL	Medium	Oban-Craignure	Oban-Craignure
Catriona	2016	Phase 4	CMAL	Small	Claonaig - Lochranza	Tabert – Lochranza / Portavadie
Carvoria	2017	Phase 4	CMAL	Small	Gallanach - Kerrera	Gallanach - Kerrera
Glen Sannox	2024	Phase 4	CMAL	Major	Ardrossan-Brodick	Ardrossan-Brodick

Some replaced vessels will be retained to provide short-term stand-by cover for new vessels. Some surplus vessels will also be retained as network-wide “resilience vessels”.

The introduction of 6 new major vessels in Phase 1 will produce opportunities for the deployment of some major vessels (others will be disposed or retained as the “resilience vessel”. Whilst deployment plans remain under review, the expectation is that this would allow for the replacement of the MV Isle of Lewis on the Oban-Castlebay service.

Also, the plan is to replace MV Hebrides with 2 new vessels on the “Little Minch” services with vessel delivery scheduled during Phase 1. MV Hebrides would then be redeployed and herself replaced by the end of Phase 2 (2031).



## Annex B – Vessels – Northern Isles

Vessel	Year entered service	Proposed replacement	Owner	Type	Primary route (Summer)	Primary route (Winter)
MV Helliard	1997	Phase 2	CMAL	Freighter	Aberdeen – Kirkwall - Lerwick	Aberdeen – Kirkwall - Lerwick
MV Hildasay	1999	Phase 2	CMAL	Freighter	Aberdeen – Kirkwall - Lerwick	Aberdeen – Kirkwall - Lerwick
MV Hrossey	2002	Phase 3	CMAL	Major	Aberdeen – Kirkwall - Lerwick	Aberdeen – Kirkwall - Lerwick
MV Hjaltland	2002	Phase 3	CMAL	Major	Aberdeen – Kirkwall - Lerwick	Aberdeen – Kirkwall - Lerwick
MV Hamnavoe	2003	Phase 3	CMAL	Major	Scrabster - Stromness	Scrabster - Stromness

## Annex C – Ports – Clyde and Hebrides

ABP - Associated British Ports

ABC - Argyll & Bute Council

CNES - Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

CMAL - Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd

MHA - Mallaig Harbour Authority

NTS - National Trust for Scotland

SPA - Stornoway Port Authority

TLFHA - Tarbert Loch Fyne Harbour Authority

THC - The Highland Council

UHT - Ullapool Harbor Trust

Port	Location	Owner	Berthing Type
Aird Mhor	Barra	CNES	Slip
Ardrossan	North Ayrshire	Peel Ports	Linkspan
Armadale	Sleat, Skye	CMAL	Linkspan
Berneray	Berneray	CNES	Slip
Brodick	Arran	CMAL	Linkspan
Bull Hole	Mull	CMAL	Overnight berth
Campbeltown	Kintyre	ABC	Linkspan
Canna	Canna	NTS	Slip
Castlebay	Barra	CMAL	Linkspan
Claonaig	Kintyre	CMAL	Slip
Colintraive	Cowal	CMAL	Slip
Coll	Coll	CMAL	Linkspan
Colonsay	Colonsay	CMAL	Linkspan
Craignure	Mull	ABC	Linkspan

Port	Location	Owner	Berthing Type
Cumrae	Cumrae	CMAL	Slip
Dunoon	Cowal	ABC	Linkspan
Eigg	Eigg	THC	Slip
Eriskay	Eriskay	CNES	Slip
Fionnphort	Mull	ABC	Slip
Fishnish	Mull	CMAL	Slip
Gallanach	Near Oban	CMAL	Slip
Gigha	Gigha	ABC	Slip
Gigha berth	Gigha	ABC	Overnight berth
Gourock	Inverclyde	CMAL	Linkspan Boat steps
Iona	Iona	ABC	Slip
Kennacraig	Kintyre	CMAL	Linkspan
Kerrera	Kerrera	CMAL	Slip
Kilchoan	Ardnamurchan	CMAL	Slip
Kilcreggan	Rosneath peninsula	ABC	Pier (no linkspan)
Largs	North Ayrshire	CMAL	Slip
Leverburgh	Harris	CNES	Slip
Lismore	Lismore	ABC	Slip
Lochaline	Morven	CMAL	Slip
Lochboisdale	South Uist	CMAL	Linkspan
Lochmaddy	North Uist	CNES	Linkspan
Lochranza	Arran	CMAL	Slip
Mallaig	Mallaig	MHA	Linkspan
Muck	Muck	THC	Slip
Oban	Oban	CMAL	Linkspan x 2 Slip
Otternish	Berneray	CNES	Overnight berth

Port	Location	Owner	Berthing Type
Port Askaig	Islay	ABC	Linkspan Slip
Port Ellen	Islay	CMAL	Linkspan
Portavadie	Cowal	CMAL	Slip
Raasay	Raasay	THC	Slip
Rhubodach	Bute	CMAL	Slip
Rothesay	Bute	ABC	Linkspan
Rum	Rum	THC	Slip
Sconser	Skye	THC	Slip
Stornoway	Lewis	SPA	Linkspan
Tarbert, Harris	Harris	CMAL	Linkspan
Tarbert, Loch Fyne	Kintyre	TLFHA	Slip
Tayinloan	Kintyre	ABC	Slip
Tiree	Tiree	CMAL	Linkspan
Tobermory	Mull	CMAL	Slip
Troon	South Ayrshire	ABP	Linkspan x 2
Uig	Skye	THC	Linkspan
Ullapool	Ullapool	UHT	Linkspan
Wemyss Bay	Inverclyde	CMAL	Linkspan

## Annex D – Ports – Northern Isles

Port	Location	Owner	Type
Aberdeen	Aberdeen	Aberdeen Harbour Authority	Linkspan
Lerwick	Shetland	Lerwick Port Authority	Linkspan
Kirkwall	Orkney	Orkney Islands Council	Linkspan
Stromness	Orkney	Orkney Islands Council	Linkspan
Scrabster	Caithness	Scrabster Harbour Trust	Linkspan



## Annex E – Local Authority Vessels and Ports

Shetland Islands Council

Vessel	Year entered service	Type	Primary route (summer)	Ports
Bigga	1991	Vehicle/passenger	Bluemull Sound	Gutcher (Yell) Belmont (Unst) Hamars Ness (Fetlar)
Dagalien	2004	Vehicle/passenger	Yell Sound	Toft (Shetland Mainland) Ulsta (Yell)
Daggri	2003	Vehicle/passenger	Yell Sound	Toft (Shetland Mainland) Ulsta (Yell)
Filla	2003	Vehicle/passenger	Out Skerries	Symbister (Whalsay) Laxo (Shetland Mainland) Vidlin (Shetland Mainland) Out Skerries Harbour
Fivla	1985	Vehicle/passenger	Deployed across all routes covering docking periods and breakdowns	Deployed across all routes
Geira	1988	Vehicle/passenger	Bluemull Sound	Gutcher (Yell) Belmont (Unst) Hamars Ness (Fetlar)
Good Shepherd	1986	Passenger (1 craned car)	Fair Isle	North Haven (Fair Isle) Grutness (Shetland Mainland)
Hendra	1982	Vehicle/passenger	Whalsay	Symbister (Whalsay) Laxo (Shetland Mainland) Vidlin (Shetland Mainland)
Leirna	1992	Vehicle/passenger	Bressay	Bressay Ferry Terminal (Lerwick) Bressay Ferry Terminal (Bressay)
Linga	2002	Vehicle/passenger	Whalsay	Symbister (Whalsay) Laxo (Shetland Mainland) Vidlin (Shetland Mainland)

Vessel	Year entered service	Type	Primary route (summer)	Ports
Snolda	1983	Vehicle/passenger	Papa Stour	West Burrafirth (Shetland Mainland) Hamnavoe (Papa Stour)
New Advance	1996	Passenger (1 craned car)	Foula	West Burrafirth (Shetland Mainland) Foula (Foula)

Note: Both ferry terminals for the service to Bressay are within the Lerwick Harbour area and are owned and managed by Shetland Islands Council rather than Lerwick Port Authority

#### The Highland Council

Vessel	Year entered service	Type	Primary route (Summer)	Ports
Corran	2001	Vehicle/passenger	Corran	Corran, Ardgour
Maid of Glencoul	1975	Vehicle/passenger	Corran (relief)	Corran, Ardgour
Western Isles	1960	Passenger	Knoydart / Tarbet	Mallaig, Inverie, Tarbet
Larven	2017	Passenger	Knoydart / Tarbet	Mallaig, Inverie, Tarbet
Bigger Dipper	2023	Passenger	Small Isles (school transport)	Mallaig, Eigg, Muck, Rum, Canna
Lismore	1988	Passenger	Camusnagaul	Fort William, Camusnagaul
Renfrew Rose	1984	Vehicle/passenger	Cromarty	Cromarty, Nigg

Note that Corran and Maid of Glencoul are Council-owned; other vessels are privately owned, operating routes contracted by the Council.

Orkney Islands Council

Vessel	Year entered service	Type	Primary route (summer)	Ports
Charles Ann II	2012	Passenger	Westray – Papa Westray inter-island	Moclett (Papa Westray) Pierowall (Westray)
Earl Sigurd Earl Thorfinn	1989 1989	Vehicle/passenger	Outer North Isles	Kirkwall Nouster (North Ronaldsay) Moclett (Papa Westray) Backaland (Eday) Loth (Sanday) Whitehall (Stronsay) Rapness (Westray)
Eynhallow	1987	Vehicle/passenger	Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre	Trumland (Rousay) Egilsay Wyre Tingwall Shapinsay
Graemsay	1996	Passenger	Graemsay and Hoy	Graemsay Moaness (Hoy) Stromness
Hoy Head	1994	Vehicle/passenger	South Isles	Lyness (Hoy) Longhope (Hoy) Houton (Orphir)
Shapinsay	1988	Vehicle/passenger	Shapinsay, Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre	Kirkwall Balfour (Shapinsay) Trumland (Rousay) Egilsay Wyre
Nordic Sea	2012	Passenger	Relief	Various
Thorsvoe	1991	Vehicle/passenger	Shapinsay/relief	Various
Varagen	1988	Vehicle/passenger	Outer North Isles	Kirkwall Backaland (Eday) Loth (Sanday) Whitehall (Stronsay) Rapness (Westray)

Planned vessel configuration will look slightly different, with three larger vessels proposed for the Outer North Isles plus an additional smaller vessel deployed to specifically serve North Ronaldsay and Papa Westray on a tidal Ro-Ro basis.



**TRANSPORT  
SCOTLAND**

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