

## **GOUROCK-DUNOON FERRY SERVICE STEERING GROUP**

### **Deployment of the MV Coruisk – 16 December 2014 to 1 April 2015**

#### Background

1. The AFL service suffered a significant deterioration in performance during winter 2011-12. The AFL service also suffered significant weather disruption during Winter 2012-13. Bad weather affected reliability during the winter season (November 2012 to March 2013) with only 86% of sailings taking place (and only 68% in March 2013).

2. A limited number of options were available to AFL and to the Scottish Ministers to improve the resilience of the service in the winter 2013-14. A search for short-term replacement vessels had been initiated early in 2012 but this had not resulted in any suitable vessels offering significant performance improvements being found. The only vessel available for deployment on the service in 2013-14 was the MV Coruisk.

3. Following a review of the Winter 2013-14 MV Coruisk deployment, and the inability to again provide additional resilience on the route through replacement tonnage, the Deputy First Minister took the decision to redeploy the MV Coruisk during the Winter 2014-5.

4. The Deputy First Minister announced on 21 August 2014 that:

*“The MV Coruisk was welcomed by regular passengers on the Gourock-Dunoon route last winter and brought additional resilience and confidence to the service which had been lacking in previous years.*

*“I want passengers to have that same confidence this winter and, following consultation with the Gourock-Dunoon Ferry Services Steering Group and with Argyll Ferries Limited, I have decided that the redeployment of the MV Coruisk is the best option for passengers who depend on the service.*

*“The MV Coruisk is the only suitable and available vessel able to operate on this service. When she is available this winter, she will carry passengers on key peak sailings on the route and be on standby during other periods.”*

#### Deployment details

5. The MV Coruisk is deployed on the Mallaig-Armadale service during CalMac's summer season and provides overhaul cover to the MV Argyle and the MV Bute on the Wemyss Bay-Rothesay service for part of the winter season. This left a period of just over 3 months available from 16 December 2014 to 1 April 2015.

6. Following consultation with user representatives, AFL again deployed the MV Coruisk on the same sailings as in the previous Winter:

Gourock departures	0645	0750	1650	1750
Dunoon departures	0715	0820	1720	1820

7. The deployment at peak times ensured that key commuter services were again strengthened and also addressed the concern raised by AFL that the MV Coruisk would struggle to maintain the hourly return timetable over an extended period<sup>1</sup>. Keeping the deployment to 2 return sailings morning and evening gave confidence that any delays would not have significant knock-on effects on to later services. At other times the MV Coruisk remained on stand-by to be deployed step if the other vessels were unable to operate due to the weather conditions.

8. The MV Coruisk was also deployed on the route following short term technical issues with the MV Argyll Flyer. The MV Coruisk provided 138 additional sailings to cover during the MV Argyll Flyer's absence. In this way the vessel fulfilled her purpose in adding resilience and maintaining the AFL scheduled timetable for the benefit and convenience of their travelling customers.

9. The MV Coruisk's service operated until Tuesday 1 April 2015 before leaving to resume her normal, Mallaig to Armadale service ahead of the Easter holiday weekend.

10. The following report gives factual statistics on the AFL operation over Winter 2014-15 and also provides comparisons, where possible, with the previous year's deployment of the MV Coruisk.

## Performance

### *Sailings*

11. There were 696 sailings scheduled for the MV Coruisk during her period of deployment. In total 916 scheduled sailings took place including additional sailings covering for the MV Argyll Flyer, 56 were cancelled due to adverse weather conditions, 8 for technical reasons, 2 due to the unavailability of Gourock pier and 20 due to hours of rest for the crew restrictions due to the large number of additional covering services being provided.

12. The MV Coruisk provided an additional 306 sailings when one or both of the other 2 vessels were unable to sail. 18 of these sailings were made by the MV Coruisk when both the MV AliCat and the MV Argyll Flyer were unable to operate. On these occasions, the MV Coruisk was able to provide continuity of service for passengers which led to an increase in the reliability of the service as a whole during the period of her deployment. The MV Coruisk also undertook a further 288 sailings for operational effectiveness, and carried an additional 3,269 passenger, to maintain the 2 vessel service to timetable when one or other of the other vessels could not

<sup>1</sup> Reference Punctuality Stats from 2013/14!

sail due to for weather or technical reasons. Table 1 gives a comparison of this and the previous year's operation of the MV Coruisk.

	21 December 2013 – 31 March 2014	16 December 2014 – 1 April 2015
Scheduled sailings	479	696
Completed sailings	444	916*
Cancelled sailings	35 (32-weather, 3-others)	86 (56-weather, 8-technical, 2-linkspan, 20-hours of rest)
Additional sailings	133	306**
Passengers carried (total)	9,514	14,885
Passengers carried on additional sailings	1,685	3,269

\*MV Coruisk covered the MV Argyll Flyer's timetable when off due to technical reasons. The service was operating to timetable and as such, no cancellations were recorded against the MV Argyll Flyer. They are included as additional sailings for MV Coruisk.

\*\*Majority due to above reasons.

13. The figures in Table 1 require further interrogation as they cannot be compared like for like with last year's operation, as total completed sailings are skewed as a result of the MV Coruisk covering for MV Argyll Flyer during her time away from service due to a technical breakdown. During the period the MV Argyll Flyer was out of commission, the MV Coruisk did 310 sailings, including the normally associated 72 sailings, it would have undertaken as part of its normal deployment. Table 2 below provides further analysis.

	MV Coruisk – peak am/pm sailings and standby cover / weather resilience	MV Coruisk covering for the MV Argyll Flyer due to tech issue
Scheduled sailings	696 (8 per day)	72 (8 per day)
Completed sailings	634	180
Cancelled sailings	86	30
Additional sailings (out with peak times)	172	138
Passengers carried (total)	14,885	2588
Passengers carried on additional sailings	2224	1045

### *Passengers*

14. The MV Coruisk carried 14,885 passengers during the period of her normal deployment, up from 9,514 during the Winter 2013-14 period. The most popular sailings were those from Dunoon to Gourrock in the peak morning and from Gourrock to Dunoon in the peak evening, reflecting the service's importance to commuters.

15. During the same period, the MV Argyll Flyer carried 47,544 passengers and the MV AliCat carried 24,883. Table 3 below shows the number of passengers carried by AFL during the winter period, broken down by vessel.

<b>Winter 2014-15</b>	MV Argyll Flyer	MV AliCat	MV Coruisk	Total
Number of completed sailings	3,019	1,995	916	5,930
Number of passengers	47,544	24,883	14,885	87,312
Ave no of pax per sailing	15.7	12.4	16.25	14.7
<b>Winter 2013-14</b>				
Number of completed sailings	2725	1733	577	5,035
Number of passengers	33,949	14,934	9,514	58,397
Ave no of pax per sailing	12.5	8.6	16.5	11.6

### *Reliability*

16. The purpose of deploying the MV Coruisk was to improve the reliability of the service during adverse winter weather. Table 4 shows reliability information for the 3 vessels (MV Coruisk, MV Argyll Flyer and MV AliCat) during the term of the deployment. These figures have not been adjusted to take account of relief events as defined in the contract

<b>Winter 2014-15</b>	MV Argyll Flyer	MV AliCat	MV Coruisk	Total
Scheduled sailings	3,272	2,236	696	6,204
Sailings cancelled	253	241	86	580
- weather	245	241	56	542
- technical	6	0	8	14
- other	2	0	22	24
% schedules sailings completed	92.3%	89.22%	87.64%	90.65%
Additional sailings	-	-	306	306
Total sailings	3,019	1,995	916	5,930
% total sailings completed	92.03%	89.22%	90.61%	90.21%
<b>Winter 2013-14</b>	MV Argyll Flyer	MV AliCat	MV Coruisk	Total
Scheduled sailings	2982	1894	479	5355
Sailings cancelled	257	161	35	453
- weather	239	159	32	430
- technical	18	0	1	19
- other	0	2	2	4
% schedules sailings completed	92%	91.5%	92.7%	91.6%
Additional sailings	-	-	133	133
Total sailings	2982	1894	612	5488
% total sailings completed	92%	91.5%	94.3%	91.8%

### Punctuality

17. Table 5 below gives punctuality information for the 3 vessels during the period of the MV Coruisk's deployment. These figures have not been adjusted to take account of relief events as defined in the contract:

<b>Winter 2014-15</b>	MV Argyll Flyer	MV AliCat	MV Coruisk	Total
Scheduled sailings	3,272	2,236	696	6,204
Scheduled sailings late	71	82	327	480
% scheduled sailings late	2.17%	3.66%	46.98%	7.73%
<b>Winter 2013-14</b>	MV Argyll Flyer	MV AliCat	MV Coruisk	Total
Scheduled sailings	2982	1894	479	5355
Scheduled sailings late	117	109	91	317
% scheduled sailings late	3.9%	5.8%	19%	5.9%

### Cost

18. The main cost to AFL of deploying the MV Coruisk was the charter of the vessel, with crew, from CalMac Ferries Ltd. This generates a financial benefit to CalMac and, through the clawback mechanism in the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services contract, to Transport Scotland. The cost to AFL of providing the additional services with the MV Coruisk is provisionally estimated as £812,000. The net cost to Transport Scotland of the deployment of the MV Coruisk is provisionally estimated as £110,000. In 2013-14 the cost to AFL of providing the additional services with the MV Coruisk was provisionally estimated as £658,000 and the net cost to Transport Scotland of the deployment of the MV Coruisk was provisionally estimated as £142,000.

19. The cost, per completed sailing and per passenger, of the deployment of the MV Coruisk to Argyll Ferries and to Transport Scotland in Winter 2014-15 is set out in Table 6 overleaf. It must be noted that the figures given for Winter 2014-15 have been derived from the total sailings completed by the MV Coruisk, including the additional sailings to offset disruption when the MV Argyll Flyer was out of commission. As such a direct comparison with the previous year's operation cannot be made. Winter 2013-14 costs per sailing and passenger are given for information only. Operating costs such as staff and fuel cannot be split out of the total figure when the MV Coruisk was supplementing the MV Argyll Flyer's service. The final column is added to provide some context (figures from the last full contract year, 2012-13<sup>2</sup> when the MV Coruisk was not utilised in her winter resilience capacity):

<sup>2</sup> This is for illustrative rather than comparative purposes. A comparison with contract year 3 once final figures are available will be more meaningful as a number of other additional costs have been added to the contract since contract year 2.

<b>Winter 2014-15</b>	AFL	TS	
Per sailing	£886.46	£120.08	
Per passenger	£54.55	£7.38	
<b>Winter 2013-14</b>	AFL	TS	<i>AFL 2012-13</i>
Per sailing	£1,075	£232	£73
Per passenger	£69.16	£14.92	£4.14

### Conclusions

20. A trial of the MV Coruisk on the route was undertaken in Winter 2013-14 and subsequently extended during Winter 2014-15. As can be seen by the increased passengers carried and additional sailings the MV Coruisk provided additional resilience on the service this winter.

21. Given the severity of the 2012-13 winter's disruption, it was appropriate to use the MV Coruisk in 2013-14 and again in 2014-15, as the only suitable vessel available, to seek to improve the resilience and reliability of the service this winter. This has been achieved. The MV Coruisk's percentage of scheduled and total sailings completed was down on the previous winter. The reliability was lower than the MV Argyll Flyer, however moderately higher than the MV Ali Cat. It cannot be disputed however that her deployment enabled the relief cover for the MV Argyll Flyer when needed and her ability to step in when no other vessels were running again added significantly to the resilience of the ferry service. This was complemented by the additional resilience provided by the replacement bus service.

22. However, the cost of the deployment per sailing and per passenger is still high. Punctuality was relatively poor in comparison with the other vessels although this has not given rise to a large number of complaints; as before restricting the scheduled deployment to 2 return sailings morning and evening prevented delays from having a knock-on effect to the remainder of the timetable.

Transport Scotland  
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