

ARDROSSAN TASKFORCE

Fourth meeting – 4 October 2017

Note of meeting

Attendees

Humza Yousaf, Minister for Transport and the Islands
Cllr Alex Gallagher, North Ayrshire Council (NAC)
Karen Yeomans – NAC
Doug Coleman – Peel Ports
Kevin Hobbs – Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL)
Ruth McIntosh - CMAL
Robbie Drummond – CalMac Ferries Ltd (CFL)
Pauline Blackshaw - CFL
Bill Calderwood – Arran Economic Group (AEG)
John Nicholls - Transport Scotland (TS)
Graham Laidlaw – TS
Richard Hadfield - TS
Val Ferguson - TS

Apologies

Cllr Joe Cullinane
Kenny Gibson, MSP
Jim Anderson, CMAL

Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

1. Mr Yousaf welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited members to introduce themselves.

Item 2 – Update on Actions from last meeting

2. There were no issues arising and actions were accepted as undertaken or covered in today's agenda.

Item 3 –Update on the work of the Project Board

3. Karen Yeomans introduced the presentation (copy of presentation attached) on the work of the project board. A technical subgroup had been established and was looking at a variety of options for infrastructure improvements in the harbour to address issues raised by CFL. Robbie Drummond summarised in his section of the presentation the issues raised by Masters during the simulator trials.
4. Cllr Gallagher asked about the simulator tests and the design of the vessel. Kevin Hobbs confirmed that the new vessel was designed to hold station in

45kt wind and had more power in her engines than the current vessel on the route. Kevin confirmed that the vessel is not under engineered. However the benefits of the new design may not all be realised due to the restricted available space in the harbour.

5. The figures for operating restrictions used in the CFL presentation all related to weather and Mr Yousaf queried the apparent worse performance of the new vessel given it was specifically designed for this route and suggested a solution was required urgently.
6. Doug Coleman stated that the Peel proposal as submitted in December 2016 included works to replace the linkspan and upgrade the marine infrastructure but it did not anticipate any redesign of infrastructure as was now being suggested. The commercial proposal from Peel Ports likewise covered the upgrades not redesign.
7. Doug then summarised the options set out in the drawings provided. The base offer as submitted previously is Option 0 with recessed linkspan.
8. Additional options considered included new channels south or north of Horse island (Options 1 and 1a) and dredging to allow more manoeuvrability. Option 1b was a new breakwater but that needed further work to establish the best position.
9. Option 2 included a new dredged area and removing part of the Arran berth pier and the Winton pier on the Irish berth to allow better manoeuvrability. Option 3 included removal of part of the current car park to the west of the Arran berth and Winton pier cut off. Option 4 included Winton pier head removal and dredging of a new arc for manoeuvring. The final swell option was the breakwater only.
10. Costings for each option had been discussed by all parties at a recent meeting and on that basis the options had been distilled down to 3 requiring further detailed analysis.
11. Further analysis on Options 2 3 and 4 was recommended and the benefits of others were not considered to justify the significant costs.
12. Mr Yousaf queried the swell option but this only addresses that issue and not manoeuvrability in the harbour generally.
13. The operational and service implications of each of the 3 options was being reviewed by CFL.
14. Pauline Blackshaw summarised their high level assessment of operational impacts of these options –
 - a. Option 1 – lots of benefits but costly – recess linkspan creates a narrow channel to the berth which would impact on the timetable

- b. Option 2 – biggest operational benefits with more manoeuvring circle and a longer berth – land side space impact and possible disruption to service during construction.
 - c. Option 3 – delivers some requirements – dredge to north provided more space but not into Arran berth but did remove tunnel effect at the berth
 - d. Option 4 like Option 3 but no cut out to west to give more space to manoeuvre was better for the Irish berth but not the Arran berth
 - e. Breakwater could be added to any of the options but not fully considered yet
15. Karen confirmed that the risk to reduction in service was recognised and crystallised in the reduced number of options. She recommend it was sensible to progress proposal as submitted last year and appraise the 3 remaining options in detail which was expected to take up to 3 months to distil down to a preferred option on which to move to a detailed design.
16. Communication issues were key as at today's full council meeting a question had been tabled on program pause to consider these options. **A communication plan will be prepared.**
17. Mr Yousaf confirmed that it was important and urgent to find a solution and move forward. He appreciated the work done and would discuss the next steps with officials before deciding on an options appraisal.
18. Doug added that there remain unknowns such as Environmental Impact Assessment obligations which may require seasonal studies which could impact timescales overlapping activity rather than sequential design that could be done earlier?
19. Mr Yousaf asked if the options could be simulated and it was agreed they could for manoeuvring but not for construction and this will be done as part of the analysis.
20. **Mr Yousaf agreed to discuss with officials and would need to consider potential funding issues.**
21. Cllr Gallagher as who should pay and did not wish to see the Troon versus Ardrossan issue opened up again. Mr Yousaf confirmed he was not assuming government would pay for the preferred option.
22. Bill Calderwood added that community impacts during this further consideration and during works on either option could not currently be determined. Mr Yousaf confirmed that in his meetings with the community timing and reliability had been uppermost and he would speak to officials and will get back quickly with his views.
23. Doug added that the linkspan order expected in September had not been placed and was a risk against options as the manufacturing slot could be lost and the impact was not known.

Karen and Cllr Gallagher left the meeting at this point

Item 4. Update on new Vessel

24. Kevin provided an update on the vessel. Delivery by May 2018 following a launch date in August 2017, were planned however the launch date has now slipped to 21 November and CMAL are working with the yard to assess the impact on delivery which is likely to be 3 months delayed. He is meeting with the yard later in the day. Mr Yousaf asked how long after delivery before the vessel would come into service and this was expected to be 4 to 6 weeks. Contractually the yard had 120 days before penalty in contract applied.

Item 5. Update on Brodick works

25. Kevin provided an update. The walkway was in final trials and there had been some systems issues causing delay on schedule. Moveable part of walk way was installed a month ago and final accreditation is expected next week. There will be a familiarisation period for the operator and the official opening is on 23 October as planned. Mr Yousaf added he was pleased with how it looked during his last visit.

Item 6. Operational update by CFL

26. Robbie indicated there was little to add but recruitment of crew for the new vessel was planned for November/December 2017. There was a shortage of qualified masters and engineers and they may need to use existing staff and back fill. Robbie was confident they will find the right people.

27. Bill added his view that the summer service had run fairly well despite the high demand. Robbie confirmed demand was challenging and why a new bigger vessel was being sourced. It was challenging keeping to timetable with full boats.

28. Bill emphasised the need to get timetable issues sorted to allow better connections to rail etc as service was not commuter friendly without early sailing from Arran. This was for discussion with CFL as per the normal process.

Item 7. Next Steps

29. Mr Yousaf confirmed he would have a conversation with officials and he appreciated the sensitivities and would make a quick decision thereafter.

30. Doug added that a public meeting required by the Marine Licensing pre application process, was scheduled for 12 October and they were considering whether to go ahead as options for works may change. After discussion it was agreed it would go ahead based on original proposal and consider in co-ordination with responses given in council meeting later in the day.

Item 8. AOB

The next meeting was likely in the new year subject to discussions as on-going.