

FERRY INDUSTRY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES – 4 APRIL 2019

Attendees

Alf Baird (AB) – by phone
Michael Craigie (MC) – by phone
Allan Comrie (AC)
Brian Fulton (BF)
Richard Hadfield (RH)
Kevin Hobbs (KH)
Roy Pedersen (RP)
Ranald Robertson (RR)
Chris Wilcock (CW) Chair
Alison Wills (AW) Minutes

Apologies

Ian Docherty (ID)
Paul Flynn (PF)
Brian Gordon (BG)
Gordon Ross (GR)

1. Introductions

CW welcomed the attendees and introduced himself as the Director of Aviation, Maritime, Freight and Canals (AMFC), in place of Fran Pacitti who was currently on maternity leave.

2. Future Meeting Topics For Discussion

Membership of the group was discussed and it was felt that consideration should be given to the current membership as previous members had changed employment and were no longer involved, and others had frequently been unable to attend. CW suggested a new representative from the Chamber of Shipping could be invited to attend or to nominate an attendee. He would also clarify whether Stuart Garrett, Serco NorthLink, would be joining the group. A list of topics could be drafted and non-attendees could be asked their views. It was suggested that for future topics, invitations could be extended on an ad-hoc basis to those who would be best placed to offer the group the benefit of their experience of various subjects as and when required.

CW suggested the following topics, which the group supported:

- 1) Vessel options and solutions and the factors affecting these – including infrastructure, resources and transition requirements.
- 2) The future shape of transport (including new technologies) and what that might mean for the role and nature of ferries
- 3) Circumstances where private operators may consider introducing new services operating on a commercial basis.

CW would give consideration to further topics and requested the group email him any other topics for discussion. He would be willing to accept proposals to commission papers, should the group collectively agree this would be beneficial on a case by case basis).

3. Demand, Capacity and Needs Based Assessment

RH had circulated a number of graphs showing various aspects of demand and capacity as a prompt for discussion. It was noted that figures used in the Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan were based on 9 weeks average utilisation and

that more detailed information showed significant peaks within the year and within the week on certain routes. Statistics such as these could be used to inform future priorities but consideration should be given to managing demand to make the best use of available ferry capacity in order to balance requirements of peak demand and yet avoid under use of vessels at other times.

It was noted that islands have different requirements which ferry services can support in line with the Scottish Government's Islands Policy and, when published the Islands Plan. It was also noted that the Islands Policy is to reverse population decline and promote sustainable communities. Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) has benefitted some island communities in terms of promoting tourism and making residents travel to the mainland much cheaper. However views were expressed that in some cases the growth of tourism is putting a strain on island housing, employment and local infrastructure. Options for developments in fares policy could be further discussed, however, ideally local roads and other infrastructure needs to be in place to manage additional traffic. Additional ferry services could enable commuters to undertake employment on islands and the mainland, making daily return journeys. Some areas without frequent ferries could not benefit from the levels of tourism or employment which other areas could expect.

Action: RH to update with figures from NorthLink ferries and, if obtainable, Pentland Ferries.

There was a general discussion regarding how travel methods have changed. Foot passengers using public transport when they reached their destination were once the majority, now car travel has become increasingly popular, especially where bus or train services are not provided in line with ferry times.

Car ownership or use may decline in future due to car clubs and automated vehicles, and this could therefore affect future ferry procurement requirements. RH would look into a comparison between foot passengers and car passengers during summer months on certain routes e.g. Arran and Mull to see if increased numbers were travelling in vehicles or on foot. Foot passenger information could also be used when planning requirements in ferry terminal buildings.

The group noted that The National Transport Strategy and Ferries Plan 2 were being prepared, with the former due to be issued later in the year.

CW advised the group that major investments, either through Transport Scotland or through CMAL etc, would have to go through the TS decision making board. Discussions at Ferry Industry Advisory Group could be in some circumstances feed in as background or supporting information to help inform this process. The experience of the group would be beneficial in discussions around vessel options, on balancing factors such as size, resilience etc. although it was noted that there are constraints, particularly budget and deployment flexibility.

Although the Scottish Government would be prepared to look at second hand ferries, it was noted that despite extensive work in this area it has proved impossible so far to find any vessels that fit the required criteria, particularly around seakeeping and port access.

4. AOB

No other business was raised.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was arranged for 6 June in Buchanan House Glasgow at 1100hrs.