

ARDROSSAN TASKFORCE

Ninth Meeting – 20 November 2019

Note of meeting

Attendees

Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands
Susan Malcolm - Transport Scotland
Caroline Connelly - Transport Scotland – Secretariat
Graeme McGinty – Project Manager
Ruairidh Campbell – CMAL Liaison Officer
Bill Calderwood – Arran Ferry Committee (AFC)
Louise Kirk – North Ayrshire Council (NAC)
Pauline Blackshaw – CalMac
Alasdair Laurenson – North Ayrshire Council (NAC)
Alex Gallagher – North Ayrshire Council (NAC)
Karen Yeomans – North Ayrshire Council (NAC)
Doug Coleman – Peel Ports Group Ltd (PPG)
Gary Hodgson – Peel Ports Group (PPG)
Kenneth Gibson MSP

Apologies

Graham Laidlaw – Transport Scotland
Frances Pacitii – Transport Scotland
Kevin Hobbs – CMAL
James Anderson – CMAL
Danielle Neutgens – CalMac
Robbie Drummond - CalMac
Andrew Hemphill – PPG
Cllr Joe Cullinane – NAC

Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

1. Mr Wheelhouse welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Item 2 – Last Meeting Overview and matters arising

2. There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes of 23 April 2019, with the Minutes published on the Transport Scotland webpage.
3. Mr Gibson raised his previous request for an amendment to the minutes of the meeting of 13 August 2018 chaired by Mr Matheson in regards to the wording used on service continuity. The content was agreed. Transport Scotland has published the Minutes on the TS webpage.

Item 3 – Ardrossan Steering Group Update

4. Susan Malcolm introduced the presentation with input from Doug Coleman and Karen Yeomans on the Marine & Landside works, including updates on the work of the technical groups. The update and discussion covered:
 - Governance Structure
 - Progress Report
 - Service Continuity, including current status of the Irish Berth
 - Communications and engagement strategy
 - Funding
5. Mr Wheelhouse acknowledged that there has been a recent outage of the Ardrossan linkspan, and at the same time the Gourrock linkspan was not available. The disruption to passengers was regrettable however all parties worked together to resolve the issues with the Ardrossan berth being returned to service on Wednesday 9 October 2019. The Gourrock berth returned to service on 25 October 2019 however vessel ramps are unable to land meaning services remain restricted to foot passengers only.
6. Mr Wheelhouse acknowledged that the Steering Group had been progressing the design and planning phase, and welcomed the works on the Irish Berth being undertaken by Peel Ports Group Ltd. PPG confirmed that the works on the Irish Berth linkspan were nearing completion, and they had been engaging with CalMac during this process. The tenders for the civil and structural works to the Irish Berth have now been returned and are currently being assessed by PPG.
7. PPG also confirmed that once available, further works will still be required to the berth however these are not expected to impact services.
8. It was recognised that discussions on the funding package for the project were still to be concluded and it was agreed that decisions would be needed soon if key programme dates are to be met.
9. Mr Wheelhouse re-iterated the Scottish Government's commitment that services will operate out of Ardrossan during the construction period, albeit services may be subject to disruption such as adverse weather conditions, however he asked that the Steering group, in the parameters of the continuity plan, do their utmost to minimise disruption to passengers.
10. Mr Wheelhouse welcomed the recent passenger engagement survey which had been conducted in early November by CalMac. This resulted in a high number of face to face interviews on board the vessel, and on-line surveys being completed. CalMac confirmed that they were analysing the data, and would be engaging with the Arran Ferry Committee and other key stakeholders on the results, which will inform the service continuity plan and timetables.
11. There was discussion on engagement with the communities, and North Ayrshire Council confirmed that a public information event on the Landside Infrastructure would be undertaken in January 2020, exact dates to be confirmed.
12. Mr Wheelhouse welcomed this engagement and acknowledged that no final decision had been made on the landside infrastructure, which included the terminal building and the passenger access system.
13. CMAL confirmed that the LNG requirements at Ardrossan were being progressed; aligned with the Landside development works currently being undertaken by North Ayrshire Council.

Item 4 –Vessel Update

14. Mr Wheelhouse stated that the Scottish Government had recently announced Fergusons is to be taken into public ownership, and he recognised that progress on the new vessels had been slow, which was clearly a cause for concern for the local communities.
15. Establishing a revised timetable for the completion of the two ferries remains one of the main tasks for the management at the shipyard, and an update on a delivery programme will be available shortly.
16. A report on the shipyard is expected. When the report has been received, and Ministers have had an opportunity to consider it, Derek MacKay, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work will update the Parliament. .

Item 5 –Next Steps

17. The Task Force agreed the following work be taken forward –
 - Communications Strategy to be developed including public information events
 - Service Continuity planning
 - Governance structures to be refreshed
 - Funding discussions between TS and PPG
 - Funding discussions between TS and NAC
 - Next Task Force meeting to be earlier than planned – in 3 months' time rather than 6 months' time.
18. Communications Group is leading on communications for this project, with a programme being progressed with input from all members.

Item 6 - AOB

19. No items raised under AOB

Item 7 – Date of next meeting

20. Date of next meeting – to be scheduled around February 2020.