

**Mobility and Access Committee for
Scotland (MACS)**

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Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

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Our ref:
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Date:
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Dear Sir or Madam,

**MACS RESPONSE TO THE CALL FOR EVIDENCE INTO CONSTRUCTION AND
PROCUREMENT OF FERRY VESSELS IN SCOTLAND**

Please see below a response from the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS).

Yours sincerely,

Hilary Stubbs

Vice Convener
MACS Ferries and Aviation Workstream Lead

Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee Inquiry into construction and procurement of ferry vessels in Scotland Call for Evidence

This response is provided by Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS), a non-departmental public body ministerial advisory body.

Our aims are:

- To give Scottish Ministers advice on aspects of policy affecting the travel needs of disabled people;
- To take account of the broad views and experiences of disabled people when giving advice on travel needs;
- To encourage awareness amongst disabled people in Scotland of developments which affect their mobility, choices and opportunities of travel;
- To work closely with the Scottish Government and ensure the Committee's work programme complements the work being undertaken by the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), the Scotland Office of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and other organisations and voluntary and statutory agencies;
- To promote the travel needs of disabled people with transport planners, transport operators and infrastructure providers so that these are taken fully into account in the delivery of services; and
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Committee's work against the above aims in improving travel opportunities for disabled people in Scotland.
- Transport Scotland believes that transport for everyone is a basic human right, and that door to door transport is vital for inclusive travel options.

1. What are your views on the conclusions and recommendations of the programme review board with respect to delivering the most effective delivery programme for the completion of the two vessels, MV Glen Sannox (vessel 801) and vessel 802?

1.1. MACS is extremely disappointed by the significant delay in the construction of the two vessels, however, we support the steps that have been taken to take FMEL back into public ownership and produce a quality report on the future programme of build for the vessels.

1.2. MACS is concerned about the lack of governance which has been applied to the contract from CMAL and FMEL, especially the findings that key aspects of a contract are not in place such as stock management, defect management, and work control.

1.3. We have an increased confidence in the likelihood of the vessels being completed having read the proposed staffing and control structures which are recommended in the report.

1.4. With the delays and additional costs we are concerned that the specification for the vessels will fall short of the accessibility standards which we had hoped would be in place for a new vessel. For example will there be a [Changing Place](#)¹, and will facilities, layout, signage be given the detailed attention that allows disabled travellers the opportunity to travel without any barriers.

¹ <http://www.changing-places.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=YEDKVYyX8TE%3d&tabid=38>

2. What has been the impact of the repeated delays to completion of the contract to construct two hybrid ferries on the specific routes and island communities awaiting delivery and entry into service of these two vessels?

2.1. Many ferry services are lifeline services and the delay to the vessels has meant that the CALMAC routes which were expecting the new vessels have had to work with vessels which are not fit for purpose. This means that sailings are frequently cancelled due to technical issues or inappropriate weather.

2.2. The impact of people not being able to attend medical and surgery appointments impacts on their wellbeing, and their physical and mental health.

2.3. At a recent round table meeting to discuss access to health appointments which MACS and Disability Equality Scotland organised the impact of ferry cancellations was raised by attendees and by the wider public through [an on-line poll](#)².

2.4. The current vessels are not fit for purpose for disabled travellers. The lifts are frequently out of order, the gangways do not meet the recommended standards as detailed in the [MACS Ferries toolkit](#)³ or the [DfT Marine Toolkit](#).⁴

Passenger information is not inclusive with no visual noticeboards or hearing loops, the disabled toilets are not accessible and there are limited medical rooms available for hospital discharge patients.

2.5. Residents on Isle of Arran are noting the impact on many aspects of their lives. For example the care homes and domiciliary care rely on carers travelling from the mainland to work their shifts, with ferry cancellations patients are not receiving the treatment they require.

2.6. Frequently, post, food supplies, newspapers and many other daily requirements are delayed by hours or even days when the ferries are cancelled.

3. What actions can be taken, in particular with respect to improved contract management processes, to ensure future contracts of this type are delivered a) on time; and b) on budget?

3.1. CMAL, Scottish Government and the shipyards need to recognise that any project of this value needs to have the most skilled personnel in the management and technical roles. Whether this project faltered due to these skilled people not being recruited or their posts not being on the initial proposals, perhaps due to cost cuts, is unclear, but a procurement specification should clearly outline the full managerial requirements for projects of this nature.

² <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/46440/subgroup-transport-to-health-event-21-november-2019-briefing-paper-final.pdf>

³ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/41917/macs-letter-improving-accessibility-at-ferry-terminals-27-march-2018.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-guidance-notes-relating-to-regulation-eu-no-1177-2010/maritime-passenger-rights-industry-toolkit>

3.2. Transport Scotland chose to proactively support the Green agenda and to procure a dual fuel vessel. In addition they chose a Scottish shipyard as its builder. There is merit in this position but the learning point is that there was no track record of this type of vessel being built at FMEL. Further the design of the vessel and its fuel systems were, and still are, incomplete and untested. Unless this lesson is learnt investment will continue in unachievable dreams.

4. What key challenges need to be addressed in procuring new vessels to support Scotland's ferry network and how might these be overcome?

4.1. Vessels need to be capable of sailing in all weather conditions.

4.2. Destination ports and ports of refuge need to be accessible in all weather conditions.

4.3. The interior design of the vessels needs to fully encompass the needs of disabled travellers to allow them to fully access the vessel and its facilities. Consultation with disabled users will enhance this work and ensure that the design of a vessel is 'right first time'.

4.4. The build programme is currently more than 2 years behind schedule so future procurement needs to be done in a timely manner with reassurances from the shipyard that they are competent to compete this build.

5. How might the experience of the procurement and fulfilment of the current hybrid ferries contract inform the development of an updated Ferries Plan?

5.1. The Ferries Plan 2 needs to undertake robust research into the most suitable vessels for the busy routes in Scotland to ensure future vessels are fit for purpose. The purposes include passengers, freight, medical repatriation, and essential island services like fuel supply.

5.2. This research may of necessity be international to ensure the vessels and their mode of operating is tested and value for money.

5.3. The Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands, Mr P. Wheelhouse has indicated that MACS should be involved in the development of the Ferries Plan 2.

6. What are the likely implications of the Scottish Government's decision to take Ferguson Marine Engineering Ltd. into public ownership for the fulfilment of the current contract and the award of future contracts for the construction of new ferries?

6.1. Following the decision to take FMEL into public ownership Scottish Government has quickly identified significant gaps in the construction of the vessels which have included lack of skilled people, lack of quality control, no design resource etc. With this analysis and the resources to plug the significant gaps we are optimistic that the vessels can be completed.

6.2. With the investment of public finance into the FMEL yard Scottish Government may consider that using this resource for future vessels would be appropriate given the level of investment undertaken and the skilled workforce which will be assembled, however, the success of future builds depends on many factors. These include each phase of the procurement of vessels from its design, build and completion.

7. What impact is the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union likely to have on the future award of new ferry construction contracts, in particular as regards ongoing compliance with applicable rules on state aid and competitive tendering?

7.1. We are not in a position to comment on this.