

This and the following 39 pages comprise Schedule 23 referred to in the foregoing Contract between the Scottish Ministers and Serco Ltd.

SCHEDULE 23 – STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DELIVERY PLAN

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
ANM	Aberdeen and Northern Marts
CIPD	The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
DPTAC	Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
MACS	Mobility and Access Committee Scotland
NAFC Marine Centre	North Atlantic Fisheries College Marine Centre
ONE	Opportunity North East
SME	Small or Medium Enterprise
Third Sector Parties	Community groups, voluntary organisations, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives and individual volunteers
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
NFUS	National Farmers' Union of Scotland
OAE	Orkney Auction Mart

B6 Stakeholder & Community Engagement Delivery Plan

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Serco's Approach to the Stakeholder and Community Engagement Delivery Plan

The purpose of this Stakeholder and Community Engagement Delivery Plan (Engagement Plan) is to demonstrate our understanding of the objectives that Serco and Scottish Ministers have set for the operation of the Northern Isles Ferry Service, with respect to the many small to medium-sized businesses, community groups, councils and other stakeholders who are involved directly or indirectly with the Northern Isles Ferry Service.

Our proposed Engagement Plan provides a comprehensive and robust approach to ensuring we are keeping our stakeholders and the communities informed and involved in the development of their Ferry Service, which we have been so proud to operate since 2012. We have provided a comprehensive and robust approach and have provided full details of our systems and procedures. We have outlined our steps for satisfying all statutory requirements and explain how we monitor compliance with this Plan during the term of the future contract.

Our Engagement Plan is mindful of Scottish Government's (SG) high level objectives:

- Be safe, sustainable and efficient
- Be responsive to local needs and appropriate to the requirements of those using them
- Contribute to sustainable economic growth on our islands and in our remote rural communities
- Be resilient to social and commercial stresses

This Delivery Plan has been structured around the ITT Vol 2 – B6, with a section explaining about the challenges of Stakeholder and Community Engagement as a whole – relating to technical, logistical and management challenges. We have then explained:

- Our Approach and methodology, utilising the best practice we have developed over the last six and a half years on which our proposals have been based
- Our Proposals for the new contract term

This contract offers the opportunity to further improve Serco's approach to stakeholder and community engagement in the Northern Isles and the north east of Scotland. Serco will build on the lifeline role of the service, sustaining the socio-economic viability of the islands and help make it a vibrant place to live, work and visit by ensuring the effective delivery of the Ferry Service.

Our NorthLink Management Team Redacted

Redacted will continue to undertake regular engagement with key stakeholders. This will include relevant local authorities, local island forums and industry groups, regional transport partnerships, public transport operators, other commercial ferry operators, community representatives. Also included will be representatives of Orkney, Shetland, Caithness and Aberdeen stakeholders including agriculture, hauliers, seafood and tourism groups at island transport forums, industry forums, face to face meetings, onsite verbal discussions as well as conferences and events, e-newsletters and personal email updates Redacted Redacted

In addition, our dedicated freight website will continue to ensure our Freight customers are provided with up to date service information. We will continue to seek feedback from

stakeholders at industry forums, discussion and annual surveys to further improve our freight services and ensure that we are constantly meeting their needs.

At a community level, we will continue to foster relationships with community organisations
Redacted

Regular engagement with these organisations provides us with invaluable information on the community perception of our services, allowing us to update and implement strategies and initiatives where required.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with relevant national and local tourism groups for the social and economic wellbeing of the Northern Isles and the north of Scotland. We strive to promote tourism by sharing knowledge and expertise with industry partners. Promotion will include running effective marketing campaigns
Redacted

At Serco, we value all passengers who wish to travel on our services. We are committed to operating a Ferry Service that focuses on customer care on all vessels and ports in which NorthLink operates. We will introduce a new 'Interpreter Live' feature to our website to improve the overall customer experience for the hearing impaired. Our team will continue to engage with accessibility groups by proactively attending meetings, hosting onboard events and staff training to ensure we offer all our passengers a comfortable journey no matter what their needs.

We recognise that community and customer feedback continues to play an important role in improving the Ferry Service and enables Serco to help sustain the economic growth of the islands and remote rural communities. We will introduce new pre-travel advice emails to customers, post travel surveys and updated iPad surveys onboard to offer a range of feedback loops. All feedback will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to drive continuous improvement across the business and benefit sustainability. In addition, we are extending the opening hours of the Customer Service Centre and introducing a 'Live Chat' facility to the NorthLink website to further enhance our customer engagement.

NorthLink employees and respective Trades Unions will continue to be well informed about the business and we are committed to two-way open, trustworthy, proactive and responsive communication and engagement. Our management taps into employee ideas and opinions to optimise the organisation's learning and innovation, making the most of the skills, creativity and knowledge of every individual in the business.

Serco will continue to involve local, small and medium enterprises in its supply chain by building on our local procurement strategy for our onboard hotel operations. Redacted

and promote our existing suppliers through new 'Meet the Supplier' events and by hosting monthly supplier showcase events held onboard our vessels to help showcase their produce to new audience. We will continue to procure goods and services from Supported Businesses and local SMEs within 50-miles of our operating ports to deliver sustainable, economic growth and promote the environmental wellbeing of the Northern Isles and north east of Scotland. This procurement strategy has been highly beneficial to date with over ^{Redacted} of produce for our ^{Redacted} hotel services procured from local businesses. This allows NorthLink to offer passengers a real taste of the region whilst helping to support local businesses.

The NorthLink Sponsorship Programme will continue to deliver social value and provide support for individuals, institutions, clubs and associations through the award of complimentary, competition and voucher discounts, festival discounts and sponsorship of events and activities. Headed by a local sponsorship panel we will continue to undertake biannual reviews to provide financial sponsorship to support local events, groups and individuals enabling them to participate in Scottish, UK and international activities.

As a company, we support local employment through local recruitment, our apprenticeship programme in partnership with the ^{Redacted}

Redacted

Serco will continue to host a range of events and visits both onboard the vessels and in the terminals in which NorthLink operates to benefit the social wellbeing of the local communities. This enables us to provide local groups and organisations to undertake events, demonstrations and seminars and further integrate the NorthLink service into the communities in which it serves.

1.2. Key Improvements

- Maintaining and enhancing existing relationships with key stakeholders including local authorities, regional transport partnerships, Redacted agriculture, hauliers, seafood and tourism by attending local transport forums and industry groups, seeking inputs about our service development
- Building on our relationships with tourism partners across the Northern Isles and north east of Scotland, through cooperation and collaboration to grow market sales jointly and improve product development and delivery
- Making wider use of mobile apps and social media channels to engage with customers' promotional campaigns for each season, run in partnership with tourist groups, event organisers and activity providers
- Enhanced community and customer feedback loops via updated onboard iPad surveys and the introduction of post travel surveys to ensure we are continuously meeting their needs
- Improved real-time customer engagement with the introduction of a Live Chat facility on the NorthLink website and extending the opening hours at our Customer Service Centre
- Introduction of a Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager to engage with transport providers to improve public transport, active travel links and accessibility for all our customers
- Issuing an automatic pre-travel advice email to all customers providing information about relevant documentation, travel advice, check-in, arrival times, promotional offers and available upgrades
- Enhanced support for NorthLink suppliers including SMEs and supported businesses with the introduction of annual 'Meet the Supplier' events and hosting monthly supplier showcase events held onboard our vessels to help showcase their produce to new audience
- Continuous improvement of our procurement processes including the provision of simplified contents of our Supplier Pack (following SME feedback)

We will regularly monitor performance and seek to take it to the next level using Serco's continuous improvement methodology.

2. Introduction

Serco will continue to ensure that all suitable arrangements are put in place to undertake regular engagement with relevant local authorities, Redacted, regional transport partnerships and representatives of Orkney and Shetland stakeholders, including agriculture, hauliers, seafood and tourism to ensure the effective delivery of the lifeline Ferry Service through our attendance and participation in local transport and user forums.

Our objectives in relation to engagement with our stakeholders and local communities are to:

- 1) Continue to recognise the variety of stakeholder groups and their differing requirements on the lifeline Ferry Service

Understand the variety of views and opinions about what the ferry service should be providing and work together to ensure we can support these as far as possible within the overall objectives set by Scottish Ministers

- 2) Build on the success of our existing engagement strategy through regular engagement and consultation with representatives of Orkney, Shetland, Caithness and Aberdeenshire stakeholders to further enhance and support the local economy
- 3) Continue to be proactive in identifying potential conflicts and capacity constraints between our passenger and freight customers, resolve these issues and be proactive in delivering a ferry service in the best interests of all users
- 4) Enhance our engagement practice with the range of groups including agriculture, hauliers, seafood and tourism to better understand their views, make changes as appropriate or escalate to Transport Scotland

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3. Understanding the Requirements for Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Table 1: Assessment of Challenges – Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Stakeholder and Community Engagement	
Technical	Redacted
Logistical	
Management	
Involvement of Supported Businesses and SMEs	
Technical	Redacted
Logistical	
Management	

4. Stakeholder and Community Engagement – SCE1

4.1. Approach to Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Serco's philosophy to community and stakeholder engagement is to promote open, transparent and positive relationships that are established through regular engagement and consultation with a range of stakeholders, including relevant local authorities and regional transport partnerships (RTP), and representatives of Orkney and Shetland stakeholders, including agriculture, hauliers, seafood and tourism groups to ensure the effective, safe and professional delivery of the Ferry Service.

By using this philosophy since 2012, Serco has implemented an engagement strategy specific to the Northern Isles and North East of Scotland and has built strong relationships within the communities we serve. Our engagement ranges from informal meetings and information sharing through our various online portals, to participation in island forums and working in partnership through to the development of community initiatives.

At the centre of NorthLink's operations is our Serco NorthLink Management Team who are based in Aberdeen and Stromness and are easily accessible to all within the community. Redacted Redacted

The team Redacted provide management and to offer support to our people and engage with a range of stakeholders through regular meetings with local authorities, regional transport authorities (RTP), harbour boards, public transport operators as well as stakeholders from Orkney, Shetland, Caithness and Aberdeen. This includes agriculture, hauliers, seafood and tourism groups through participation at island transport forums, industry and academic forums, and on-site verbal discussions.

A wide range of stakeholder engagement that takes place throughout the year at various meetings throughout the network, including but not limited to the Shetland External Transport Forum, Orkney Travel and Transport Forum, Caithness Transport Forum and the Northern Isles Consultative Forum.

NorthLink is a key partner in the development of the islands' economy and plays an invaluable role in supporting the tourism, seafood and agricultural sectors. We have worked closely with key stakeholders in the Northern Isles communities representing a range of sectors to seek out and understand the evolving patterns and demands in all aspects of our service. We are committed to our role in delivering a lifeline service and we strive to ensure that the needs of the communities are at the heart of our decision making.

4.1.1. Ferry services consultation with representatives of local authorities and regional transport partnerships; and agriculture, hauliers, seafood and tourism sectors

Since 2012, Serco has continued to operate the required reliable, regular and convenient sailings from Orkney and Shetland enabling next day deliveries to the mainland. We regularly transport freight for a range of sectors Redacted

On an annual basis, we transport over 322,500 passengers, 565,000 lane metres of freight, the equivalent to nearly 38,000 commercial vehicles, approximately 25,000 cattle and 134,000 sheep. As the incumbent, strong industry and stakeholder cooperation is imperative to running an efficient and reliable ferry service.

The above figures are based on 2017 data from Transport Scotland's SharePoint.

Throughout the year, NorthLink's Management Team Redacted, engages with Regional Transport Partnerships, Local Authorities and a range of key stakeholders from

agricultural, haulier, tourism and seafood sectors. Redacted

is to ensure that the business objectives and practices are aligned with the aspirations of our key stakeholders in the Northern Isles for the community, environment and local economy.

Objectives underpinning the work of the Serco NorthLink Management Team are to:

- Ensure the needs of key stakeholders are understood
- Work together to overcome any constraints at NorthLink to meet stakeholder aspirations
- Create ongoing community, economic and environment agendas for NorthLink, monitor our performance and constructive suggestions to ensure continuous improvements
- Provide constructive challenges to any future policies and procedures at NorthLink that apply to our community, economic or environmental agendas
- Provide stakeholders with an annual summary of the work and achievements of the Serco NorthLink Ferries in the previous year

NorthLink participates in Local Transport Forums in Orkney, Shetland and Caithness throughout the year, which currently includes, but is not limited to the organisations listed in the following Table 2:

Table 2: Local Transport Forum organisations

Local Island Forum	Category	Annual Frequency
Northern Isles Consultative Forum	Orkney Islands Council	Annual
	Shetland Islands Council	
	HITRANS	
	ZetTrans	
	Local commercial ferry operators	
	Visit Scotland	
	Transport Scotland	
Shetland External Transport Forum	Shetland Islands Council	Quarterly
	ZetTrans	
	Transport Scotland	
	Public Transport Operators	
	Port Authority	
	Tourist Group	
	Highland and Island Enterprise (HIE)	
Caithness Transport Forum	Highland Council	Quarterly
	HITRANS	
	Transport Scotland	
	Public Transport Operators	
	Harbour Authorities	
	Caithness Chamber of Commerce	
	Local Community Groups	
	Community Representatives	

Local Island Forum	Category	Annual Frequency
Orkney Travel & Transport Forums	Orkney Island Council	Biannual
	Shetland Islands Council	
	HITRANS	
	Public Transport Operators	
	Tourism Group	
	Highland and Island Enterprise (HIE)	
	Community Representatives	
Stewart Building Group	ZetTrans	Quarterly
	Shetland Islands Council	
	Transport Scotland	
	Highland and Island Enterprise (HIE)	
	Hauliers	
	Agriculture	

NorthLink regularly hosts onboard events including the Stewart Building Transport Group's quarterly meeting on our passenger vessels for Shetland-based seafood organisations and industry stakeholders. These meetings provide an opportunity for those in the seafood sector to receive updates on freight performance, ferry operations and other relevant areas, as well as to give feedback to Serco about their freight operation.

In addition, NorthLink engages with other key stakeholders through face-to-face meetings, as well as conferences and events, e-newsletters and personal email updates from Redacted

We reply to MP / MSP correspondence quickly and effectively and we track our interactions. We welcome other parties with an interest in activities at NorthLink, such as Local Authority Officers, councillors, MSPs and other stakeholder groups, who make representations to the Operational Management Team in writing.

4.1.2. Approach to Engaging with Freight Customers

Given the prominent role that our freight service has within the business, Redacted

a range of stakeholder engagement that takes place throughout the year. Regular stakeholder meetings with a variety of customers and organisations Redacted

Our continued attendance and active participation in industry group forums enables us to deliver a robust and inter-connected ferry service that promotes the economic, social and environmental well-being of North East Scotland and the Northern Isles. It also enabled us to consult with user groups and stakeholders on seasonal timetables and any other matters that have a direct impact on the ferry service. This consultation process enables us to align with the requirements for publishing and seeking approval from Transport Scotland for any changes to the ferry service.

We consult with our stakeholders if there are any significant changes to service provisions, such as seasonal timetables, and recognise Transport Scotland's authority to do so. We ensure positive relationships with our stakeholders, by working to implement most of their ideas, to enable dialogue on future ideas and issues.

Since contract commencement in 2012, Serco NorthLink has worked with stakeholders and introduced several initiatives within the freight function to enhance the customer offering and to

keep stakeholders informed. After consulting with the salmon fishing industry, we introduced the bulk bag on deck service in June 2013, to provide cost-effective, just in time deliveries (JIT) of salmon feed to Orkney and Shetland. This JIT service improves farmed salmon quality and supports the key government target of increasing annual exports.

Other developments include:

Redacted

We are always looking at ways to connect with our customers and to better understand the markets for which NorthLink is a vital part of the supply chain. We have attended and sponsored industry events over the term of the current contract.

These industry events include:

- All Energy in Glasgow
- Expo Global in Brussels, the world's largest seafood trade fair
- Scottish National Winter Fair for beef and lamb producers in Scotland
- Aberdeen and Northern Marts (ANM) Christmas Classic and Orkney Auction Mart (OAM) Overwinter Competition, both of which have been sponsored by Serco at NorthLink
- Offshore Europe, the leading exploration and production event for the oil and gas industry in Europe

We continuously monitor, review and improve our performance by seeking and acting upon feedback from an independently commissioned qualitative and quantitative stakeholder engagement survey.

Our freight timetables are programmed and agreed with Transport Scotland based on demand forecasts. Any future changes to freight timetables will continue to be based upon demand forecasts in conjunction and consultation with our stakeholders as appropriate, and we recognise Transport Scotland's commitments to do so. Any stakeholder requests to alter timetables are forwarded to Transport Scotland for consideration. If we are not able to implement a requested alteration, we will explain honestly and clearly why we have been unable to follow that course of action to the stakeholder(s) concerns and ensure that the relationship is kept positive for future dialogue on other issues.

Our current engagement strategy has proven very successful to date, with openness and transparency at the centre of our relationships. Evidence of our success is shown below in the quotes from the Auditor General for Scotland – Ferry Users' Views October 2017.

'Serco NorthLink's customer engagement is excellent. It regularly communicates with the public, haulage companies and representatives of the fishing, aquaculture and seafood sectors. Serco NorthLink provides useful information on demand and capacity which allows it to plan ahead in conjunction with hauliers.'

'Good relationships and open communication exist between Serco NorthLink and its stakeholders, such as councils, Regional Transport Partnerships, hauliers and the fishing, aquaculture and seafood industries.'

'OIC meets with Serco NorthLink, Transport Scotland and Shetland Islands Council every six months, but OIC said that there was generally little need for regular meetings because the service provided by Serco NorthLink is so good.'

'The quarterly meetings of the Shetland External Transport Forum and the Stewart Building Transport Group are really useful and efficient forums for discussions between Transport Scotland, Serco NorthLink, stakeholders and customers.'

4.1.3. Local community liaison with representatives of Ferry Services users and the public

We have shown that community engagement is important to Serco and our Customer Services Team have engaged effectively with the local communities, contributing to sustainable economic growth on our islands and in our remote rural communities.

This is demonstrated through our regular engagement with the community to:

- Deliver social value to local communities by supporting local businesses to bring employment opportunities
- Encourage sustainability of communities including tourism
- Provide access to amenities and healthcare for island communities
- Enable the movement of freight to and from these communities
- Improve accessibility for all our users to encourage travel for all

Our community engagement strategy has allowed us to do the following:

- Establish ourselves within the local community and build a reputation of trust as the provider of a lifeline ferry service and a key employer
- Generate important feedback on the service, through our engagement methods, leading to business improvements and increased profitability and reduced subsidy
- Enhance the reputation of TS and Serco, as the operator of a safe and efficient ferry service in the Northern Isles
- Enhance community access to employment and education, and social and economic opportunities through our recruitment and training programmes

Since 2012, Serco has successfully engaged with hundreds of stakeholders, including sports clubs, events' organisers, tourist organisations, charity groups, supported and local businesses, societies and many others. To manage these stakeholders, we adapted Serco's key principles for effective stakeholder engagement.

Based on our experience we have:

- Gained an unrivalled insight into the Northern Isles' stakeholder environment
- Formulated a successful engagement strategy where we prioritise our stakeholders

- Created Redacted to champion stakeholder engagement as NorthLink community ambassadors for stakeholders, ensuring effective communication and engagement
- Welcomed customer feedback via our social media accounts, customer complaints and post-travel surveys and on-board iPad surveys to ensure continuous improvement
- Promoted local events on our NorthLink website, through our marketing team, including local music festivals, agricultural shows, food and drink events, drama, boat weeks, charity events and nature festivals
- Created NorthLink Ferries Sponsorship Scheme, Redacted

Redacted

Serco is responsible to be a proactive and progressive business, to ensure our services are attractive to the communities we serve. Our Community Ambassadors support our community engagement agenda by connecting with and supporting local events and promote them on our NorthLink website and social media accounts.

4.1.4. Engaging with Tourism Groups

Serco are fortunate to operate NorthLink in such a historic and picturesque part of Scotland, which is a growing tourist destination for its vibrant communities, ancient ruins, high quality local products and local wildlife. We partner with organisations including Visit Scotland, Destination Orkney and Promote Shetland to ensure that by working together, partners can deliver greater collaborative results. We constantly strive to promote the Northern Isles and the North and North East of Scotland by sharing knowledge and expertise with industry partners.

For several years we have hosted familiarisation trips onboard our passenger vessels to the Northern Isles for those attending the Visit Scotland Exhibition. Our Marketing Team have also organised and delivered many press and industry-related tours to build knowledge and enthusiasm for wider tourism to the Northern Isles.

NorthLink engages with Visit Scotland to reflect the Scottish Government's 'themed years' and we undertake a range of engagement with local tourism bodies including Redacted Through engagement with these organisations, we are able to deliver greater collaborative results to benefit the communities of the islands and the North of Scotland.

Positive comments from Emma Miller - who holds multiple roles including Chairperson, Shetland Tourism Association, Event Manager – Shetland Boat Week, Project Manager and Business Owner – Réalta Events Management, March 2019, supporting our engagement strategy

'I have worked with managers and front-line staff at Serco NorthLink on a number of different projects over the past few years. Their dedication to the community they work for is exemplary, in my opinion. There is a clear dedication from the top down to serve the community in a pro-active and engaging way.

In my role as an event manager, the sponsorship, activity provision and travel assistance for Shetland Boat Week has been a fundamental contribution to the development of the event, and without this it may not have been able to grow from the first year. In particular, the active participation from the Operational Management Team proved to me that this is not just a job for them – it's a genuine passion to see things do well.

From the perspective of Shetland tourism, which is an increasingly growing and important industry, I feel Serco NorthLink have contributed enormously to the growth we are seeing. I have attended events and trade shows where the company's presence has been extremely well received. The concept that they promote Shetland and Orkney as a destination, rather than their own company is, quite frankly, brilliant. It is enormously beneficial to our islands to have the additional marketing power of a company such as Serco NorthLink represent us in such a professional and quality manner as they do. Working in partnership with food and drink producers and supporting small businesses to showcase their wares (in addition to ensuring the use of local produce aboard the ships), the company embraces inclusiveness and partnership working perfectly.

While Shetland's own destination management organisations do an excellent job at promoting our islands, I firmly believe that the work Serco NorthLink do in supplementing this is a direct contributor to the growth we see in visitor numbers.

In terms of company operations, I feel that Serco NorthLink have faced a number of challenges in providing this contract over the last seven years. Not all of which have been within their control – such as the weather and the capacity of the ships. However, they do have seven years of experience in dealing with this. They know the issues and have spent many hours discussing solutions with stakeholders.

It is my opinion that to replace the management organisation at this stage would be a detrimental step backwards for the communities of Shetland and Orkney. We need to see a stable, well managed life-line ferry service continue in a way which allows further growth of our tourism industry, adequate freight shipping for our produce and a continued 'hands-on' approach from the Operational Management Team.'

4.1.5. Serco's approach to engaging with Staff and Trades Unions

Serco are committed to fostering professional development and positive working environments that enable our people to be highly engaged, capable, passionate about public service and motivated to achieve personal success.

Serco has effective policies, standards, systems and processes for recruiting, developing, rewarding and managing our people across our contracts to support our people in meeting their potential and working to the best of their ability. Our Group Management Standard is defined within our People Policy Statement (SMS-PS-P), supporting standards and related operating procedures.

In summary, Serco:

Redacted

Serco advocates a partnership approach to employment relations as the foundation for an employee engagement strategy for NorthLink. The primary lead for fostering professional development and a positive working environment at NorthLink will continue to be our Redacted

By focusing on common interests, we will continue to build trustful relationships and to be pro-active in mutually beneficial employee engagement. Our Operational Management Team advocates a 'Leading from the Front' approach to employee engagement, to encourage and enable a two-way engagement strategy as and when required.

Serco has raised levels of engagement and offered development opportunities for our people at NorthLink. We introduced a range of new initiatives and have seen employee engagement increase year on year. Our success in this area is of the highest standard, as demonstrated through our Investors in People Gold Award in November 2018.

We take a proactive and supportive approach to engaging with our recognised Trades Unions Nautilus and RMT. Redacted

We have worked together to introduce new programmes, to help ensure delivery and quality of operation is maintained, including:

Redacted

Since 2012, we have been committed to ensuring employees are well informed about the business and that they feel that our Operational Management Team are committed to two-way open, trustworthy, proactive and responsive communication and engagement. This plan has helped ensure that our management taps into employee ideas and opinions to optimise the organisation's learning and innovation, making the most of the skills, creativity and knowledge of every individual in the business. Several of the key initiatives we have introduced to improve two-way engagement are listed below:

Redacted

- Redacted

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) research shows that dialogue is one of the most important drivers of employee engagement. Our initiatives for employee engagement have ensured good dialogue through two-way communication, ensuring our people feel valued and listened to.

4.1.6. Serco's approach to engaging with Accessibility Groups

Our emphasis is to continue to engage with accessibility groups throughout the new contract, listening to and acting on their feedback and looking at new ways to improve the service we provide for accessibility groups.

Serco NorthLink value all passengers who endeavour to travel on our Northern Isles ferry services.

Our people are committed to operating a service that focuses on customer care on all vessels and at all ports in which NorthLink operates. Accessibility is a priority to ensure the comfort of all passengers, including those with wide-ranging disabilities. A person has a 'disability' under the Equality Act 2010 if:

- They have restricted mobility, cognitive impairment or hearing and visual impairments
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities

Our Redacted Director sits on the National Transport Accessibility Steering Group regularly engaging and working with disabled people and their organisations. In 2016, we assisted with the development of Transport Scotland's Accessible Transport Strategy. Accessibility is top of our agenda and we already provide a high level of accessibility on our vessels that was devised with the support and input of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) and Mobility and Access Committee Scotland (MACS). We regularly host training events by Access Panel Orkney onboard our vessels along with regular Guide Dog Training Sessions throughout the year.

Since 2012, we have worked with Transport Scotland to introduce several new initiatives at NorthLink ferry terminals and onboard our vessels, to make the journey for those with disabilities easier and more comfortable. We have made improvements using the Ferries Accessibility Fund by Transport Scotland to do the following:

- Audible lift announcements to assist those with visual impairments to locate the correct floor
- Lowered the passenger terminal desk in Aberdeen and Scrabster to aid those in wheelchairs
- Tactile, braille and visually enhanced signage on passenger vessels, including directional signage, lift signs and cabin door numbering, to assist those with visual impairments
- RNID hearing units are available at all NorthLink ferry terminals to those who may need them
- Tactile vessel maps to aid those with visual impairments

In addition, we host other regular events on-board our vessels and provide staff training to ensure we provide the appropriate accessibility for passengers. Staff awareness through training is vital in providing the appropriate accessibility for all passengers. We hosted several accessible events on-board including:

- Staff training onboard the MV Hamnavoe hosted by Access Panel Orkney where staff were provided with disability awareness training

- Go Upstream’s ‘Making Connections’ workshop on-board MV Hjaltland to bring disabled people together with transport operators to discuss, address and plan how travel connections can be made easier. The scheme invites operators and disabled people to participate in workshops, to undertake journeys and navigate connections on Scotland’s east and west coast, and to identify connection barriers that people face.
- Scottish Disability Equality Forum has been held onboard the MV Hrossey in 2017 and 2018 and welcomed delegates, equalities groups, and transport providers to participate in the Disability Equality Scotland accessible travel summit
- Guide dog training on-board our vessels to enhance their working performance through familiarisation
- Dementia Friends programme in 2018 – we partnered with Alzheimer Scotland to take part in this programme to ensure all our people are trained to assist passengers with dementia

Positive comments from Carolyn Griffiths, Access Panel Orkney, February 2019, supporting our accessibility strategy

‘The aim of our session was to let staff experience disabilities first-hand so they can empathise with passengers’ needs.

‘All of us running the training have a disability so we were able to provide first-hand examples of what accessible travel is like for us. We were delighted to be welcomed onboard to provide this training and it’s great to see a company like Serco NorthLink Ferries take accessibility for passengers seriously.’

4.2. Proposals for Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Serco will build on and enhance our existing, strong relationships with local authorities, regional transport partnerships and stakeholders including agriculture, hauliers, seafood and tourism and of course communities themselves to ensure the effective delivery of the lifeline Ferry Service. We are committed to working in partnership with and further enhancing relationships with all stakeholder groups in general and specifically to:

- Keep our communities and local businesses informed about key operational plans and activities through newspapers, radio, letters, PR releases, publications, social media and online articles and live feed updates on NorthLink website on problems and issues
- Consult with user groups and stakeholders on proposed changes to seasonal timetables and other issues which have a direct impact on the Ferry Service through regular engagement and consultation. Feedback from these sessions will influence any final decisions taken.
- Continue to forge close bonds with communities and local businesses by exploring issues, challenges and opportunities together through regular engagement and consultation so they understand the context for why change may be required in the service delivery and receive feedback on how their decisions influenced decision making
- Continue to work in partnership with communities and local businesses to progress significant initiatives such as port improvements, integrated and active travel, ticketing solutions and boosting tourism. When appropriate we will seek advice from experts and identify innovative solutions that will be discussed at local transport and user forums.
- Further improve our fair and transparent NorthLink Ferries Sponsorship Scheme for individuals, institutions, clubs and associations that provides everyone with an opportunity to benefit.
- Continue to take a proactive approach to engaging with local businesses, attractions and activity providers to build on our existing promotional campaigns for the special interests and activities pursued by visitors to the North East and Northern Isles.

4.2.1. Community, Operational and Strategic Engagement

Table 2 in Section 4.1.1 shows our future stakeholder and community engagement plans across an extensive range of strategic, operational and community and customer groups and bodies that influence strategy, policy and service delivery across the network:

This undertaking is based on our experience as the incumbent operator and our understanding of the requirement for robust communication methods in the continuous improvement of the Ferry Service. Our team, led by NorthLink Redacted and supported by our dedicated Redacted will engage with all relevant local authorities, regional transport partnerships and representatives of Orkney, Shetland, Caithness and Aberdeenshire stakeholders, including agriculture, hauliers, seafood and tourism groups along with various regulatory bodies. As the operator of the current contract, we recognise the critical importance of the lifeline role of the Ferry Service in sustaining the socio-economic viability of the region and the importance of continuous improvement based on consultation and feedback.

Our strategy will:

- Enable NorthLink's Management Team to be open and transparent in how we engage, consult with and respond to communities, RTPs, Local Authorities, harbour authorities, public transport providers, tourism groups and industry and freight customers on their ideas and feedback, and improve NorthLink's service reliability by; Redacted
- 'Lead from the Front' on stakeholder engagement through regular engagement with NorthLink's Redacted
- Promote strong working relationships with harbour operators and port users through formal and informal engagement
- Redacted
- Be compliant with our contractual obligations on timetables and other issues that may have a direct impact on the Ferry Service
- Adhere to appropriate trading and operational legislation

In addition to the above, we will continue to engage with our key stakeholders through a variety of other channels, ensuring that our communication approach is appropriate for each person. This will continue to include:

- Face-to-face meetings with the Redacted and rest of the NorthLink Management Team

- Regular attendance at conferences and industry events
- E-newsletters and personal email updates from our Redacted
- Email updates sent at least daily about operational status of our passenger and freight vessels including early disruption warnings. These emails are sent to all key stakeholders including Transport Scotland, relevant RTPs, local authorities, agriculture, hauliers, seafood, tourism groups and media outlets
- Annual survey sent to relevant stakeholders

Other parties with an interest in NorthLink’s activities, including Local Authority Officers, Councillors, MSPs and other stakeholder groups will continue to be able to make representations to NorthLink in writing. NorthLink responses will continue to be undertaken quickly and effectively and all our interactions will be tracked. We aim to issue a response to any query within Redacted

Redacted

4.2.1.1. Community Ambassadors

From Commencement Date our dedicated team Redacted

fostering relationships with

community organisations including:

Redacted

Through our activities with these groups, we will continue to gain invaluable information on community perceptions of our services, allowing us to create relevant strategies and initiatives to address any issues.

Serco is responsible to be a proactive and progressive business, to ensure our services are attractive to the communities we serve. Our Community Ambassadors support our community engagement agenda by connecting with and supporting local events and promoting them on our NorthLink website and social media accounts.

4.2.2. Community engagement strategy and timetable consultation

We will ensure that matters raised during various island forums or various engagements are incorporated in the seasonal timetable reviews and will be the responsibility of our Management Team through scheduled local transport forums and Redacted Managers through ongoing local engagement. Our Redacted Managers have built considerable knowledge of the island communities and they are ideally placed to represent the island communities, and the problems and issues raised during any review and preparation of the new time table proposals. This whole process can be summarised as:

- Redacted

- Redacted

the proposed new timetable will be submitted to Transport Scotland for review.

- If a proposed timetable is successfully approved by Transport Scotland, Serco will then begin the process of publishing new services and incorporating the new timetable onto the NorthLink website and booking system

Senior representatives of the company will continue to play an active role in contributing to ongoing local and strategic planning forums and networks. This will include our active involvement in the Scottish Tourism Alliance to help deliver the Scottish Government's Tourism Strategy 2020.

4.2.3. Engagement with tourism partners

NorthLink operates in a historic and picturesque part of Scotland, which is a growing tourist destination for its vibrant communities, ancient ruins, high quality local products and local wildlife. Throughout the term of the next contract, Serco will:

- As part of our Marketing Plan for the Northern Isles Ferry Service, we include the wider use of mobile apps and social media channels to attract relevant customer profiles, with promotional campaigns for each season, run in partnership with tourist groups, event organisers and activity providers
- Continue to engage with Visit Scotland to ensure we can deliver greater collaborative results to the social and economic wellbeing of the islands. Within the first two years, we will appoint selected staff onboard to become Visit Scotland 'iKnow Partners'. We constantly strive to promote the Northern Isles and the North and North East of Scotland by sharing knowledge and expertise with industry partners.
- Continue to align ourselves with the Scottish Government's Themed Years. We will engage with Visit Scotland to celebrate The Year of Scotland's Coasts and Waters 2020. Our Marketing Team will promote the event via blogs for NorthLink's website and onboard magazine, host onboard events and bridge tours, and through the sponsorship of various seafaring events.
- Build on our existing strong and positive relationships with Redacted

through joint campaign activity, regular engagement and alignment with their key messages.

- Continue to attend events including the Redacted to showcase all that Orkney, Shetland, Caithness and Aberdeenshire have to offer. Redacted
- Continue to host onboard familiarisation trips for those attending the Redacted as they provide a great opportunity to build industry knowledge and enthusiasm for wider tourism to the Northern Isles and North East of Scotland



Figure 1: Serco NorthLink Ferries' Team attending the Visit Scotland Exhibition, April 2018

These relationships reflect our commitment to working collaboratively for the social and economic wellbeing of the Northern Isles and the north of Scotland. We constantly strive to promote tourism in the communities in which we operate by sharing knowledge and expertise with industry partners. Promotion will include effective marketing campaigns through our media outlets and sponsorship of events via NorthLink's Sponsorship Panel.

4.2.4. Engaging with Accessibility Groups

Serco will continue to value inclusion of all passengers who wish to travel on Northern Isles services. Our Redacted

will continue to take an active role engaging with various accessibility groups including Redacted Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS), Redacted and others who represent those with additional access needs. Our plan is to listen to feedback from these groups and our customers so NorthLink can continue to introduce new measures to further optimise the accessibility of our services. In doing so, we will maintain a focus on inclusion, which is at the heart of the business.

NorthLink will continue to operate beyond regulatory compliance wherever there are attainable benefits for customers with additional access needs. Over the term of the new contract, Serco will:

- Introduce 'Interpreter Live' service to the NorthLink website to enhance the customer experience for hearing impaired customers. This will be an on-demand service of real-time access to qualified and registered British Sign Language Interpreters. The system will enable customers to book journeys online, seek information about NorthLink services and troubleshoot.
- Sit on Transport Scotland's Accessible Travel Steering Group to contribute to the development of accessible travel policy in Scotland
- Use Transport Scotland's Accessibility Fund, to improve our onboard and shoreside facilities to enhance the travelling experience of our disabled users and others facing mobility or access challenges, including passengers that have hidden impairments
- Meet the needs of our disabled passengers by enabling specific requests for relevant facilities, services and assistance when making reservations either through our Customer Service Centre or at NorthLink's terminal check-in locations
- Host onboard events such as Guide Dog Training Sessions, Go Upstream's 'Making Connections' workshops, Orkney Access Panel staff training and Scottish Disability Equality Forum
- Ensure our people receive annual training so as to provide the appropriate level of accessibility for all customers
- Ensure disability associations in Orkney and Shetland including Orkney Disability Forum and Disability Shetland are consulted throughout any build process to ensure suitable and appropriate facilities were included for disabled access



Figure 2: Serco NorthLink Ferries welcomed delegates, equalities groups and transport providers onboard the MV Hrossey for the Disability Equality Scotland accessible travel summit

4.2.5. Incorporating Customer and Community feedback through the contract via Online and other feedback loops

Addressing online feedback plays an important role in improving the ferry service and enables Serco to help sustain the economic growth of the islands and remote rural communities. Our aim is to ensure that our website meets the needs of all our users, no matter what their needs. Community feedback will always form an important strand of our engagement strategy to assist our decision-making and service enhancements going forward. Over the term of the new NIFS contract, we will implement several improvements to further aid our two-way customer and community feedback loops. Redacted

All customer complaints will continue to be acknowledged within five days and a response will be issued within 14 days.

Our website will continue to provide our customers with up-to-date information and operational news about sailings along with a range of other information, including boarding information, onboard facilities for all users, timetable information, fares, information about all ports in which we operate, and destination guides for Orkney, Shetland, Caithness and Aberdeen. In addition, we will introduce a series of updates and new initiatives to improve our customer engagement by:

- Issuing customers with an automatic pre-travel advice email informing them of relevant documentation, travel advice, check-in, arrival times and promotional offers and available upgrades
- Issuing our customers with 'Post-Journey Surveys' via email to help ensure the quality of our service is maintained. This will promote enhanced two-way engagement with our customers. NorthLink will continuously monitor and review responses and the overall performance of the service with a focus on continuous improvement.
- Introduction of a live chat facility on the NorthLink website to improve our customer engagement and the customer's experience. The introduction of this new technology will allow customers to troubleshoot and complete their bookings.
- Continue to provide customers with NorthLink's onboard iPad surveys to rate their onboard experience. Our iPad surveys provide valuable feedback about our onboard customer experience and a suggestions page to provide NorthLink with inputs about potential service improvements. NorthLink will continue to monitor and review all responses on a regular basis to ensure continuous improvement and a safe, efficient, quality service for our passengers and the communities we serve.

- Continue ‘Speak to the MD’ initiative to facilitate direct communication between passengers and the Managing Director via a specific e-mail address
- Introducing extended opening hours at our Customer Service Centre, to enhance our customer engagement as shown in Table 3 below. This will enable us to provide access to a wide range of NorthLink services and enhance our customer service experience.

Table 3: shows the proposed opening hours for the NorthLink Customer Service Contact Point

April to October (Inclusive)	
Monday to Friday	05.30 through to 24.00
Saturday and Sunday	08.00 to 24.00 (note at the weekend the Hamnavoe sails at 09.00)
November to March (inclusive)	
Monday and Tuesday	05.30 to 20.00 (No evening arrivals into Hatston)
Wednesday to Friday	05.30 to 24.00
Saturday and Sunday	08.00 to 24.00

In addition to our existing feedback loops, Serco is always looking for new ways to enhance engagement with local communities and enable them to provide valuable feedback about the service.

Feedback from our customers will continue to form an important part of our engagement and decision-making strategy moving forward. We will continue to provide our customers with a variety of tools to provide customer feedback, including, but not limited to, our social media accounts, on-board iPad surveys which includes a customer suggestion section, customer complaints (both on and off-line) and post-travel surveys to drive continuous improvement across the business and benefit sustainability.

4.2.6. Incorporating Employee feedback through the contract via meetings, online surveys and other feedback loops

Serco will continue to advocate a partnership approach to employment relations as a foundation to its employee engagement strategy for NorthLink. By focusing on common interests, we will continue building trustful relationships and be pro-active in mutually beneficial employee engagement. Redacted

Over the term of the next contract we will ensure that our employees remain well informed about the business and that our leadership team is committed to two-way open, trustworthy, proactive and responsive communications and engagements. We endeavour to implement new two-way employee engagement where appropriate and continue to implement all existing initiatives. Our existing methods have helped to ensure that our management continues to tap into employee ideas and opinions to optimise the organisation’s learning and innovation, making the most of the skills, creativity and knowledge of every individual in the business. We will achieve this by continuing the following initiatives:

Redacted

Redacted

By continuing to implement our existing initiatives and endeavouring to introduce new feedback loops as appropriate, we will drive continuous improvement across the business to the benefit of all.

5. Involvement of Supported Businesses and SMEs – SCE2

5.1. Approach to Involvement of Supported Businesses and SMEs

Serco is committed to providing an equitable opportunity for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Supported Businesses to participate in subcontracting opportunities on our contracts. Serco supports Transport Scotland's commitment to develop business relationships with Supported Businesses and SMEs and will continue to draw on a rich, deep and wide Scottish supply chain. Our experience at NorthLink and Caledonian Sleeper has enabled us to create a Scottish supply chain of SMEs and supported businesses with a local purchasing rate by value of over ^{Redacted}. Our policy will continue to support the local economy, showcasing the best of Scottish produce, benefiting the environment by reducing food miles and adding value to the local economy.

The primary aim of a supported business is the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged people, with the main aim of the business being the social and professional integration of disabled and disadvantaged people.

At NorthLink, one of our earliest initiatives in the existing contract was to introduce Supported Businesses into our supply chain.

Article 19 of the EU public procurement directive allows public bodies to make the decision to reserve public contracts for supported businesses. This is enacted in Scotland by Regulation 7 of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulation 2012. We will continue to seek diverse suppliers and subcontractors to increase our supplier base and to participate on our contracts as we strive to provide value-added services in support of Government objective.

Serco's core values of Trust, Care, Innovation and Pride align with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 (Section 9), improving the economic social, and environmental wellbeing of the authority's area and ensuring that equitable opportunities are afforded to all SMEs and supported businesses to compete for contracts. Serco's core business is to deliver Government services, and we use the expertise of local providers and stakeholders to deliver a localised offer, leveraging our strength and presence as a provider of lifeline services.

In accordance with our current standard practice on the existing Northern Isles Ferry Service Contract, our Group Management Standard and the Supply Chain (SMS-GS-PSC1) outlines our commitment to sustainable procurement. It reflects our own ethical standards and code of conduct and ensures that our sourcing processes are fair and ethical to both Serco and the participating suppliers, with consideration for the environmental, social and economic factors important to our clients and communities that we serve.

We are committed to procuring goods and services from within a 50-mile radius of NorthLink's operating ports. We hold Meet the Buyer events Redacted

to offer local producers the opportunity to pitch to NorthLink's procurement team, present products and explore new business opportunities. Local procurement ensures many environmental benefits by reducing the number of food miles travelled, and economic and social benefits to the communities through supporting local employment to provide NorthLink with an assurance of service resilience.

This commitment to supporting our local suppliers and quality produce has led to the following recognitions:

- Award from Orkney Food and Drink Forum for 'Best Kids Meal'
- Awarded VisitScotland's Taste Our Best Award for locally sourced food on all our NorthLink passenger vessels since 2015
- Invitations to participate in events organised by 'Scotland Food and Drink'

By procuring locally we offer our customers an authentic taste of the region, as well as promoting produce from the local communities close to our ports. We support and share Scotland Food and Drink's 2030 vision where: 'Scotland is a globally recognised food tourism destination where high quality, memorable food and drink experiences are delivered by proud and passionate local ambassadors.'

5.1.1. Case Studies from Supported Business and SMEs

NorthLink's initiative with Shetland-based social enterprise **COPE Ltd.**, was evolved in this way to include seasonal shower gel and soap in cabins, as opposed to a single brand product all year round. The benefit to COPE has been increased sales in the on-board shop, sustained employment and their high-street retail, as passengers have been able to try these products while in their cabins. COPE also won the contract to supply our two Aberdeen-based passenger vessels with sandwiches, enabling them to take on more staff.

Positive comments from Ingrid Webb, CEO of COPE Ltd. – February 2019, supporting our engagement strategy

'COPE Ltd has been working alongside NorthLink Ferries for many years and we highly value our relationship with them. We supply our Shetland Soap and Shetland Kitchen Co products to all the ferries travelling between the northern isles and mainland Scotland. This contract is invaluable to us as a social enterprise as it assists us to sustain and develop our social purpose, employing people with learning disabilities. We love working alongside NorthLink and hope it continues well into the future.'
Ingrid Webb, CEO of COPE Ltd.

Aberdeen-based **Glencraft** are a social enterprise for craftsmen with a range of abilities and disabilities and their main objective is to provide dignity through work. Through a rolling cabin maintenance programme, Glencraft has supplied 400 x Crib 7 fire-rated mattresses to all our vessels, as well as 350 quality mattresses at Caledonian Sleepers. NorthLink donate old mattresses to Shetland-based social enterprise COPE who either refurbish or recycle them.

Positive comments from Graham McWilliam, Managing Director, Glencraft – February 2019, supporting our engagement strategy

'Glencraft have worked with the team at NorthLink Ferries for a number of years. They have been very supportive of our cause and have provided significant work for the team, allowing us to employ further disadvantaged individuals. We are proud to be able to support such a well-established company and look to continue to do that for many years to come. It is comforting to know that our Social Enterprise is helping the customers arrive at their destination well rested and refreshed.'

Graham McWilliam, Managing Director, Glencraft

Community Food Initiative North East (CFINE) is an Aberdeen-based social enterprise that engages with people who have employment challenges. CFINE supply our Aberdeen vessels with Grade A fruit and vegetables for our onboard services. In addition to the business avenue, we have developed a close working relationship with CFINE to deliver real change not just in Aberdeen but in the Northern Isles. In 2018, we became the first ferry operator in Scotland to back the provision of access to sanitary products. The decision followed the Scottish Government announcement to make sanitary products free to people on low incomes and those in education. Sanitary products are supplied to Serco by CFINE, who managed the 'Access to Sanitary Products' pilot in Aberdeen on behalf of the Scottish Government. This initiative has been highly successful, and we are working together to expand CFINE's distribution network of sanitary products to people on low incomes and in education in Orkney and Shetland.

Positive comments from Fiona Rae, Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) of Community Food initiatives North East (CFINE) supporting our engagement strategy

'CFINE improves health and well-being and the environment, tackles poverty and builds resilience through a range of support and services for and with disadvantaged, vulnerable, low income individuals, families and communities in NE Scotland, Moray and the Highlands and Islands.

CFINE have been working in partnership with NorthLink since October 2016 building a strong relationship between supplier and customer through our enterprise business.

In addition to the business avenue we have developed with NorthLink, we are now working closely together, delivering worthwhile and valuable projects which have enabled CFINE to expand its distribution network of essential products to disadvantaged individuals and families in Orkney & Shetland.

We look forward to our continued relationship with NorthLink and value the incredible support we have received from the committed team of staff, who go above and beyond.'

Fiona Rae, Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) of Community Food initiatives North East (CFINE)

Redacted

By implementing the concept of 'local' to our wholesale procurement, we have been able to build strong relationships with the supplier through regular contact and reduce our food miles, while increasing NorthLink's resilience, and ability to be reactive to change.

Redacted

NorthLink Redacted have worked hard to further improve disabled facilities onboard all our passenger vessels in recent years. During the last refit, NorthLink installed specially designed public area disabled toilets and shower facilities on each of its RoPax ferries.

This year we are introducing further new measures in NorthLink ferry terminals to optimise accessibility to services, including:

- A more extensive deployment of large print and Braille reading materials and signage throughout NorthLink's port facilities from supported business Royal Blind Scottish Braille Press through a third-party supplier
- The introduction of hearing assistance systems within the port facilities

Going forward, our challenge will continue to be maintained efficiency and cost-effective purchasing while using Supported Businesses in Scotland and the Northern Isles. At NorthLink we have balanced the need for high-quality and value-for-money products and services. We have supported new local SMEs (with no more than 250 employees) and Supported Businesses, integrating at least ^{Redacted} per cent disabled or disadvantaged people into their workforce. Our appraisal process of their tenders ensures a fair opportunity to all involved.

Outside of common consumables, food and local crafts, vessel hotel services and large spend areas are specialist and generally specific to maritime operations. No Supported Businesses have been identified that provide the appropriate skills or services. Through our knowledge as the incumbent operator, regular contact with HIE, Redacted and local authorities, we have identified a range of goods and services provided by Supported Businesses in Scotland. The following areas are considered to be where supply opportunities may exist with companies:

Redacted

5.1.2. NorthLink Ferries Sponsorship Programme

In 2012, Serco created a new ground-breaking sponsorship programme on its NorthLink service to provide support for a range of individuals, sports teams, schools, food and drink festivals, folk festivals, theatre groups, charitable events, clubs and a range of other groups to the benefit of the local communities. The NorthLink Ferries Sponsorship programme is headed by Redacted

Redacted and a panel of local community representatives, running six-monthly sponsorship reviews. This has enabled many events to take place both on the islands and further afield. Since 2012–2013, total sponsorship has increased by over 250% when compared to 2018–2019, as shown in Figure 3:

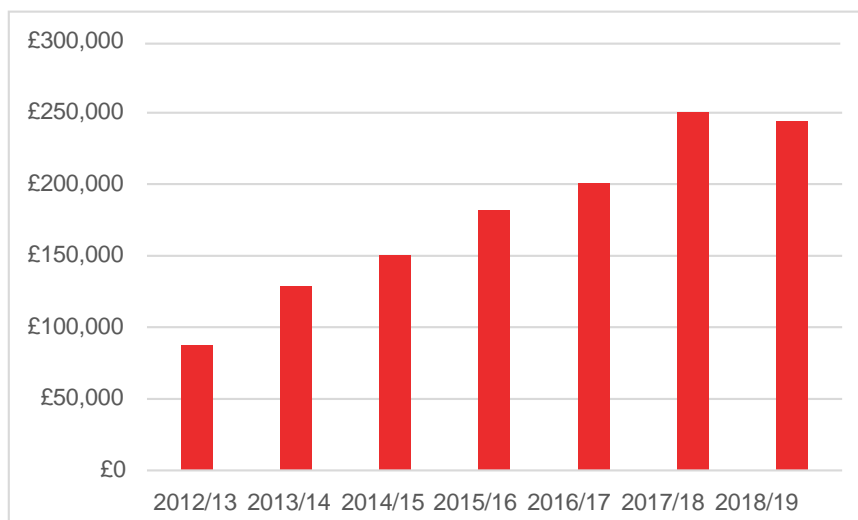


Figure 3: Bar chart demonstrating the substantial rise in sponsorship at NorthLink since 2012

Our sponsorship programme has helped enable a wide range of events to take place both on the islands and further afield in Aberdeen City and Shire, Moray and the Highlands and gives NorthLink a great opportunity to meet with the representatives of our customer base. A small sample of these events include:

- RNLI fundraising days
- The biennial Classic Car Show in Shetland
- The Hjaltibonhoga Fiddlers, representing Shetland at the Royal Military Tattoo in Edinburgh
- Discounted fares for Orkney Folk Festival patrons
- Stromness Shopping Week
- Shetland Boat Week
- RSPB Orkney Nature Festival
- Exhibitions in The Pier Arts Centre
- ‘Orkney Food and Drink Awards’ and ‘Taste of Shetland’
- Sports events and clubs including - Stromness Golf Club NorthLink Open, Orkney Youth Development Group, Netball Orkney, Shetland Amateur Football Team, Orkney Rugby Club, Lerwick Amateur Swimming Club and Junior Inter County sports
- Providing lunch for the Junior Up Helly Aa Jarl Squad and their families
- Sponsored travel for swimming and athletic teams, horses and rally cars
- Fishermen's Mission fundraising efforts
- Shetland Folk Festival

Sponsoring community events and charities like this is an essential part of working with the communities in which NorthLink operates. Our support also includes the Scottish mainland across Aberdeen City and Shire, Moray and the Highlands, and includes:

- Highlands and Islands Tourism Awards
- Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival

- ANM Christmas Classic Livestock Sales at the Inverurie Mart
- Taste of Grampian event, attracting more than 30,000 people each year
- Aberdeen and Northern Marts Christmas Classic
- VisitScotland Expo in Glasgow to promote tourism in the Northern Isles

These were part of a programme of support throughout the route network, demonstrating the close working relationship Serco has developed within the communities we serve.

Positive comments from Redacted	Portsoy Community Enterprise – April
2019, supporting our local community engagement strategy	
<p><i>'To whom it may concern,</i></p> <p><i>Dear Sirs,</i></p> <p><i>We are writing to express our support for the re contracting of NorthLink Ferries to operate the Aberdeen, Orkney and Shetland services.</i></p> <p><i>Many of the volunteer members have used and enjoyed the actual ferry services with the combination of their well-appointed and comfortable ships and first-rate customer care.</i></p> <p><i>However, a key reason for writing is to underline our experience of NorthLink providing much more than simply an excellent ferry service.</i></p> <p><i>As a volunteer community organisation totally committed to increasing the tourism appeal of the area via our annual Scottish Traditional Boat Festival, The Salmon Bothy, the Boatshed, the Sail Loft bunkhouse and Portsoy's caravan park, we have particularly appreciated the support provided by NorthLink towards achieving our objective.</i></p> <p><i>Collaborative promotional activity has significantly helped to increase awareness of this area, increased numbers visiting from Orkney and Shetland (and vice versa) and helped the development of important business relationships between this area and the islands. This reflects the company's high level of commitment to the economic success and wellbeing of the region, indications of a company which puts in so much more than simply providing a service.</i></p> <p><i>We strongly endorse the Serco NorthLink Ferries application and trust that the renewal decision is made.'</i></p> <p>Redacted Portsoy Community Enterprise</p>	

5.1.3. NorthLink Cadets and Apprenticeship Programmes

Our Community Ambassadors Redacted have built strong relationships with local schools and colleges, by connecting with young people from local communities, and inviting schools, youth groups and other organisations to get involved with their local ferry service and learn more about the maritime environment. We welcome pupils and teachers onboard to help them bring a range of subjects to life and to contribute to and support the Scottish Government's holistic approach to learning through 'Curriculum for Excellence'. These visits occur regularly during the year and our continued participation puts our service at the heart of the communities we serve, to engage future generations to use ferry travel and to assist with future recruitment.

We have also built strong relationships with colleges, marine centres and the universities of the Highland and Islands in the North East and the Northern Isles. Serco is an integral part of the Northern Isles and we are committed to promoting the career opportunities available to young people living in the communities that we serve:

- We are keen participants in 'Developing Young Workforce (DYW)' in Orkney and our Redacted sits on the board of DYW. This helps us to provide an interface between schools and employers. We enable introductions to highlight the opportunities for locals and others to live and work within the communities in which we operate.

- The introduction of our Trainee Officer Cadet Scheme and offered sponsorship opportunities to four cadets per year, providing further employment and long-term career opportunities for local people. So far, this has led to more than 24 cadets completing the training course.
- The introduction of a new apprenticeship programme in partnership with Redacted
The programme was created to deliver a series of new junior positions onboard and provide the relative training required.
- Redacted
-

Redacted

In 2019, NorthLink was commended by the Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands, Paul Wheelhouse, for the development of young people from Shetland and Orkney. We can further demonstrate this through our reward of the highest Investors in People accreditation, Gold standard, and are the first and only ferry operator in Scotland to achieve this plaudit.

Positive comments from Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands, Paul Wheelhouse –March 2019, supporting our engagement strategy

‘Modern Apprenticeships are an excellent way for all employers to invest in their workforce and provide the essential skills the economy needs now and in the future.

‘We want to see more employers making more opportunities available whilst helping drive up the quality of those apprenticeships, so NorthLink Ferries as one of the key employers in the Northern Isles should be applauded for their unique first.

‘As a Government it’s heartening to see young people from local communities gaining invaluable work experience, work placements and qualifications in their local industry today, giving them every chance of being the workers who will lead Scotland’s seafaring industry tomorrow.’

Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands, Paul Wheelhouse

5.1.4. Hosting Events in Terminals and Onboard NorthLink Vessels

Serco plays an important role in supporting the local community and delivering added social value. Our Redacted Officers regularly liaise with local groups and organisations to help organise events onboard our vessels and in the terminals in which NorthLink operates. This strategy has enabled us to provide local groups and organisations with a place to undertake local events, demonstrations and seminars helping to deliver social value to local communities.

For the existing contract, NorthLink has hosted a wide range of events both at our terminals and onboard our vessels. A selection of these events is listed below:

- Dogs Against Drugs Shetland Team at Lerwick terminal
- Aberdeen Drugs Dog unit at Aberdeen terminal
- Orkney Drug Dog onboard MV Hamnavoe
- Stewart Building Group
- Scottish Disability Equality Forum held onboard the MV Hrossey
- Access Panel Orkney disability awareness training for our staff onboard the MV Hamnavoe
- Guide Dog Training Sessions
- Nautical Institute annual reception onboard MV Hjaltland
- Opportunity North East (ONE) Dining Club Event held onboard MV Hjaltland
- RNLI Cruise around Bressay
- Mearns Young Farmers visit at Aberdeen terminal and onboard MV Hjaltland
- On-board visits from Robert Gordon University and North East Scotland College, Primary Schools

5.2. Proposals for Involvement of Supported Businesses and SMEs

5.2.1. The responsible person with defined authority for establishing, maintaining and reporting on the opportunities for purchasing supplies or services from Supported Businesses and SMEs

As a result of Serco's experience running NorthLink, Caledonian Sleeper and other contracts across Scotland, we have experienced how important it is to have a real and local relationship with SMEs and supported businesses on the ground. For this reason, the primary lead for establishing, maintaining and reporting on opportunities for purchasing suppliers or services from SMEs and supported businesses will continue to be the Redacted

Redacted already has an in-depth knowledge of the region and is well positioned to understand the various supply needs of the business. The role of the Redacted will include:

Redacted

5.2.2. Engaging with Supported Businesses

We will build on our current, successful approach to engaging with Supported Businesses and SMEs at NorthLink, where considerable effort has been put into building on supplier relationships with supported businesses and continue to provide an opportunity for local and sensitive suppliers to be involved in the NorthLink supply chain.

We have found that supported businesses often require additional assistance and need to be engaged with directly to help them fulfil the opportunities to work with the transport operator. We will continue to run our Meet the Buyer events across the network. These events have been extremely well received by local businesses as well as the support structures around them, like local authorities, economic development agencies and political representatives. NorthLink will continue to publicise these events. We see this as being an exemplar of best practice and consistent with Scottish Government's objectives to provide opportunities to supported businesses and other SMEs.

We will continue to buy 'local' by procuring goods and services from within a 50-mile radius of NorthLink's operating ports where appropriate. This may seem obvious, but we recognise that for many communities, there is a clear conflict between a product being sourced local to them, and a similar product being sourced from an SME or Supported Business, which could be located anywhere else in Scotland. We recognise the importance of offering local produce to our customers, the social value and the benefit it brings to our service. For example:

- Redacted

Our approach to procurement will continue to be balanced, sourcing supplies and working hard to ensure that the emphasis is not biased towards one community over another. We enable potential suppliers to have a fair and appropriate opportunity and this will continue over the term of the next contract.

Our proposal includes:

- Engagement in an audit of the business, which will include identifying various contracts for consumables and one-off services needed:
 - This process will allow us to verify areas of the service we could introduce goods and services that could be supplied by Supported Businesses that are not already
- Continue to build on the successful approach already undertaken at NorthLink and continue to hold Meet the Buyer days throughout the network, associated with appropriate press coverage and support for local support for local authorities, HIE and ONE
- Actively including supported businesses in NorthLink's marketing, attractions, destinations and island services to support tourist footfall and continue to improve the sustainability of these ventures

In our experience, we understand that Orkney, Shetland, Caithness and Aberdeen are different and creating opportunity for all is important. Redacted

The objective of a good procurement process will continue to be to secure goods and services that provide the best balance of cost, quality and service. Although there are a number of purchasing categories where Serco's purchasing scale across multiple businesses allows for economies of scale agreements, Redacted

There are a number of other discretionary spend areas that differ from contract to contract, where local arrangements are more sensible, often from local or specialist providers.

5.2.3. Engaging with Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

Serco actively supports Scottish Ministers' policy relating to SMEs for sustainable public procurement that supports Scotland's economic growth through improved procurement practice. We will continue to maximise efficiency and collaboration by placing local, economic, social and environmental wellbeing at the heart of the procurement process and will work collaboratively to further enhance Scotland's international reputation for leading edge innovation in sustainable public procurement.

Serco has forged positive relationships with SMEs and social enterprises in Scotland and continue to see them as a vital and valuable part of our supply chain and important source of innovation and future growth, as well as improved efficiency and quality of our services.

Redacted

We are dedicated to sourcing locally. We place great emphasis on seeking out and securing genuine opportunities for greater local SME involvement at both ends of the routes we operate. Our procurement strategy helps deliver many environmental and economic benefits to the communities in which we operate as well as providing us, as the operator with assurance of service resilience during inclement weather conditions often experienced in the Northern Isles and north east of Scotland.



We pride ourselves on working closely with local suppliers and sourcing the best quality goods from across the north east of Scotland and the Northern Isles from sustainable, ethical and traceable sources. This approach has led to all our NorthLink passenger vessels achieving Visit Scotland's coveted 'Taste Our Best' award each year since 2015 for the use of local food and drink, the highest levels of vessel hygiene, as well as demonstrating customer service excellence. Locally sourced food finds its way onto our menus and proudly display the Taste Our Best Award and the Good Food Nation pledge. In addition, we remain committed to the Scottish Government's Ambition 2030 Scotland, a Land of Food and Drink to make farming, fishing, food and drink Scotland's most valuable industry.

We offer residents and visitors local products that are from the North East and Northern Isles, such as jewellery, fudge, cheese, beer, as well as Viking burgers from Orkney, jewellery, fish, bakery products, sandwiches, milk and soap from Shetland, biscuits and gin from Caithness and fruit, vegetables, cheese and salad dressing from Aberdeen. For the new contract we will continue to work closely with local SMEs for the provision of local produce for the NorthLink food and beverage offering, together with locally themed retail products. We endeavour to continue to improve sales onboard our vessels and at our shore-side outlets and facilitate sustainable economic growth and support the provision of a circular economy for the Northern Isles and its remote rural community.

5.2.3.1. Engaging with Suppliers

In order to build on our successful efforts procuring goods from local suppliers, Serco's Procurement Team at NorthLink will continue to work closely with members of our supply chain and especially SMEs, to facilitate the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the authority area, to support the provision of a circular economy for the Northern Isles and its remote communities. Over the term of the next contract we will:

- Continue to provide our suppliers with fair and transparent tendering opportunities

- Host Meet the Buyer events both onboard the vessels and in the ferry terminals to provide local businesses with the opportunity to showcase their offerings and engage with Serco to understand our strategy for the NorthLink Ferry Service, aligned with Transport Scotland's objectives
- Provide simplified contents of our Supplier Pack (following SME feedback)
- Continue to monitor quarterly SME expenditure to ensure ongoing provision of opportunities and improved efficiency, economy and quality of our service delivery
- Continue to provide workshops and mentoring in subjects such as the tendering process, accounting, marketing, health and safety and environmental management to support organisations in fulfilling their contractual obligations and help develop and grow their skill base to tender for larger contracts independently.
- Continue to ensure innovation and growth opportunities are included as part of our supplier review process

We will continuously refine and improve the supply chain, much of which is anchored in the Northern Isles and the North East of Scotland, with a focus not just on Scottish SMEs, but particularly on local SMEs. We have forged relations with Scotland Food & Drink who develop the food strategy for the Scottish Government so we can continue to tie into the wider catering strategies Serco is developing. By attending Scotland Food & Drink events, we are able engage with the local supply chain to directly support Scottish provenance, both in our current contracts and in helping us develop our supply chain solutions for future Scottish contracts.

5.2.3.2. Supporting Local Produce

Serco understands the important role its ferry services play in contributing to the sustainable economic growth for the Northern Isles and remote rural communities. We will continue to host networking events and talks onboard to promote local produce. In the past we have held events such as the North East ONE Dining Club Event and Aberdeen Grampian Chamber of Commerce Food and Drink Networking Event. These events allow NorthLink to highlight the benefits of and our commitment to using locally sourced food and drink.

In addition, we will introduce new events held onboard our vessels to help promote local produce including:

- Annual 'Meet the Supplier' events. These events will be held onboard our vessel in Aberdeen, showcasing our suppliers produce to industry bodies in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and beyond to help them further promote their produce and expand their customer base
- NorthLink will host selected suppliers onboard our passenger vessels on a monthly basis to promote their produce to passengers, carrying out tastings during sailings to help the to showcase their produce to new audiences



Figure 4: NorthLink sponsored many Orkney and Shetland producers at Taste of Grampian, June 2018

We will continue to promote local businesses throughout the term of the next contract using a range of methods including our online Business Directories, under the 'Guide To' sections. We will help visitors to plan their visits and support local events, Redacted

By working closely with suppliers and sourcing the best quality products from across Orkney, Shetland, Caithness and Aberdeen, we provide healthy and affordable options that showcase the best the region has to offer. This benefits the economies of the Northern Isles and the North East of Scotland and gives us the opportunity to be an exemplar in local sourcing.

Positive comments from Redacted Opportunity North East (ONE) – March 2019, supporting our engagement strategy

'Opportunity North East (ONE) has worked closely with Serco NorthLink Ferries' team via the North East Scotland Food & Drink Network (formerly Grampian Food Forum) over a number of years. The team shows a genuine commitment to increasing their knowledge and connections with local food and drink businesses by regularly attending 'meet the producer' events, hosting a dining event on board MV Hjaltland in 2016 and acting as a judge for the North East Scotland Food & Drink Awards in 2019. This interest is reflected in Serco NorthLink's local procurement strategy and the number of north east food and drink suppliers supplied onboard in the restaurant and bar, such as Rora Dairy and Summerhouse Drinks.'

5.2.4. NorthLink Ferries Sponsorship Programme

Serco will continue to deliver social value through the NorthLink Ferries Sponsorship programme to provide support to sports people, teams, societies and many groups of the Islands and North-East communities. The NorthLink Ferries Sponsorship panel is headed by our island-based team and local community representatives, who run six-monthly reviews to support the launch of local events and deliver social value to the communities in which we operate. The sponsorship panel decides on financial sponsorship to support local events, groups and individuals enabling them to participate in Scottish, UK and international activities. In addition, financial sponsorship can aid groups or individuals participating in activities and events in the Northern Isles to promote the economic and social wellbeing of the islands.

Sponsorship includes complimentary, competition and voucher discounts, festival discounts and sponsorship of events and activities. Redacted



Figure 5: The Hjaltibonhoga fiddlers, sponsored by NorthLink, showcasing their talent at The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, August 2018

Examples of our sponsorship is wide ranging and includes food and drink festivals, Redacted

Sponsoring community events and charities like this is an essential part of working with our local communities.

5.2.5. Engaging with Schools, Colleges and Universities

As a company, we understand our role in supporting local employment and apprenticeship opportunities in the communities in which we operate. Redacted will build on our strong relationships with local schools, colleges and universities by connecting with young people from local communities, and inviting schools, youth groups and other organisations to get involved with their local ferry service and learn more about the maritime environment. Over the term of the next contract, we will:

- Welcome pupils and teachers on-board to help them bring a range of subjects to life and to contribute to and support the Scottish Government's holistic approach to learning through 'Curriculum for Excellence'
- Remain keen participants in 'Developing Young Workforce (DYW)' in Orkney; our Redacted sits on the board of the DYW helping us to provide an interface between schools and employers
- Continue our Trainee Officer Cadet Scheme offering sponsorship opportunities to four cadets per year, providing further employment and long-term career opportunities for local people. This scheme has led to 24 cadets completing the training course to 2018.

- Continue our apprenticeship programme in partnership with the Redacted
The programme was created to deliver a series of new junior positions onboard and provide the relative training required.
- Continue to work alongside Redacted to encourage young people to apply to work with us.

5.2.6. Hosting Events in Terminals and Onboard NorthLink Vessels

Serco, through its Community Ambassadors will continue to host events and visits in the terminals in which NorthLink operates and onboard our vessels to benefit the social wellbeing of the local communities. This strategy will continue to enable us to provide local groups and organisations with a place to undertake events, demonstrations and seminars, delivering social value and further integrating the NorthLink service into the communities in which it serves.

5.2.6.1. Maintaining high standards in procurement, and fostering good relationships with suppliers

The relationship between Serco and its SME suppliers will continue to be a key component to achieve high performance in our business. In selecting our suppliers, we work hard to choose reputable business partners who are committed to ethical standards and business practices compatible with ours. Redacted

We ensure that our suppliers sign up to the highest practices and standards, we are committed to cutting red tape and making Serco easier to deal with from a supplier perspective. We appreciate that this is particularly important for SMEs and have joined Transport Scotland in its commitment to suppliers signified by the Suppliers Charter. We will continue to work with Transport Scotland to improve our procurement processes to ensure that SMEs have fair and equal access to procurement opportunities for NorthLink. In March 2019, the Federation of Small Business identified that only a fifth of Scotland's £12 billion procurement budget goes directly to small businesses, even though they account for 98 per cent of Scotland's business community. Over Redacted of our onboard suppliers are sourced from within Scotland, and we endeavour to continue to improve our information sharing and remove undue complexity from our tendering process.

We acknowledge the Scottish Government's position of highlighting the professional responsibility of purchasers in relation to planning, advertising and awarding contracts to maximise the involvement of SMEs.

We are also cognisant of the changes to public procurement such as the Public Contract Regulation 2015, which has made public procurement processes simpler and more cost effective for SMEs to win business with us. Where appropriate we will advertise tender opportunities on our website, giving Scottish firms, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as third sector businesses, a fair chance to compete.

Table 4: Summary of Proposals for Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Proposals	Timing and duration	Responsibility	Stakeholders involved	Assumptions/dependencies	Method for measuring results
<p>We will facilitate periodic meetings between Transport Scotland, CMAL and NorthLink Ferries as required</p> <p>Selected onboard staff to become Visit Scotland iKnow Partners</p> <p>Alignment with the Scottish Government's Themed Years</p> <p>Introduce 'Interpreter Live' service to the NorthLink website to enhance the customer experience for hearing impaired customers.</p> <p>Issuing customers with an automatic pre-travel advice email informing them of relevant documentation, travel advice, check-in, arrival times and promotional offers and available upgrades.</p>	Redacted				

Proposals	Timing and duration	Responsibility	Stakeholders involved	Assumptions/dependencies	Method for measuring results
<p>Issuing our customers with 'Post Journey Surveys' via email to help ensure the quality of our service is maintained.</p> <p>Introduction of a live chat facility on the NorthLink website to improve our customer engagement and customer experience.</p> <p>Update onboard iPad customer satisfaction surveys to rate their onboard experience.</p> <p>Introducing extended opening hours at Customer Service Centre to enhance our customer engagement.</p> <p>'Meet the Supplier' Events. Networking event for NorthLink's suppliers to showcase produce to businesses to grow their brand</p>	Redacted				

Proposals	Timing and duration	Responsibility	Stakeholders involved	Assumptions/dependencies	Method for measuring results
<p>NorthLink will host selected suppliers onboard our passenger vessels on a monthly basis to promote their produce to passengers, carrying out tastings during sailings to help them showcase their produce to new audiences.</p> <p>Provision of mentoring workshops to supported businesses and SMEs in subjects including marketing, tendering process, accounting, health and safety, environmental management and ensuring innovation is included as part of supplier review</p>	Redacted				