

Isle of Arran Ferry Committee.

Notes of Public Meeting held on Monday 18th January 2016 at Brodick Hall.

The Panel consisted of:

Chairman

Sir Kenneth Calman

Transport Scotland

Graham Laidlaw – Head of Ferries Unit

Brian Gordon – Head of Ferries Policy

CMAL

Tom Docherty – CEO

Ramsay Muirhead – Head of Engineering

Andrew Duncan – Director of Vessels

CalMac

Eric Smith – Contracts & Estates Manager

Ross Moran – Operations Manager

Simon Richmond – Area Operations Manager

Mark Thompson – Senior Marine Manager

North Ayrshire Council

Karen Yeomans – Director of Economy & Communities

1. Iain Thomson(IT) chair of the Arran Ferry Committee opened the meeting and explained that the Committee were facilitating this meeting to give the public the opportunity of asking questions about the ferry directly to key people from the relevant organisation. He indicated that this was not a Ferry Committee meeting and questions of the Ferry Committee can be raised by other means. IT introduced and welcomed Sir Kenneth Calman(KC) as chair of the public meeting.
2. KC introduced himself to the meeting explaining that he has had associations with the Island since 1964, he has a clinical background through which he is aware of the clinical services to the island and the challenges islanders have. As Chief Medical Officer for Scotland he was also aware of the issues of providing a service to islanders. He has also been Chair of NTS and is concerned about our marine heritage. He explained that the meeting is the opportunity to ask questions about service provision and advised that a note will be taken of the meeting by the Ferry Committee minute secretary. He saw the key issues was to have a ferry service which would maintain a world class island. He invited questions and asked those asking questions to identify themselves.

3. The panel introduced themselves.

North Ayrshire Council. Involved in Arran Economic group and the development of harbours especially Brodick Harbour.

CMAL are the owners of the vessels and some of the Scottish harbours, they are responsible for building new ferries and port facilities.

Transport Scotland are the executive agency of Scottish Government. They have a responsibility for policy, fare issues, contract management, procurement of ferry services including the new contract for the Clyde and Hebrides area which will run from Oct 2016 for 8 years, they sponsor CMAL and CALMAC and provide some of the funding for infrastructure development.

CALMAC are responsible for the Clyde and Hebrides Services on behalf of Transport Scotland, operating the terminals and ferries.

4. **KC - What is being done to improve the reliability of services, especially at Ardrossan?**

4.1. KY- Pleased with the investment that has been secured for Brodick but the Council along with others have recognised the importance of looking into issues relating to Ardrossan and have started work on this. She outlined that Ardrossan Harbour is owned by Peel Ports and a dialogue has been established with CMAL, Abellio and CALMAC.

As the gateway to North Ayrshire visitors are passing through Ardrossan which is one of the most deprived areas in North Ayrshire. Along with partners the Council have raised the matter with Derek Mackay MSP, the Transport Minister and a Ministerial Taskforce has been set up in December 2015 with the aim of creating a harbour which is fit for purpose. The first meeting is on 3rd February. Derek Mackay has indicated that he is keen to make progress and to put options forward for the development of Ardrossan harbour.

The Council are optimistic that with the right people around the table that progress can be made.

5. **KC: Will the public of Arran be consulted?**

5.1. KY- Yes as the work develops.

5.2. GL- Reaffirmed that the Minister is keen to make progress with NAC, Peel Ports and other partners.

5.3. ES- CALMAC are on the Taskforce and have already opened a dialogue with Peel Ports.

5.4. TD- CMAL are already active with the technical staff from Peel Ports and will now focus on the Ministerial review.

6. **Neil Arthur- Will the new vessel cope with Ardrossan harbour as it is at present and can you assure us that the engineering of the new vessel won't take away the focus from the redevelopment of Ardrossan?**

6.1. KY- the impetus is with all our partners. Peel Ports, who have shown an appetite to develop the port, will be held to task by the partners on the Task Force.

6.2. TD- one project won't interfere with the other, one is a new ship, the other is the regeneration of a harbour.

6.3. AD- the new vessel will be fit for purpose and reliable. Simulations at Ferguson's Shipyards have been held to ensure the vessel will operate reliably in and out of

Ardrossan. Calculations have been made that show the vessel is capable of holding station in winds of 50kts. Further calculations will be made as the design develops and berthing simulations will be undertaken by the shipyard.

7. Ann Robert, Brodick. Concerned about the train services from and to Ardrossan. When there are 2 ferries on this route the services isn't integrated and also the train doesn't wait if the ferry is late.

7.1. GL-CALMAC and Abellio are both Transport Scotland (TS) services. CALMAC liaises with both the train and bus operators to try and meet the needs of the public. TS will try and get the interface right between the various providers. When the timetables settle down this will be an opportunity to have a better transition, especially when the new contract is awarded.

7.2. RMo with a background in rail travel and now with the ferries he knows the importance of an integrated transport hub, so will endeavour to build a seamless travel system.

8. Ian Ferguson and Guy Murray on behalf of Arran Civic Trust made the following observations. They appreciate there is work to do with the new Brodick Terminal but they have some residual concerns. As experienced architects, but now in their 80's they are frightened by the design proposals for the new terminal. In particular the 5.5m climb to reach the ferry which will be a challenge to many people and the lifts will only hold 12 people so access to the ferry is going to be a problem. Also the cost of the project was £18m 2 years ago and is now estimated at £30m which in today's world is excessive and a waste of public money. Therefore it is not good enough and whilst the contract can't be reversed the access could be redesigned and the walkway removed from the plans. Likewise, health and safety has not been considered and no discussion with the NHS has taken place on the design of the terminal.

Can the panel please comment on this and reconsider their plans?

8.1. RMu-There have been 5 public meetings where Arran residents could air their views before the master plan and consultation communications began. There were a lot of conflicting views which needed to be fitted into the available space and facts which affected the plans included the fact that the new pier has to be in deeper water, it has to be longer than the existing pier as the vessels currently overhang the pier, it needs to point north east and with these facts a new pier would also have access on both sides to allow ferries, cargo and/or cruise ships to berth at the same time. Access needed to take into consideration the various levels required especially as vessels are increasing in height and to do this vehicles would need to go under a walkway, so the new access will have a gradient to match these needs but will benefit from being an appropriately covered access. In addition construction has to take place whilst keeping the existing pier in full use. In conclusion the new construction gives cars and pedestrians access together to the vessels which will aid service delivery.

8.2. The costs were estimated at £18m, but the project went out to tender and market competition has increased the costs, partly due to the shortage of businesses who can deliver such a project.

9. **Guy Murray**-If the walkway is covered how do medics get to someone who is taken ill, and with the proposed lift capacity there would be a long wait for all passengers?

9.1. RMu- The Isle of Mull ferry uses a similar lift, except that it is located immediately opposite the exit from the vessel so its access can be hindered by pedestrians walking past, however, the lift analysis shows that the two proposed lifts will cope with demand.

10. **Ian Ferguson**- what about 'lift anxiety', there are a substantial number of people who suffer from this, he knows of 3 in Corrie alone and are they to become prisoners on the island? Also it's 130m from Shore Road to the boat which is too far for those with a heavy suitcase or buggy.

10.1. RMu-if they are on the car deck currently and can't use the stairs they must be in the same position now, but worse as the lift from the car deck to the main floors is smaller on the Caledonian Isles than in the proposed new terminal building.

In relation to the distance the pier has to be in deep water and has to be built to manage the expectations of the next 50 to 60 years so needs to be where it is planned to go. Analysis by NAC shows that for someone with a buggy going from the bus stance to the ferry will only take an extra 49 seconds when compared to the existing facility.

11. **Kate Russell**. Is the new boat going to be able to get into Ardrossan?

11.1. RMu-CMAL engineers are working on this and a report is due in the next 2 weeks, if there are any issues they will be put to the Task Force.

12. **Betty Buchanan**- Is RMu saying that the new vessel and the Caledonian Isles both have issues with Ardrossan Harbour? Have CALMAC tried to buy Ardrossan from Peel Ports?

12.1. ES- Buying ports is not part of our business.

12.2. GL- all parties have the same aspirations of providing an enhanced ferry service.

13. **Robert Cummings**-Reliability and Ardrossan are both big problems, he described that he has heard that CALMAC have spoken to Peel Ports about future plans, however, the skippers must also have indicated what they need, so why are we not having a new linkspan at Ardrossan instead of a new terminal in Brodick?

13.1. KC- is encouraged that Ardrossan is now in the programme of discussions as well as the plans for Brodick.

13.2. MT-explained that the 3 ship's Masters report to him, however, the weather is one of the main issues with Ardrossan Harbour in addition to the sharp turn which the vessel has to make into the berth. He advised that some work can be done to improve the resilience of the harbour but major work is needed.

14. **David Kelso** – As the Troon to Larne ferry has terminated does Troon provide a port of refuge when Ardrossan isn't accessible?

14.1. MT-Caledonian Isles, Isle of Arran and Isle of Lewis ferries have all been into Troon but work on the linkspan would be needed to have it as a port of refuge. If a vessel can't get into Ardrossan due to the weather, it can't get into Troon, but

sometimes there are some windows of opportunity. The weather that affects Ardrossan, affects Troon.

15. David Kelso – will Wemyss Bay be able to accept Caledonian Isles when it's refurbished?

15.1. MT-Caledonian Isles is longer than those which Wemyss Bay is designed for.

16. Margaret Haddow- Mr Thompson spoke about the sharp turn into the berth at Ardrossan, why isn't the Irish berth used?

16.1. MT-the Irish berth is well fended and has a good linkspan but it is narrow and there is a shallow gap to negotiate into the berth, however it is good in assisting the resilience of Ardrossan.

17. Brenda Stewart – We need a proper report on matters not a chat with the Masters of the Vessels. The original plans for Ardrossan Harbour had a breakwater, is this an option?

17.1. MT explained that he has been a Master of various ships so his discussions are technical not chitchat. All ideas for Ardrossan will be considered by the Task Force but breakwaters are major investments.

18. Margie Currie – Gourock was once acceptable as a port of refuge, is there something about the level of control that CALMAC has at Ardrossan and Gourock which affect the development of ports of refuge?

18.1. AD- 15 ports are under consideration as destinations for the new vessels. This includes Gourock

18.2. RMu- the project to replace the linkspan at Gourock will consider the berth as well, but this is not due on site for 3 or 4 years due to funding availability.

18.3. MT- Gourock is a potential port of refuge but Caledonian Isles has to berth 'bows in' as the berth is shorter than at Ardrossan. She also has stabilisers which have to be brought in as the vessel approaches both Ardrossan and Gourock. At Gourock when she brings in the stabilisers it is difficult to hold the ship against the berth as it is affected by the wind, so using Gourock as port of refuge isn't always feasible. This is particularly the case in south, southwest winds.

In a recent study he has undertaken with the Met Office weather reports have indicated that we have had 25% more strong winds than 10 years ago, which obviously impact on sailings. The Masters have to consider the safety of the passengers, the vessels, the pier staff and the linkspan. A damaged linkspan would take 6 months to repair and no one wants the level of disruption.

19. Gavin Fulton – He appreciated that at times Ardrossan is dangerous, but at times Gourock would be accessible, however, he understands that if Caledonian Isles is diverted the pontoon at Gourock has to be adjusted and the Argyle ferries have priority at Gourock, therefore Caledonian Isles is denied access to the port. Is there any comment on this and is there any reassurances that once the Rothsay ferry ceases that Caledonian Isles can use Gourock as a port of refuge?

19.1. MT- there is no problem with the pontoon at Gourock, so no changes are necessary. The Masters have the discretion and the management backing to go into

Gourock if necessary, however, the winds affect the vessel no matter where it sails to.

19.2. GF replied that he didn't feel the explanation was creditable.

20. Sally Campbell- Expressed concerns that CMAL consultation wasn't done with the foot passengers. Considering the age profile of the island the distance to walk, the 35 steps and a lift that could breakdown means there are concerns from many foot passengers and CALMAC and CMAL need to think carefully and address matters for these passengers. In particular the new plans have more interfaces with traffic than the current arrangements.

20.1. RMu- the main pedestrian thoroughfare has been designed with pedestrian priority on a raised footpath where it crosses the traffic streams. Currently there are 2 traffic crossings and the new design is the safest option possible.

20.2. SC- how much further will pedestrians have to walk and are they second to the vehicles?

20.3. RMu- have worked very closely with CALMAC to ensure the comfort and safety of pedestrians. The bus terminal will be moving and pedestrians will have priority on the access. In the plans there are 2 drop off points, 2 coach drop off points and 8/10 taxi bays, which can be converted to additional drop off bays. There are 2 dedicated pedestrian access points. He added that the design has had to cope with conflicting issues and the restricted availability of land at the port.

21. David Henderson – when the ferry is on amber the ferry refuses to take livestock even if the animals are already at the port. Who makes this decision and why?

21.1. MT- the decision to sail, to carry passengers and or animals is made by the Master of the Vessel. They are well experienced Masters with lots of years of experience and they are skilled at making these decisions. The decision to carry animals is due to the movement of animal trailers, animals are not secured in a trailer and if the vessel rolls the animals may bunch up and the trailer may topple over. Sometimes when the stabilisers are drawn in on approach to Ardrossan the vessel may roll and the animals are at risk. He continued that he has had discussions with NFU about this and is meeting them in Oban next week where there will be a mutual discussion between the Masters and the NFU to gain a better understanding from both sides.

21.2. SI explained the set up of a trailer and the stability of them.

22. Vicky Rigby- Many passengers will have difficulties walking up the walkway, have escalators or moving walkways been considered?

22.1. RMu they have both been considered, but they are high capital cost and high maintenance costs. Also due to the length of the walkway buggies and heavy bags would not be allowed on escalators. One of the consultative meetings considered ramps as part of the design but the meeting dismissed this idea so a walkway was designed. A ramp was also ruled out because of the significant increase in not only the width of the building, but also the length of walk (approximately an additional 90metres)

23. Chris Brown – when will the new boat arrive, and when will CMAL design a boat that will fit all the terminals?

- 23.1. TD- delivery of the new vessel will be May 2018. The 2 vessels currently under design will fit up to 15 facilities including Brodick, Ardrossan and Gourrock.
- 23.2. CB-Will the vessel in May 2018 be the Arran vessel?
- 23.3. TD- it will be the Arran vessel when it comes here.

24. **Neil Arthur-** the vessel approach route into the Ardrossan berth is not designed to be a direct route in but it was intended that the vessel reverse into the berth, but the sandbanks at the entrance to the harbour prevent this. Why haven't the dredgers cleared the sandbank?

24.1. No comments from the panel

25. **John Ford-** on several occasions when he needed to go to hospital the ferry has been fully booked and he has been put on a waiting list, then 2 hours before she sails he has had a call to say there is space on the boat. When he got to the ferry the mezzanines were not in use and the ferry only ¼ full. Why is this and do commercial loads have priority over medical emergencies?

25.1. SR- this is an issue, but with the significant increase in traffic and an old booking system the booking system can indicate that the ferry is fully booked. However, both commercial and non-commercial traffic does cancel prior to a sailing so space is reallocated when it can be. He is unsure why the mezzanines were not in use, but explained that due to the height of commercial vehicles and some motorhomes the mezzanine can't be used when they are in line. He will consider the allocations given to commercial vehicles but he also has problems with private individuals who make multiple bookings in case they need them and then don't turn up or cancel.

25.2. JF- FC isn't representative when it only has one representative from the independent travelling public.

26. **Guy Murray-** if Peel Ports don't play ball with the Task Force what happens then?

26.1. KY- Peel Ports are critical to the plans, if they don't come on board they will be a barrier to future investment, but currently they are engaged in discussions. The Task Force is keen to drive all options.

27. **David Freeman-** Arran has a special place with its dark sky, can assurances be given that the planning and lighting at the port give consideration to this pollutant.

27.1. RMu- yes.

Summary.

KC thanked the FC for arranging the meeting, it has covered a wide range of topics, but he was surprised that there had been no mention of RET.

The panel summarised their positions:

TD- these events can sometimes be very negative, but CMAL is investing a lot in Arran with a new ferry, new terminal at Brodick and improvements at Lochranza, so he was pleased to answer the questions put to them.

KY- Ardrossan redevelopment is one of her top projects and a priority for the Council's CEO, her team and Council Members. The partnership is complicated but good business relations

have been created. The Task Force for Ardrossan is a challenge but reliability and a good customer experience are essential.

GL- Transport Scotland have engaged with the FC over a number of years, especially over RET, the new ferries and the terminal. This engagement will continue.

SR- the meeting has been useful from an operator's point of view. He hopes the public will have a better understanding of the challenges to the vessels and the skippers. The teams at both ports work extremely hard to deliver lifeline services.