

11 APRIL 2012

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

MARINE SERVICES UPDATE

1. SUMMARY

This report provides an update on current issues in the Oban Lorn and Isles area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report with the exception of item 3.3 where Members are invited to approve taking forward the development of plans to construct a new waiting room facility on Luing.

3. North Pier

The new Harbour Master, Vicki McKenzie, has been appointed and is already making the necessary contacts with regular users of the Council facilities. She has successfully completed her training as a Port Facility Security Officer which is essential for the Council to continue accepting the international vessels largely represented through the cruise industry. Vicki has also been introduced to the three Council operated ferry services in Oban, Lorn and the Isles and will be responsible for the day to day management of these services.

In respect of the management of the pier, the proposal to relocate the bin and waste oil store is in hand and works should be complete before Easter this includes the lockable bollards which will be operated by Council staff and the Emergency Services.

3.1 Cruise ships

This year there has been considerable interest in visiting Oban. A meeting with the principal shipping agents, who are in regular contact with the Harbour master, is being arranged and other key stakeholders will be invited such as the tour operators and the Police. There are a total of 29 ships that have registered an interest many of which will sail to Iona as part of their itinerary. The Council is aware of the 2013 celebrations on Iona in honour of St Columba and preparations are in

hand to address the continuing problem with the ferry slip which has exposed reinforcement causing difficulties for the ship.

The Council is a member of Cruise Scotland and a number of other members recently attended Miami to meet with cruise lines that are looking to expand their itineraries to include Europe. It is anticipated that the Council will be attending the trade show scheduled to be held in Hamburg in 2013. This is an opportunity for Argyll and Bute to market both the facilities that can be offered and the County as an exciting destination.

3.2 Pontoons

The proposals to construct pontoons that will act as a step ashore facility are in the process of design. There is a requirement to undertake geotechnical investigations and the consultant is establishing if there is any information on previous wave climate studies, environmental and or ecological investigations. This, coupled with the requirement to understand the coastal topography will lead to a competent design that will be fit for purpose. Once this process is complete and has been accepted by Members, implementation will be subject to procurement through the normal procedures. It is anticipated that this will lead to the facilities being available for the start of the season in 2013. There have been enquiries from Kerrera Marina in respect of their potential use of these facilities and it has been confirmed that they will be open for public use and managed by the Harbour Master.

3.3 Luing waiting room

The most recent Luing Ferry Users Group has requested that Members be made aware that the Community desire a replacement waiting room facility on Luing. The ideas discussed were for the building to include toilets, welfare facilities for the crew and allow for the potential for a gift shop/cafe. The replacement waiting room for Cuan has been procured and it was expected to be in place before the end of March. However, when preliminary works commenced for servicing the building, ownership of the land was disputed and this is currently being investigated by Legal Services.

3.4 M V Belnahua Refit

The annual refit for the M V Belnahua has been tendered and won by Corpach ship yard. There are significant re-plating works to the deck required this year and the refit is scheduled to take five weeks. The relief vessel will be the Grey Dog and provided there are no significant emergent works identified once the vessel is in dry dock then the vessel should be back in service prior to the summer sailings.

3.5 Craignure Passenger Access System

The ownership and statutory duty to maintain the Passenger Access System (PAS) have both been challenged in recent months and having taken legal advice a response has been sent to the Minister Keith Brown, which clarifies the Council's position.

The PAS was originally installed by Caledonian MacBrayne and transferred to CMAL in 2009. The present temporary system was installed by CMAL and is considered to be fit for purpose. It has all the relevant certificates in respect of dynamic and static load tests and electrical safety. Maintenance of the PAS is undertaken in accordance with the maintenance requirements as set out in the O&M manual for the PAS, held by CMAL.

In the meantime and with regard to the Scottish Government's draft ferries Plan, Council officials have met with officers of Transport Scotland and CMAL to discuss future infrastructure planning. If a new PAS is to be procured for Craignure, then the earliest it could be brought into operation without disrupting Mull's summer tourist economy would be Spring 2014. The lead time for procurement to achieve this date is in the order of 15 -18 months which dictates that any decision regarding what is required and how it will be funded has to be taken by October 2012.

3.6 Barge in Oban bay

The barge situated on a mooring within Oban bay belongs to North West Marine Ltd. It is legitimately moored but the owners are conscious of previous attempts to relocate it were never concluded. The owners have made it clear that they are prepared to relocate provided there is assistance with funding and that a suitable site is found. The principal difficulty is identifying a suitable site. They have also offered to refurbish the barge although such work would certainly attract attention from SEPA.

4 IMPLICATIONS

Policy	Change to restrict access to the North pier
Financial	Increase in income for piers and harbours
Personnel	None
Legal	None
Equal Opportunities	None

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03 April 2012