

**Policy Lead Report - Transportation (Strategic, Local, Ferries, Piers,
Harbours and Airports)**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is my second report as Policy Lead for Transportation (Strategic, Local, Ferries, Piers, Harbours and Airports).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that members note the contents of the paper.

3.0 UPDATES**3.1 Funding**

The Strategic Transportation Team have secured external funding, or are awaiting the outcome of bids, to deliver a number of transportation projects across Argyll and Bute during 2016/17.

3.1.1 SPT External Funding

SPT are the Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) for the West of Scotland and their remit within Argyll and Bute covers the Helensburgh and Lomond area with the rest of Argyll and Bute within HITRANS' remit. SPT's capital programme has been subject to a significant cut in 2016/17 and SPT received funding applications totalling £40m from their 12 Councils for a funding pot of £15m.

For 2016/17 SPT have awarded capital funding totalling £180k to Argyll and Bute Council to deliver the following projects:-

- Bus Infrastructure Upgrades - £100k
- Park and Ride (Gasometer Site) Land Purchase - £80k

Details of these projects are as follows:-

3.1.1.1 Bus Infrastructure Upgrades

Argyll and Bute Council have been awarded £100k from SPT's 2016/17 Capital Programme to continue the programme of bus infrastructure upgrades on local bus routes in the Helensburgh area. These works are undertaken by the Council's Roads Services and include installation of high raised kerbs, replacement of shelters and lining works. High raised kerbs allow better access to low floored buses for

passengers by reducing the vertical/horizontal gap between the bus and footway. New tactile paving will also be installed to assist partially sighted passengers to board buses. The bus stop waiting environment will be improved with the installation of new contemporary designed shelters and information panels. Bus shelters will be identified by the Council's Public Transport Manager based on patronage figures and discussions with local elected members and bus operators. Lining of stops, where required, will also be undertaken as a priority.

3.1.1.2 Park and Ride (Gasometer Site)

It has been an aspiration to deliver a park and ride facility serving Helensburgh for a number of years to ease pressure on town centre parking from commuters. SPT previously funded a feasibility study into a park and ride site serving Helensburgh. Since the feasibility study was undertaken, a site has become available in the centre of Helensburgh which could potentially be developed into a park and ride facility.

This site is the former gasometer works located between East Princess Street and Grant Street which is ideally located for access to local public transport facilities e.g. Helensburgh Rail Station. Land negotiations are currently being progressed with Scottish Gas Networks (SGN) by Argyll and Bute Council's Estates Department with a view to the Council purchasing the site for a park and ride facility. Land negotiations are understood to be at an advanced stage and this it is intended to purchase the site and undertake design works and planning in 2016/17 with a view to constructing a park and ride in 2017/18.

This funding bid covers the anticipated costs associated with the land purchase and design. The Council are awaiting SGN providing ground condition surveys as the value of the site will be dependent of the level (if any) of remediation works required to decontaminate the ground.

3.1.1.3 Sustrans Funding

Funding bids totaling £470,000 have been submitted to the Sustrans 2016/17 Community Links Programme by the Strategic Transportation Team. Sustrans will provide funding for up to 50% of the total cost of infrastructure that encourages increased levels of active travel, in particular walking and cycling.

Funding bids are prepared by the Strategic Transportation Team who consult with other Council departments, including Roads Services, to identify potential projects and submit bids. Ultimately it is Sustrans who decide which projects are awarded funding as the Community Links Programme is always oversubscribed. It is therefore unlikely that all projects will be successful.

Following consultation with relevant Council teams, funding bids for the following projects have been submitted to the 2016/17 Community Links Programme:-

- Hermitage Park Walking and Cycling Links - £300,000;
- Helensburgh and Lomond Cycleway - £100,000;
- Letterdaill (Cairnbaan) Footway Community Link - £50,000;
- Cycle Counter Upgrades - £20,000.

Where possible, projects that are awarded funding will be designed and constructed in-house by Argyll and Bute Council, providing work for local Roads Services and

Design teams.

3.2 Awards

3.2.1 Nomination for Scottish Transport Award

South Islay Distilleries Path has been nominated for a Scottish Transport Award.

In 2015/16 the Council secured in excess of £300,000 of funding from Sustrans and this included the final phase of the South Islay Distilleries Path, which is a 5km remote cycle path, connecting the villages of Port Ellen with Ardbeg, in the south of the island. This project was managed by the Islay Community Access Group (ICAG) with support from Argyll and Bute Council and it was delivered following efforts to secure in excess of £700k of public and private sector funding.

The path provides a traffic free, surfaced walking and cycling link between the villages of Port Ellen and Ardbeg and it is also a safe route to the local primary school at Port Ellen. In addition, the path provides access to the distilleries at Ardbeg, Lagavulin and Laphroaig, which are key employers in the area and are also major local tourist attractions.

Constructing such a considerable length of a path in a remote location, such as Islay, was both technically and financially challenging and, as such, every effort was made to source materials locally and use local contractors in order to keep project costs viable at the same time as achieving maximum benefit to the local economy.

Initial monitoring indicates that in excess of 9000 people have used the path since August, averaging around 2500 users per month during summer 2015, and this figure is expected to grow, now that all sections of the route are complete and open for use. The path has proved extremely popular and was recently featured in an article in the Telegraph regarding the top 10 destinations in the Highlands and Islands to visit.

3.3 Rest and Be Thankful Bus Turning Facility

All stakeholders are working together (Citylink, Transport Scotland, SPT, WCM) to resolve issues surrounding the use of the new bus turning facility at the Rest and Be Thankful by services operated by West Coast Motors. Discussions have now moved forward and stakeholders are working towards a resolution that will see services operated by West Coast Motors using the turning facility in May on a ring and request basis. The local 302 service continues to use the new facility.

3.4 Argyll and Bute Council: Road Safety Unit

3.4.1 “Scottish Biker Magazine” Launch

The 3rd edition of the Scottish Biker Magazine, a publication produced by Road Safety West of Scotland, was launched on 20th March at a Biker event in Inveraray. Bikers came from all over Scotland and from as far as Northern Ireland, Newcastle Upon Tyne and Cumbria. Representatives also attending the event included Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue, MOTOScotland, West Safety Camera Unit, Mary’s charity and Institute of Advanced Motorists The Council’s Road Safety Unit have been concentrating efforts on reaching motorcyclists who travel to the area. In partnership with Road Safety West of Scotland, the magazine aimed at

motorcyclists, both local and visitors, who ride on roads in the West of Scotland is being distributed free of charge throughout the area in an initiative supported by the 12 local authorities, Police and Fire Service.

The magazine called Scottish Biker is written for bikers by bikers and aims to give information on all aspects of riding, from getting started on basic skills, more advanced training and tips on maintenance and equipment. It includes popular routes and links and covers the types of issues that bikers may come across, from the skills of cornering, to where to get a cup of coffee.

The roads in the West of Scotland are understandably very attractive to motorcyclists from all parts of the country and beyond. Although it is extremely positive that riders come to enjoy the scenery and roads within the area, there have been concerns at the number of motorcycle casualties experienced in recent years.

Motorcyclists are roughly 35 times more likely to be killed in a road traffic accident than car occupants, per mile ridden. It is hoped this magazine will help to focus the attention of bikers on all aspects of their riding. Copies of the magazine are available from Motorcycle dealers and venues popular with motorcyclists. Road safety officers in all of the Councils in the West of Scotland will also be able to supply copies on demand, and the magazine will also be available digitally on the Council website.

3.5 Argyll and Bute Council: Oban and the Isles Air Services

3.5.1 Oban and the Isles Air Services

The passengers carried on the isles air services operated out of Oban airport continue to grow in the first quarter of 2016. This continues the trend of growth from last year.

In 2015 passengers carried on Oban and the Isles Air Services rose to just over 4,200. In total 4,262 passengers were carried during 2015 compared to 3,516 during 2014. This equates to a 21.2% annual increase.

The Council's three airports will also feature as part of an airport documentary series filmed by BBC Alba which is due to be aired on Monday 25 April at 8.30pm for a run of 8 weeks.

3.6 External Transport Agency: Transport Scotland

3.6.1 Road Safety Framework Annual Report

The 2015 Road Safety Framework Annual Report has been published outlining key progress made in the last 12 months towards government targets in this vital policy area. Key highlights in the report include:

- the continued success of drink driving legislation, introduced by the Scottish Government, which is leading the way in the United Kingdom,
- the positive developments with seatbelts on school transport,
- dramatic improvements in driver behaviour on the A9 following the introduction of average speed cameras,
- numerous Scottish cities exploring the possibility of implementing 20 mph speed limits in city centre streets, following the publication of revised Scottish

Government's guidance

Further details are available on Transport Scotland's website:

<http://www.transport.gov.scot/news/road-safety-annual-report-shows-improving-picture#sthash.QWm7iRY3.dpuf>

3.6.2 CHFS Contract

CalMac Ferries Ltd provide the Clyde and Hebrides ferry services under tendered contract with Scottish Ministers. The three year contract runs from October 2013 to September 2016. The selection process for the next Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) contract is underway that will see a contract awarded at the end of May 2016 for the provision of the services from October 2016.

Further details are available on Transport Scotland's website:

<http://www.transport.gov.scot/ferries/clyde-and-hebrides>

3.6.3 Ferry Freight Fares

Transport Scotland's report, following consultation, on research and analysis of options for ferry freight fares was published last summer. There was a consensus view amongst stakeholders that it will be crucial to ensure the outcomes of the review provide a freight fares policy which firmly supports the economic development and sustainability of the islands.

Further analysis, approved by the Working Group, will therefore be carried out by Transport Scotland. The intention is that a new freight fares structure will be implemented during future Scottish Government ferry contracts. The exact timing of the introduction of the new freight fares structure has yet to be decided.

3.7 Trunk Roads

3.7.1 A82

Transport Scotland is operating an improvements programme to address a number of long-standing issues along the route of the A82. The A82 is a vital artery for communities in the western Highlands, linking Fort William, the Highlands and the Western Isles with Glasgow and the Central Belt. The programme covers areas including Pulpit Rock, Crianlarich and Tarbet to Inverarnan.

3.7.2 Crianlarich Bypass

A new bypass has been constructed in order to tackle the delays experienced by road users during the busy tourist season.

3.7.3 Pulpit Rock

The A82 at Pulpit Rock has offered a significant engineering challenge for decades.

Since completion of the improvement works in May 2015, road users are now able to pass through this section of the A82 without stopping at traffic lights.

3.7.4 Tarbet to Inverarnan Upgrade

Transport Scotland have commissioned CH2MHILL - Fairhurst Joint Venture to look at options for upgrading the A82 between Tarbet and Inverarnan.

The route runs adjacent to the west bank of Loch Lomond.

3.7.5 A83

£6.6M of funding has been awarded for work on the A83 local diversion route; the Old Military Road, so it can be improved to help keep Argyll open for business in the event of a landslide at the Rest and Be Thankful.

Transport Scotland will look to improve the general layout, access points and the operation and implementation of the diversion route should it be required. The local diversion route is part of the range of measures being progressed on the A83 under the Red Option to help reduce the risk of impacts of landslides at the Rest and Be Thankful. As well as the diversion route, it has seen the introduction of additional fencing and debris netting as well as drainage and culvert improvements.

3.8 External Transport Agencies

3.8.1 External Transport Agency: Scotrail - Changes to services to and from Glasgow Queen Street.

As part of Scotrail's preparations to deliver faster, longer, greener trains for Scotland, on Sunday 20 March, Glasgow Queen Street High Level tunnel closed for 20 weeks, for essential upgrading. It will re-open on Monday 8 August. This means that Queen Street High Level station is temporarily closed too. Queen Street Low Level station remains open and services are being diverted either to Low Level or to Glasgow Central.

As a consequence of diverted services using Queen Street Low Level station, alterations need to be made across the network, particularly west of the city, to ensure that there is room on the line for trains to follow the diverted route. This means a temporary timetable is in place for other services, particularly trains that currently use Queen Street Low Level and Glasgow Central Low Level stations. Some services have been retimed with different stopping 'patterns', and some trains terminate/start at different stations than normal. This affects the Helensburgh to Edinburgh service and details of the changes can be found at Scotrail's website: <http://www.scotrail.co.uk/queenstreettunnel>

3.8.2 External Transport Agency: HITRANS - Oban Railway Station

HITRANS are undertaking a feasibility study to improve Oban railway station and its integration with the CalMac Ferry terminal which will complement the CHORD Project Public Realm Works in this area. In order to understand opportunities for development and to gain a good understanding of the current layout, HITRANS have commissioned Robert Gordon University to undertake a Scanning and Engagement study of Oban Harbour, Rail Station and Bus Stance Area. This work will see a 3D model developed of the area, with visual options of what the pier may look like if the ferry terminal and railway station were to operate more effectively. HITRANS will be using the model and visual options to consult with stakeholders and members of the public.

3.8.3 External Transport Agency: HIE - Research

HIE have commissioned a research study to assess the impact of current transport connectivity on economic performance in Mid Argyll, Kintyre, Cowal and Bute and consider the scope for significant investments in transport infrastructure to produce transformative economic impacts. Consultations have taken place with over 30

stakeholders, businesses and service providers and the findings of the study will be published shortly by HIE.

3.9 Piers and Harbours

3.9.1 Road Equivalent Tariff

Road Equivalent Tariff (or RET) was introduced for the Mull (Oban to Craignure) ferry in October 2015. The RET formula for calculating fares is a combination of a fixed element (to ensure services remain sustainable and to cover fixed costs such as maintaining harbour infrastructure and vessels) and a rate per mile (calculated by Transport Scotland analysts using contemporary independent research by the RAC). The Isle of Mull ferry normally operates on the Mull (Oban to Craignure) route. With the commencement of the summer timetable on 25 March 2016, and following the introduction of RET, a second ferry, the MV Coruisk, now operates on this route – adding, approximately, 50 sailings per week. Early indications are that there has been a marked increase in passenger and vehicle numbers already.

Argyll and Bute Council officers have worked closely with the local community to discuss, and plan for, the expected additional traffic likely to be generated by RET. In the short-term, minor works are planned at Craignure marshalling area to improve traffic management; these works will be carried out early this summer. Additional advisory signing is also being erected. Assistance has also been provided by ABC officers to facilitate the compilation of an advisory leaflet for motorists, providing information on issues such as driving on single track roads, using passing places, allowing overtaking, camping etiquette etc. Going forward, through our working with the RET Group on the island, longer-term options are under consideration including adjustments to assist with traffic management in the village. ABC officers will continue to work closely with stakeholders to ensure that alterations and improvements to road-signing, parking layouts etc. are fully discussed with users prior to implementation of any changes.

3.9.2 Port Marine Safety Code

As a 'Statutory Harbour Authority' (SHA), the Council has specific obligations set out in national legislation (notably the Harbours Act 1964) - all SHAs are subject to the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC). The Code is not statutory, but it has relevance and moral force that means it is obligatory. In order to comply with the Code, the Council must develop and operate an effective marine 'Safety Management System' (SMS). Each harbour authority must appoint a Designated Person (DP) to provide independent assurance directly to the "Duty Holder" that the marine Safety Management System (SMS) is working effectively. Their main responsibility is to determine, through assessment and audit, the effectiveness of the Marine SMS in overall compliance with the Code.

Audits have now been carried out by the Council's DP at Rothesay, Oban and Campbeltown Harbours. Navigational Risk Assessments (NRAs) have been completed for the six main ports: Craignure, Oban North Pier, Dunoon, Port Askaig, Campbeltown and Rothesay. A draft Safety Management System (SMS) structure/framework document, for application to all piers and harbours, has been compiled and this document is now being progressed. User group meetings are being arranged at Rothesay, Oban, Dunoon and Campbeltown Harbours to facilitate interaction between key stakeholders.

A database using specialist marine software (MarNIS) has been installed for use by key marine staff. All NRA's have been moved onto the MarNIS database. In future, monthly reports produced by Piers and Harbours staff will be filed on the new system ensuring consistency in reporting. Further training of port staff has now been carried out this month (April). Essentially, work on the compilation of the SMS document continues with a target date for completion of October 2016. Stakeholder meetings will be held in April.

3.9.3 Oban Single Harbour Authority

The Council is the owner of, and Statutory Harbour Authority (SHA) for, the North Pier in Oban Bay; the Council's SHA area extends to just a few metres off the berth. CMAL is the owner of, and SHA for, the South Pier (the main ferry terminal in Oban Bay) - CMAL's SHA area also extends just a short distance out from its berths.

Outside of these two small SHA areas, there is no other statutory body responsible for the bay. With the introduction of RET on the Mull route, there is now an additional ferry in operation. In January 2014, ABC collaborated with CMAL and the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) to appoint consultants (Fisher Associates) to prepare a management strategy to improve marine safety in Oban Bay. A number of options have been put forward for the future management of Oban Bay. In order to discuss these options in greater detail it has been suggested that representatives from the Council's Harbour Board meet with representatives from the CMAL Harbour Board. At the recent ABC Harbour Board, held on 7 April 2016, it was agreed that Members should arrange to meet with members of the CMAL Harbour Board in order to take forward discussions on the Single Harbour Authority for Oban. A date will be arranged for later this year, which may coincide with a 'Development Day' for members of the Harbour Board.

4.0 CONCLUSION

As I stated in my previous report in September, Improving transport links across Argyll and Bute continues to be a key part of delivering on our Single Outcome Agreement and will contribute significantly to bringing more people and more jobs to our area. Alongside our own investment, we continue to work with partners, stakeholders and funding bodies to continuously raise the potential of this area, increase competitiveness and make improvements from which the local economy can benefit. We continue to monitor the effects of RET in order to gauge the challenges and benefits that it brings in order that we can respond appropriately and exploit any emerging opportunities for the benefit of the area.

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