

**TRANSPORT SCOTLAND'S VESSEL REPLACEMENT AND DEPLOYMENT
PLAN**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Transport Scotland published their Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan (VRDP) in February of this year.
- 1.2 Two of the main recommendations made in previous reports which impact on Argyll and Bute services, and discussed in some detail in Transport Scotland's latest report, relate to the Mull and Islay routes. The Council's marine facility at Craignure on Mull is considered to be 'physically limited', affecting the ability of large vessels to berth overnight. Whilst the Islay route is considered to be the busiest for freight in the entire CHFS (Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services) network, with limited opportunities for expansion, the need for an assessment of options has been identified.
- 1.3 This report highlights particular points of note arising in the VRDP, which will have a bearing on the future of the Council's marine infrastructure. Some detail is provided on the following ports and/or routes:- Port Askaig, Islay; Craignure, Mull; Lismore; Fionnphort to Iona and Tayinloan to Gigha.
- 1.4 Council officers are working closely with Transport Scotland, CMAL and Calmac to ensure that the goals and priorities identified in the VRDP, in relation to the Council's marine infrastructure, remain achievable.
- 1.5 It is recommended that Members consider this report.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Transport Scotland published their Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan (VRDP) annual report in February of this year. This document reports on the progress which has been made against Transport Scotland's ferry service plans to the end of 2016.

2.2 The VRDP is founded upon:-

- a) The routes and services proposals set out in the Ferries Plan,
- b) A capacity and demand analysis for each route,
- c) The need to replace vessels as they reach the end of their life, and
- d) Upgrading and replacement of associated infrastructure.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that Members consider this report.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 This most recent report from Transport Scotland is the third annual report on the subject; it summarises the outputs of the VRDP project up to the end of 2016.

4.2 In December 2012 Transport Scotland published the *Scottish Ferry Services : Ferries Plan (2013 – 2022)* on the back of the earlier *Scottish Ferries Review*. The Ferries Plan provides a basis for the shape of all of Scotland's ferry services until 2022 and underpins the development of the VRDP.

4.3 Two of the main recommendations made in previous reports which impact on Argyll and Bute services, and discussed in some detail in Transport Scotland's latest report, relate to the Mull and Islay routes. The Council's marine facility at Craignure on Mull is considered to be 'physically limited', affecting the ability of large vessels to berth overnight. Whilst the Islay route is considered to be the busiest for freight in the entire CHFS (Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services) network, with limited opportunities for expansion, the

need for an assessment of options has been identified.

- 4.4 Council officers meet regularly with representatives from Transport Scotland, CMAL and Calmac to review the Council's marine assets and discuss future plans. The Ferries Plan plays a large part in setting the Council's priorities in the planning of future works on the Council's marine infrastructure.

5.0 DETAIL

- 5.1 A copy of Transport Scotland's VRDP report can be found here:-

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/41509/vrdp-annual-report-2016-30-january-2018.pdf>

- 5.2 Particular points of note arising in the report, which will have a bearing on the future of the Council's marine infrastructure, are as follows:-

- 5.2.1 Islay – The report refers to this service becoming the 'most capacity constrained' in future. Currently CMAL has produced plans for extending their ports at both Kennacraig and Port Ellen to enable larger vessels to berth alongside; this will improve resilience to the service in the event of larger back-up vessels being required. Arch Henderson has been commissioned by the Council to consider the feasibility of extending the berth at Port Askaig – this work is ongoing. The report goes on to recommend that the next major vessel procured by Calmac be allocated to the Islay service to replace the MV Hebridean Isles.
- 5.2.2 Oban to Craginure – Calmac plans to deploy the MV Hebrides as the primary summer-season vessel on this route, with the MV Isle of Mull or MV Isle of Arran as the secondary vessel. The costs for works to accommodate these vessels overnight at Craginure will be considerable; the Council, with prior agreement from Transport Scotland, has issued a consultancy brief for a STAG report on future options for Craginure Pier.
- 5.2.3 Oban to Lismore – Initially, the Ferries Plan noted that two services operated to Lismore and there was an intention to work towards one service only. The VRDP now notes that this is a long-term aspiration and that the original appraisal will be subject to review. Currently the Council is working on improvement works at both Port Appin and Point on Lismore.
- 5.2.4 Fionnphort to Iona – The Ferries Plan sets out a long-term proposal to construct a berthing facility at Fionnphort which would allow for a longer operating day and provide a more suitable overnight berth in terms of crew access. The Council has engaged a consultant to consider the feasibility of providing a new breakwater at Iona and overnight berth at Fionnphort. A contract for carrying out ground investigation works in the area is expected to be awarded shortly.
- 5.2.5 Tayinloan to Gigha – The Ferries Plan included a long-term proposal to make improvements at Gigha which would allow the ferry to be berthed overnight at the ferry slip – this would allow for a longer operating day. A feasibility study

has been carried out by the Council and the next stage will be to progress the design of the new infrastructure – comprising of an overnight berth at Gigha and aligning structure at Tayinloan. It is likely that any new development at Gigha would include provision of a charging point to enable the deployment of a hybrid ferry as a future aspiration – as outlined in the VRDP.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Council officers are working closely with Transport Scotland, CMAL and Calmac to ensure that the goals and priorities identified in the VRDP, in relation to the Council's marine infrastructure, remain achievable.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Policy	Considered to be none directly arising from this report.
7.2 Financial	Fees and charges will have to increase to fund the Council's Marine Asset Management Plan.
7.3 Legal	Considered to be none directly arising from this report.
7.4 HR	Considered to be none directly arising from this report.
7.5 Equalities	Considered to be none directly arising from this report.
7.6 Risk	Asset management planning reduces the risk of having to repair and maintain existing infrastructure.
7.7 Customer Services	Continued consultation with local communities.

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