

## Aviation, Maritime, Freight & Canals

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Councillor Alan Reid

By email: [alan.reid@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:alan.reid@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

Date:  
10 April 2018

Dear Councillor Reid

Thank you for your letter of 16 March regarding the request for Transport Scotland officials to attend the Cowal Transport Forum (CTF).

I was contacted by an Argyll & Bute Council officer on 12 December, seeking representation from Transport Scotland Ferries Unit at the 7 March meeting of the CTF. I responded on 22 December confirming that we would not be able to attend, as it appeared from the previous minutes that the focus of the meeting would be on the future of the Gourock – Dunoon town centre ferry service. As there would likely be an active procurement exercise at the time of the meeting and a potential bidder on the CTF, it would not be appropriate for Ferries Unit officials to attend such a meeting. I did offer that if the CTF still wished our attendance to discuss other matters, such as current operational aspects, to let me know.

I did not receive a response at the time. I was then copied into an email on 16 February confirming the meeting details, to which I reminded of my previous response. I then received a further email on 27 February, confirming that you as chair accepted the position with regards to discussions around the future of the service, however you requested our attendance to discuss issues around the current service and particularly reliability.

I replied on 1 March confirming that all relevant officials were fully committed that day and therefore we were unable to attend. I noted that the operator, Argyll Ferries Ltd, previously attended the CTF and therefore they should have been able to answer questions on operational issues. I also offered to answer any specific questions not addressed by the operator by email following the meeting.

I am aware that Argyll Ferries Ltd were unfortunately not able to attend your 7 March meeting. We have since spoken with the operator and they have confirmed that they will endeavour to attend future meetings.

Transport Scotland attend a number of consultation groups as a matter of routine, details of which are set out on the Transport Scotland website - <https://www.transport.gov.scot/public-transport/ferries/ferry-services/#51170>

Transport Scotland attend the Clyde Ferry Users Group, which covers the Gourock – Dunoon ferry service. Transport Scotland would therefore not normally attend a meeting such as the CTF, as it would be for the operator to do so and then raise any issues for escalation with Transport Scotland or through the Ferry Users Group.

I hope you find this informative and it clarifies the position.

Regards

**MARGARET HORN**