

Dear Alan

Thanks for this

I would have no objection to you chairing any such informal, private meeting and in principle I have no objection to attending such a meeting.

However there is a confusion in the Forum's approach to which I need to draw attention.

You say in you last line that you want to "*establish a constructive dialogue with the Scottish Government about the ferry service*".

I think that is an excellent idea but much as I want that to happen I could only comment as the local MSP and anything I say would be in that role.

It would be far better, if you wish to engage with the Scottish Government in that way, to ensure that Transport Scotland attends and I presume their reluctance at present is because the terms of the tender are not published.

I would encourage their attendance after that and am accordingly copying in their CEO and the Transport Minister.

If that meeting takes place and there are issues that the Forum wants to seek my involvement in or assistance with as a result of that meeting then, as the local MSP, I would be prepared to meet the forum to take part in a private, informal discussion.

Regards

Michael

From: "Reid, Alan" <Alan.Reid@argyll-bute.gov.uk>

Date: Tuesday, 20 March 2018 at 15:42

To: "Russell MW (Michael), MSP" <Michael.Russell.msp@parliament.scot>

Cc: "Moir, Andrea" <Andrea.Moir@argyll-bute.gov.uk>, "Docherty M (Marie-Claire)" <Marie-Claire.Docherty@parliament.scot>

Subject: RE: Cowal Transport Forum [OFFICIAL]

Dear Michael,

Thank you for your email. The Forum membership comprises the 6 Argyll & Bute Councillors who represent the Dunoon and Cowal wards, representatives of the community councils in Cowal, transport providers and public agencies with a transport remit.

The Forum's mission statement states,

"The Cowal Transport Forum aims to serve the needs of the Cowal community and improve connectivity for residents and visitors of Cowal. It is a forum where transport issues can be raised and discussed with decisions made and taken forward as a group for action by the relevant agency."

The planned meeting would be an informal, private one. Invitations will be limited to Argyll & Bute councillors and community councils. The intention is a dialogue. The Forum was frustrated by the failure of both Transport Scotland Ferries Policy and Contract Management Branch and Argyll Ferries to attend the most recent meeting of CTF. The Forum is supposed to be the consultation body for the Dunoon-Gourock ferry service, but we cannot fulfil this role if neither the provider nor Transport Scotland attend.

The Forum has a constructive relationship with all other providers and agencies, including the Roads section of Transport Scotland.

I am the chair of the Forum, but am willing to give up the chair on this occasion to one of the SNP or Independent Councillors if you feel it would be inappropriate for someone who has stood against you in an election to be the chair.

Meetings of the Forum are well attended and constructive. Yes, there is criticism of the Scottish Government over the ferries, but members of the Forum will tell you that I try to turn the meeting away from any such criticism towards being constructive.

The purpose of the meeting is to establish a constructive dialogue with the Scottish Government about the ferry service.

I hope the above has re-assured you and you will be able to attend.

Regards

Alan

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From: Russell MW (Michael), MSP [<mailto:Michael.Russell.msp@parliament.scot>]
Sent: 20 March 2018 12:16
To: Moir, Andrea
Cc: Docherty M (Marie-Claire)
Subject: Re: Cowal Transport Forum [OFFICIAL]

Thank Alan for this.

Before I respond can I have a list of the membership of the forum, the remit of the forum and an indication of whether this is intended to be a dialogue between the forum and myself or some form of public meeting.

Regards

Michael