

OBAN BAY DEVELOPMENT / NORTH PIER EXTENSION PROPOSALS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 As part of the Council's existing Harbour Authority area in Oban the council owns and manages a commercial berthing face at North Pier. This berthing face is in high demand and increasingly has insufficient capacity to meet the demands being made from commercial vessels. During the last year, 2 to 3 vessels per week have been turned away despite enquiries dropping due to repeated regular refusals. Recent salt deliveries have been disrupted and rescheduled due to the restricted access of heavy cranes on the cantilever pier edge. Also the availability of berthing space for CFL lifeline ferries has resulted in disruption to our other regular customers.
- 1.2 Oban Bay and the North Pier are of strategic importance for economic and tourism not only to the community of Oban but also to the hinterland of Oban, the many island communities who rely on Oban for strategic transport links, for aquaculture, off shore energy together with many other commercial and recreational users.
- 1.3 This report proposes to progress a Business Case, for future consideration by the Harbour Board, for the extension of North Pier as a commercial development opportunity providing much needed additional berthing.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Harbour Board is asked to agree to a business case being progressed to determine the viability of an extension to the North Pier, Oban.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND EXISTING USE OF NORTH PIER

- 3.1 North Pier Oban is part of the Council's wider marine portfolio and is included within the Harbour Authority area of the Council's existing Statutory Harbour Authority in Oban. North pier is used by numerous commercial vessels including but not limited to: overnight and daytime berthing of CalMac's Lismore ferry; fish farm work boats; large sail boats; barges delivering road salt and other

materials; logging boats; and small to medium cruise ships etc.

- 3.2 The existing North Pier is approximately 75m long and has a berthing depth of 3m at its southern end and 5m at its northern end. This means that there are limitations in berthing, particularly during certain tidal conditions. Furthermore, due to the construction of the berthing face there are loading restrictions at the edge which means that heavy plant such as excavators for unloading barges are restricted in how they operate.
- 3.3 Following the development of the transit berth pontoons there has been an increase in the demand for commercial berthing at North Pier and it is not uncommon for vessels to be turned away. The increase in cruise vessel business visiting Oban, increase in the size and frequency of fish farm vessels and the summer 'Tall Ships' visits. There may also be future increased CFL / CalMac ferry traffic requiring layovers due to CMAL upgrades at the Railway Pier.
- 3.4 Some work has previously been carried out around concept design for the extension of the berthing face at North Pier. Furthermore, following the decision in December 2021 by the Harbour Board for the Council to progress the Municipal Harbour Authority, officers have held workshop sessions to consider how best to reinvigorate a project to develop a pier extension. This also looked at the additional local economic benefit which could be brought to the area, particularly considering the strategic importance of Oban Bay and North Pier.
- 3.5 The scope of the proposal would include extending and strengthening the North Pier by up to an additional 50m and dredging to a usable uniform depth of 5m to facilitate and future proof the berthing face for commercial customers. These works would help to ensure a safe and efficient through traffic management of commercial and private vehicles using the pier.
- 3.6 Whilst it would be necessary to consider a range of potential design solutions, extending the width of the existing pier face into the sea to create additional working space, as well as providing strengthening to the edge of the pier together with lengthening the pier to the north, would provide a significant additional berthing face for commercial vessels. Note the final detail of any pier extension, if progressed would be dependent on the usual design process. This concept proposal would also provide additional opportunities for cruise vessels to use the North Pier as a step ashore facility rather than relying on using tenders to transport passengers from anchorages elsewhere in the bay.
- 3.7 There are 4 options which were considered as part of the concept design process which are summarised in the table below.

Option	Summary description of option	Benefits	Drawbacks
1	A 50m extension to the northwest along the lines of the pontoon breakwater and following the present berthing	This option originally looked at foot access to the extension as	Although the berthing face would be extended it would

	face. There are further variations depending on scale of access and usability of the extended area for vehicles etc.	well as additional access to the breakwaters and pontoons. It would most suit CFL layovers and cruise vessel visits. It represents the minimal cost while lengthening the berthing face.	be restrictive to commercial vessels which will need to 'work' at the pier while alongside. It would need to be accessible to a variety of vessel gangways so would still be required to have a reasonable width and structure.
2	Extending out to seaward by 10m of the existing working berthing face.	This puts the workable berthing face into the more desirable deeper water suitable for larger commercial vessels.	Doesn't extend the length of the working face and presents a potential constraint on the CFL approach to the Railway Quays. Larger beamed vessels would more likely be 'Doubled up' due to the lack of extra length.
3	A combination of 1 + 2 above giving the depth and length for larger vessels.	A long deep berthing face would be ideal for larger deeper vessels without tidal restrictions.	This could exacerbate the issues with CFL vessels approaching the Railway Quay. Extending the length from this position also puts the construction into deeper water which increases the cost and complicates the engineering requirements for larger vessel loadings.
4	A specific variation to option 1 above with land reclamation of the shallow waters alongside the existing northwest facing	A narrower reclamation would see an inverted 'L' shaped quay	Expenditure and time to complete.

	wall and perhaps the esplanade wall.	which would give extra sheltered berthing spaces as well as the opportunity to improve the function and access to the Pier and car park areas.	
--	--------------------------------------	--	--

3.8 This report proposes that a Business Case is developed to test the benefits of extending the North Pier. The Business Case would consider the strategic fit, financial viability together with climate change etc. Other benefits to the local community which can be considered but lay outside the Marine scope would include increased footfall into the town center, improvement to traffic on the pier, job creation and retention in the north Lorn area (aquaculture, aggregates and supporting industries, tourism, and services).

3.9 Should the Council progress this marine project it would be carried out on the basis that it would be self-funding and provide an additional strategic asset for Oban and the islands which Oban serves. The cost of the project could well be encompassed within some existing funding mechanisms. The funding options would, in various combinations, potentially include 'Lorn Arc' TIF existing North Pier Extension project fund; external Capital Grants, Scottish Government loan funds e.g. Crown Estate and funding through the existing marine asset management plan where loans charges would be serviced from fees and charges.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The existing berthing face at North Pier Oban is receiving more demand than it is able to satisfy for berthing and laying of vessels overnight. Oban bay has limited commercial berthing facilities available. This report proposes that a Business Case is progressed of the extension of North Pier to enable additional berthing to take place and also to make the pier more versatile by improving the edge of the existing structure to facilitate better loading and unloading of vessels.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy – The Harbour Board agreed in December 2021 that the Council should proceed to make the arrangements to formally manage the unmanaged section of Oban Bay.

5.2 Financial – the Business Case would be funded through the Marine Asset management Plan with any future investment of North Pier being self-funding through the recovery of fees and charges which would be used to cover any loan repayments together with future asset sustainability costs.

- 5.3 Legal – any works to extend the North Pier will be subject to a works harbor order.
- 5.4 HR – HR implications will be identified as the proposal progresses.
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: None known.
 - 5.5.1 Equalities – None known.
 - 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – None known.
 - 5.5.3 Islands – consultation will be carried out with the island communities as a continuation and expansion of the Options Appraisal Process reported to the December harbour Board not only for the progression of a Municipal Harbour Authority but also regarding any expansion of marine infrastructure at North Pier.
- 5.6 Climate Change – due regard will be given to climate change with a view to minimising any climate change impact and these will be considered as and when they arise.
- 5.7 Risk – Risk will be managed in a proportionate way as per normal development and contract projects.
- 5.8 Customer Service – None known.

Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure, Kirsty Flanagan

Head of Roads and Infrastructure, Jim Smith

Policy Lead for Roads and Transport, Councillor Andrew Kain

June 2022

For further information contact: Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Infrastructure, or Scott Reid, Marine Operations Manager