

**MAKI FERRY ISSUES INCLUDING CAMPBELTOWN TO ARDROSSAN FERRY  
SERVICE**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on ferry issues affecting the MAKI area.
- 1.2 There have been a number of concerns raised with regard to the reliability of the ferry service to islands in the MAKI area particularly over the Easter period which is economically important to our island communities. In response to this issue the Council has liaised with the ferry operator CalMac to talk about this issue with Members and other key stakeholders as appropriate. CalMac have subsequently prepared a presentation on their performance including the question of reliability and the reasons why this is happening and why decisions are being taken.
- 1.3 Another issue of importance dealt with in this report concerns the potential transfer of council run ferries to Transport Scotland and their preferred operator once appointed following the current tender process.
- 1.4 The report also deals with the third year of a pilot ferry service between Campbeltown and Ardrossan is about to commence. The main purpose of this report is to outline the findings of the surveys taken during the pilot's second year. Transport Scotland will evaluate the findings of all three years of the pilot before making a recommendation as to whether or not the service will be extended beyond the pilot's three year period.
- 1.5 This evaluation will seek to assess the extent to which the pilot service has met its objectives:
- To provide a boost to the Campbeltown economy and develop Campbeltown as an attractive place to visit, work and do business.
  - To enhance the transport choices and links for local people and businesses in the Kintyre peninsula.
  - To increase visitors to Campbeltown and the Kintyre peninsula and support existing tourism markets and develop new opportunities.
- 1.6 Studies conducted by Vector research shows that the service is more popular with Campbeltown and South Kintyre residents than it is with residents of Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenston. Out of the households in Campbeltown and South Kintyre, 99% reported an awareness of the pilot service and 42% reported using the

service. In the Three Towns 56.4% reported awareness and only 3% reported using the service. Over 40% of businesses in Campbeltown report an increase in turnover during the period, whereas just over a quarter of businesses in Ardrossan reported a similar increase.

Transport Scotland will examine all 3 years of the pilot scheme before coming to any conclusion whether or not to recommend the extension of the ferry service into future years.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Area Committee notes the report and agrees a date for the presentation by Cal Mac on ferry performance in the MAKI area.

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1.1 There have been a number of concerns raised with regard to the reliability of the ferry service to islands in the MAKI area particularly over the Easter period which is economically important to our island communities. In response to this issue the Council has liaised with the ferry operator CalMac to talk about this issue with Members and other key stakeholders as appropriate. CalMac have subsequently prepared a presentation on their performance including the question of reliability and the reasons why this is happening and why decisions are being taken.
- 1.1.2 Another issue of importance dealt with in this report concerns the potential transfer of Council-run ferries to Transport Scotland and their preferred operator once appointed following the current tender process.
- 1.1.3 The Campbeltown to Ardrossan ferry service which runs from May to September is entering its third and final year of a pilot study that has been running since 2013. Transport Scotland will undertake an evaluation of the service during this year, looking at all three years of the pilot, reporting on the viability of the continuation of the service beyond 2015.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Area Committee notes the report and agrees a date for the presentation by CalMac on ferry performance in the MAKI area.

**3.0 DETAIL**

- 3.1 In response to the issue of ferry reliability in the MAKI area issues were discussed with the ferry operator CalMac. CalMac explained that the fleet they have to work with has an average age of over 20 years which brings with it particular issues over reliability and performance. Additional issues such as limitations on how many hours crew can work, availability of spare vessels that can use the existing ferry infrastructure, where boats can be serviced and the availability of parts are also issues that impact on performance together with the weather and associated climate change issues. That said CalMac stated that their reliability remained good despite recent incidents and have prepared a detailed presentation on the issues they face and the procedures they follow when decisions are taken to call off a service or utilise/divert another vessel. CalMac would be happy to give this

presentation to Members and other key stakeholders at a suitable time and this report asks Members to consider a possible date for this to happen.

- 3.2 Another issue of importance dealt with in this report concerns the potential transfer of Council-run ferries to Transport Scotland and their preferred operator once appointed following the current tender process. The Council has been in detailed discussions on this issue with representatives of Transport Scotland and the potential impacts of such a transfer. The Council has entered these discussions on the basis of ensuring that ferry services to our islands are maintained to the current level or indeed improved. Full financial information has been passed over to Transport Scotland together with a detailed list of Council assets including land associated with the ferries, slips or infrastructure and the ferries themselves. Transport Scotland representatives have not yet responded to this information which will be critical in the final recommendation to Council on whether to transfer or retain responsibility for the operation of the ferry services currently run by the council.
- 3.3 With regard to the Ardrossan to Campbeltown route Vector Research in association with JMP Consultants, have been commissioned by Transport Scotland to undertake an evaluation of the Campbeltown to Ardrossan pilot ferry service which runs from May to September on a Thursday to Sunday inclusive between 2013 and 2015. The evaluation will seek to assess the extent to which the pilot service has met its objectives:
- To provide a boost to the Campbeltown economy and develop Campbeltown as an attractive place to visit, work and do business.
  - To enhance the transport choices and links for local people and businesses in the Kintyre peninsula.
  - To increase visitors to Campbeltown and the Kintyre peninsula and support existing tourism markets and develop new opportunities.
- 3.4 Passenger and vehicle returns for the ferry service in 2013 and 2014 show a fairly constant trend. 7484 passengers and 1226 vehicles used the ferry in 2013, with 106 sailings averaging 70.6 passengers and 11.6 vehicles. In 2014, 6666 passengers and 1124 vehicles used the service, averaging 67.3 passengers and 11.5 vehicles.
- 3.5 To inform the evaluation a baseline report was completed in September 2013 to provide a backdrop to the data collected in both 2014 and 2015. Vector Research has undertaken and completed the 2014 wave comprising on-board passenger surveys and telephone surveys with local businesses and households in both Campbeltown and South Kintyre and Ardrossan, Saltcoats, and Stevenston (the Three Towns). 1,578 people responded to the passenger survey and 200 households responded to the telephone survey with 180 businesses also responding.
- 3.6 From the businesses in Campbeltown and South Kintyre, 43.5% of respondents claimed that turnover increased in the past 2 years, whilst 13.5% claimed that turnover had decreased. Businesses in the Three Towns report a less favourable response with only 26% claiming an increase in turnover with 14.3% claiming turnover had decreased. Of those claiming an increase in turnover in Campbeltown

and South Kintyre, 66.7% attribute at least a minor role to the arrival of the ferry. Almost a quarter, 23.1%, claim that the ferry had played a significant role. In the Three Towns a quarter of those in growth felt that the ferry had played a minor role in that increase.

- 3.7 Out of the households in Campbeltown and South Kintyre, 99% reported an awareness of the pilot service and 42% reported using the service. In the Three Towns 56.4% reported awareness and only 3% reported using the service.
- 3.8 The passenger surveys indicated that just over half of trips (55.3%) are for holiday short breaks or days' out. Other key purposes identified included visiting friends and relatives (18.1%), commuting to and from work (8.6%), and those using it for shopping (3.5%). Around 40% of those interviewed would not have made the trip in the absence of the ferry service and around 30% travel one way by ferry and use an alternative mode for the other journey.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Members have raised issues with CalMac's service reliability over recent months and Council officers have contacted CalMac to ascertain the reasons problems have arisen over reliability particularly over the easter period which is an important economic period for our Island Communities. Cal Mac have prepared a detailed presentation on the issues they face and their policies in dealing with ferry reliability which they are keen to present to Elected Members and other key stakeholders that make use of the ferry network. This report asks for a date to be agreed for this presentation to be given that is convenient for all parties.
- 4.2 Council officers are in discussions with Transport Scotland representatives over the potential transfer of the Council's ferry services and the preferred operator of the Scottish Government. The Council has supplied all requested information and is awaiting a response in the next month or so which will be reported back to Members.
- 4.3 Analysis for the final year of the pilot has obviously still to be achieved and it would be premature to come to any conclusions prior to the third year of the pilot being conducted. Analysis of the results over the last 2 years shows thqt the service is more popular with the residents and businesses of Campbeltown and South Kintyre than it is for the residents of the Three Towns. Transport Scotland will examine all 3 years of the pilot scheme before coming to any conclusion whether or not to recommend the extension of the ferry service into future years.

#### **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Policy None.
- 6.2 Financial Slight increase in Revenue to the Council
- 6.3 Legal None

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| 6.4 | HR                | None.                                                                                     |
| 6.5 | Equalities        | None.                                                                                     |
| 6.6 | Risk              | None.                                                                                     |
| 6.7 | Customer Services | Transport Scotland's decision to continue could positively impact on the local community. |

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