

Sent: 15 June 2021 13:33

To: Minister for Transport <MinisterFT@gov.scot>

Subject: Disruption to CalMac Ferries' services

Graeme Dey MSP

Minister for Transport

15th June 2021

Dear Graeme

Disruption to CalMac Ferries' services

I am writing to you on the current disruption to CalMac's timetabled services and the time chartering of the MV Pentalina for service on the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) contract between CalMac and the Scottish Government. You will recall that I have raised these matters with you and your Ministerial colleagues in the Chamber in recent weeks.

My constituents in West Scotland and many others across the country are rightly keen to ensure that the current disruption which is causing chaos is ended. I fully support that aim and concerned to ensure that the voices of islanders and Calmac workers are heard. I am also increasingly concerned that short term measures will dramatically increase the prospect of unbundling and fragmentation on Clyde and Hebrides ferry services, undermining the public sector ferry company, CalMac Ferries.

Transport Scotland's decision to time charter the MV Pentalina from anti-union operator Pentland Ferries, with no prior consultation with trade unions organising CalMac staff is deeply worrying. As we have seen from their aggressive approach to the Road Equivalent Tariff on Northern Isles routes, Pentland Ferries is motivated by private profit and not public service – a dangerous combination on lifeline services.

Unlike other private and public ferry operators in Scotland, Pentland Ferries has consistently refused to recognise trade unions on their service across the Pentland Firth. Despite the Fair Work Agenda, the Scottish Government working with Pentland Ferries will undermine CalMac's employment standards.

Pitting passengers against ferry workers who often live in the same communities can never be acceptable. I would, therefore, urge the Scottish Government to take an immediate first step and ensure that the crew of the Pentalina is covered by CalMac's collective bargaining agreements with the trade unions whilst it is chartered to provide relief capacity on CHFS routes.

I am concerned that the failure of the Scottish Government's procurement policies and the chilling effect of Covid-19 on passenger numbers could start a race to the bottom which we regrettably see elsewhere in the ferries industry and which CalMac trade unions and communities have successfully fought off, to the benefit of our island economies.

CalMac unions have rightly questioned the suitability of a catamaran on CHFS routes, including those serving Arran. I understand that sea berthing trials of the Pentalina are underway but note that one of the Calmac unions, the RMT, has raised concerns over the safety of the vessel which they continue to pursue with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

I would also be grateful for details of the charter and any crewing agreements Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd have signed with Western Isles Cruises for the *MV Larvan* and with the private owners of other vessels time or bareboat chartered for potential deployment on the publicly owned and operated CHFS contract.

I support the RMT's proposal for an urgent ferries summit with ministers, Transport Scotland, passengers and unions in order to constructively engage on these problems. I would also be grateful for a separate meeting with you and Transport Scotland officials to work out how we address these escalating problems for passengers and staff on CalMac ferry services.

I look forward to your reply and to discussing these matters further in the very near future.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Clark MSP

West Scotland Region

Minister for Transport
Ministear airson Còmh-dhail
Graeme Dey BPA/MSP



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Katy Clark MSP
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Our Reference: 202100213965
Your Reference: Disruption to CalMac Ferries' services

5 July 2021

Dear Katy

Thank you for your email of 15 June 2021 regarding the disruption to ferry services.

I appreciate entirely islanders' frustrations and the impact on communities of this recent period of disruption to ferry services. I take these matters seriously and have held early meetings with CalMac and constituency MSPs, and with the Ferries Community Board (Clyde and Hebrides). That dialogue is ongoing.

I should like to emphasise the Scottish Government's absolute commitment to supporting and improving these vital lifeline services.

Whilst I note that MV Loch Seaforth is now back in service on the Stornoway-Ullapool route and all other vessels are now back in position, I can assure you that I remain focused on the underlying issues. Transport Scotland officials are working closely and diligently with CalMac to identify where improvements to emergency plans to improve the resilience of the ferry service can be made.

In particular, to address critical resilience issues in the short-term we are actively exploring opportunities for chartering additional tonnage, including in recent weeks working with CalMac to consider the chartering of the MV Pentalina.

As you are aware, Pentland Ferries have now taken a business decision not to make the MV Pentalina available for charter. But focusing on the needs of communities, we will continue to work with CalMac and CMAL to actively explore opportunities for chartering alternative additional tonnage for the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services network to improve the resilience of the fleet as a whole, and enable

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CalMac to better respond when breakdowns and other disruption occurs, wherever on the network that is.

Regarding details of the recent charter of the MV Larvan and any crewing agreements signed with Western Isles Cruises, or any other commercial operators, this is a contractual matter for CalMac and they hold the information you are looking for.

With regards to the transport unions, Scottish Ministers will continue their on-going engagement and I look forward to the continuation of this relationship.

Yours sincerely



GRAEME DEY

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Katy Clark MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

23rd August 2021

Kate Forbes MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Finance
The Scottish Parliament
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EH99 1SP

RE: Visit to Ferguson Marine and the Future of Scotland's Ferry Service

Dear Kate,

I am writing to you ahead of your visit to the Ferguson Marine Yard in my constituency on Wednesday. I hope the trip is informative given the colossal challenges faced by the company and the ferry network more broadly, and I am keen to convey my own concerns.

My constituents in West Scotland are in desperate need of a functioning and effective ferry service run in the public interest. However, the management of the project to build two lifeline ferries at Ferguson has been shambolic from the outset. The procurement of the vessels was described as a "catastrophic failure" by a Holyrood committee in December, which found more widely that the procurement process for was "not fit for purpose".

Subsequently, what we have seen is a complete breakdown in trust between different stakeholders, with projected costs doubling and delivery date now set to be five years behind schedule. It has also emerged that the Scottish Government is paying Ferguson's "turnaround director" Tim Hair an extraordinary £790,000 a year. Such excessive pay gaps between senior boardroom staff and hard-pressed workers would be utterly unjustifiable even if the project was a success. Far greater oversight is needed for such appointments and I fully support calls for an audit into the financial management of the company.

I welcomed the nationalisation of the shipyard in 2019 and felt strongly that this decision must not be regarded as a quick fix but taken as part of a wider strategy for the ferry service. However, the continued delays have been particularly alarming given the condition of the existing fleet. More than 1,000 ferry sailings have been delayed over the past five years due to mechanical issues. Most industry experts agree that the average life expectancy is around 25 years – half of the 31 working state-owned ferries are older than that.

These are not just sudden problems that have sprung up overnight. In the 14 years since 2007, 12 ferries have been commissioned. Prior to 2007, 26 ferries of similar tonnage were commissioned. We have been left with a situation where CMAL has desperately scoured the globe on a failed search for second-hand vessels, looking at but ultimately not buying 133 vessels over the course of 18 months rather than proposing a serious plan of investing in building new ferries here in Scotland. Furthermore, the failed proposal to charter the MV Pentalina from anti-union operator Pentland Ferries with no prior consultation with CalMac trade unions was desperate and disgraceful.

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The delays to the two ferries at Ferguson have only compounded issues faced by a dysfunctional, mismanaged ferry network. The fragmentation of the structure adds to poor decision making and I firmly believe CMAL and CalMac should operate as one body. Given Brexit there can now no longer be an argument that tendering is necessary. The Scottish Government must drive a rapid and thorough state-led industrial strategy that takes into account the needs of affected communities. In my work as a constituency representative I have heard repeatedly of the failure to involve local communities in decision making leading to poor decisions. An example is the Brodick ferry terminal, which as you know was a hugely expensive project, but islanders repeatedly criticise basic aspects of the design.

I call on the Scottish Government to do the following:

- Come forward with a full ferry plan to invest in these absolute lifeline services, involving affected coastal and island communities every step of the way
- Ensure that recognised trade unions are fully involved in any discussions with Transport Scotland and CalMac over any future tonnage on the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services network
- Commission an independent review of the processes for public procurement of ferries to ensure the right lessons are learned going forward

I hope you will consider the issues I have raised ahead of your visit this week and I look forward to your response on the concrete measures I have proposed.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Clark MSP
West Scotland Region

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy
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Our Reference: 202100232977
Your Reference: Ferguson Visit

14 September 2021

Dear Katy,

Thank you for your letter of 23 August 2021 regarding the future of Scotland's ferries services and my recent visit to Ferguson Marine.

I recognise the frustration felt by communities during the disruption to services experienced and the impact it has had across the network. Concerning the procurement of vessels 801 and 802, Scottish Ministers are aware of the perceptions which exist around the procurement process and takes these perceptions seriously. Scottish Ministers continue to consider that the procurement in relation to vessels 801 and 802 was undertaken thoroughly, in good faith and with appropriate due diligence.

This Government's intervention saved Ferguson Marine from closure, rescued more than 300 jobs, ensured that the two vessels under construction will be completed and secured a future for the yard. We will continue to work with the yard to do everything we can to ensure that vessels 801 and 802 enter service as quickly as possible, to deliver the service improvements upon which our island communities depend

I can reassure you that the Scottish Government is committed to sound and transparent management of the country's finances and in line with the Committee's recommendation, Audit Scotland is reviewing the financial management of the contract for the two ferries. To aid this process Transport Scotland and CMAL officials have been supporting Audit Scotland with its work which I understand is planned to report in the winter 2021.

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With regards to the Turnaround Director's salary, the agreed fee was well within the benchmark and consistent with market rates which reflect the highly specialised nature of a role that requires senior level experience and solid track record of stabilising and transforming businesses in difficult situations.

The Scottish Government is developing and delivering a programme of investment in vessels and ports with the support of £580m over the next 5 years, as part of the Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan announced on 4 February 2021. It is envisaged that further funds will be required and made available in future years. In the longer term, the Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP) will replace the current Ferries Plan from January 2023 and, as part of the ICP, we will update and maintain this long-term plan and investment programme for new ferries and development at ports.

This long term strategy will provide Scottish shipbuilding yards with confidence that there is a programme of work for the years to come and into the next decade that they will be able to plan, budget and compete for and, if successful in securing the contracts, will help to secure existing employment and create new training and development opportunities, as well as investment and the future of their businesses.

Finally, Union representatives have already been consulted with regards to the new Islay vessel and their feedback is being considered along with that of other key stakeholders. I can also confirm that Mr Dey MSP, Minister for Transport is due to meet with the Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) and the unions representing ferries staff later this month (dates to be confirmed) following a pattern of regular engagement on these issues established by his predecessors. The trades unions will have the opportunity to raise any concerns they may have directly. In recent correspondence with the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, Mr Dey has invited them to submit their suggestions for how improvements could be made to the procurement of vessels, efficiency of services, resilience and reliability across the fleet.

I hope these details reassure you that the Scottish Government is doing all it can at this time and Mr Dey has agreed to continue the important dialogue with communities, MSPs, local authorities, trades unions and other key stakeholders as the Scottish Government addresses these key issues facing the ferries network.

Yours sincerely,



KATE FORBES

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Katy Clark MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

14th December 2021

Graeme Dey MSP
Minister for Transport
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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Our reference: AFAG-JR

Arran Ferry Action Group

Dear Graeme,

I am writing regarding the Arran Ferry Action Group, which has made representations to me this week. I note that on 2 December, in response to a question from Kenneth Gibson MSP about Ardrossan to Brodick ferry services, the First Minister confirmed that you would be writing in your capacity as Minister for Transport to stakeholders about the Scottish Government's infrastructure investment plan. In her answer, she cited Peel Ports, North Ayrshire Council and the "Arran Ferry Group" as stakeholders.

Despite this, my understanding is the Arran Ferry Action Group was not invited to the Ardrossan Harbour Task Force meeting on 7 December. I am informed that Transport Scotland subsequently emailed the group to advise that an invitation would in fact not be extended and challenging the official record. There is no other "Arran Ferry Group" I am aware of which the First Minister could have been referring to, so I would like to ask the following:

- Is the Arran Ferry Action Group a recognised stakeholder?
- Is it the Scottish Government's official position that the Official record is inaccurate and needs to be corrected?
- Will the Arran Ferry Action Group be invited to Ardrossan Harbour Task Force meetings going forward?
- Will the Scottish Government commit to reassessing the composition of the boards of CalMac and CMAL with a view to reserving seats for islanders and members of the workforce?

This is an important issue: island communities must be represented in decision making processes going forward, particularly as I believe the future expertise and local knowledge of communities who rely on ferry services will be vital if the well-publicised mistakes of recent years are to be avoided.

I look forward to hearing your answers to these questions and your thoughts on the points made.

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Yours sincerely,

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Our Reference: 202100264622
Your Reference: AFAG-JR

29 December 2021

Dear Katy

Thank you for your letter of 14 December 2021 regarding the Arran Ferry Action Group (AFAG) and their representation to attend the Ardrossan Task Force following First Minister's questions on 2nd December 2021.

To confirm; the official record of the First Minister's question of 2 December 2021 was inaccurate and is now being corrected.

The official representative body on ferry related issues on Arran is the Arran Ferry Committee, who are a member of the Ardrossan Task Force. AFAG should therefore engage with AFC to raise any concerns and these can then be raised directly at the Task Force.

I can assure you that we are fully committed to ensuring that island residents and communities' views are represented appropriately and I have tasked the newly appointed Chair of David MacBrayne Ltd as a priority, to consider how this might be achieved going forward.

The recruitment process was undertaken in line with approved guidance and was advertised widely, including on the vessels travelling to our island communities, and we were pleased to receive such a high number of applications.

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Board Members are appointed based on their experience and abilities. Having an understanding of the role of transport, including ferries, in maintaining the economic and social integrity of the Highlands and Islands is a requirement for all Board Members. It is not appropriate to limit the candidate pool for Board membership by imposing requirements for where candidates can come from.

Yours sincerely



GRAEME DEY

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Katy Clark MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

14 January 2022

Graeme Dey MSP
Minister for Transport
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Your reference: 202100264622
Our reference: AFAGRE-JR

RE: Arran Ferry Action Group

Dear Graeme,

Thank you for your response to my letter on 14 December regarding the Arran Ferry Action Group. I wanted to address a few of the points you raised in your letter.

It is disappointing that the Official Record has been corrected in this instance, although I understand the First Minister may have honestly misspoke. However, I hope you appreciate it is therefore understandable why this is of frustration to islanders who feel under-represented by the current arrangement. The Arran Ferry Action Group estimates that over 1,300 Arran residents support or engage with the group, a big chunk of the island population, yet it is not recognised as an official stakeholder. My understanding is that the group do regularly attempt to engage with the Arran Ferry Committee, but no means of contact are available beyond a Facebook page. I hope this is considered going forward when considering how the community's views are represented.

I would also like to raise that several constituents on the island have expressed their concern that the level of communication and transparency on the part of the Ardrossan Harbour Task Force is regarded as poor. The meeting papers from the 17 February meeting were not published until 8 December, meaning the decisions taken during the meeting were not publicly available for ten months. Whilst the 7 December minutes have been published in a timelier matter, these are not widely disseminated or publicised as far as I understand. I believe these issues need to be addressed going forward.

Regarding your final point on board seats, I am disappointed by the suggestion that including island representatives on relevant boards going forward is "not appropriate" and "limits the candidate pool". As has been raised by MSPs across parties and across regions, the suggestion is not that candidates be chosen based on where they "come from" but that there should be island community input to decision-making processes affecting the islands they live on, and instead also worker representation.

Presently, there is not a single island resident on either the CMAL or CalMac boards. I agree that experience should be considered a key component of the process for appointments, and

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so ensuring the daily lived experience of islanders is represented is both democratically and practically necessary. I would urge you to reflect on this going forward.

Yours sincerely,

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Our Reference: 202200273104
Your Reference: Arran Ferry Action Group

14 February 2022

Dear Katy

Thank you for your letter of 14 January 2022 in response to my predecessor regarding the Arran Ferry Action Group (AFAG) and island community representation on Boards.

I understand that the Ardrossan Task Force meeting minutes of 17 February 2021 were published late. These will be published more timeously in future. I am advised that the decision made by the Task Force on the 17th February to operate from Troon on a temporary basis during the construction period of the Ardrossan works was published by way of a news release on 18th February and was shared with all members of the Task Force.

I can confirm that the Task Force Communications group has and continues to update the Transport Scotland webpage with information at key stages of the Ardrossan harbour re-development project as it progresses. The webpage can be accessed via: [Ardrossan Harbour Task Force | Transport Scotland](#)

It is my understanding that the two groups, the Arran Ferry Committee (AFC) as island representative, and AFAG have communicated through various mediums and met very recently to discuss the Ardrossan project following the recent meeting of the Task Force. The Task Force welcomes its continued engagement with the residents of Arran and a collaborative approach by the AFC and AFAG on all ferry related matters.

I understand the disappointment that the most recent round of David MacBrayne appointments did not result in an island resident being appointed to the Board. I can confirm that Scottish Ministers' remain fully committed to ensuring that island residents and communities' views are represented appropriately on our Boards. Mr Dey, the then Transport Minister, tasked the new Chair of the David MacBrayne Board

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with exploring how we might achieve this, as one of his first priorities. I will now take this forward with the new Chair.


It is important to note that the Boards already carefully consider the views and input from the communities impacted by their work. We place a lot of value in the work of the Ferries Communities Board and would envisage the ongoing engagement with that body as a key means of ensuring islander views across the network are fully understood. I would expect this to be strengthened as we move forward.

You will be aware that we will shortly commence a recruitment exercise for the Chair and one non-executive Director position on the Board of Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited. The appointed selection panel will consider the criteria to be set and will make recommendations to Ministers. These positions will be advertised widely, including on the vessels serving our island communities.

I can also confirm that as Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited is a regulated public body, the recruitment will be overseen by, the Ethical Standards Commissioner and the Scottish Government's Public Appointments team alongside Transport Scotland officials.

I hope this information has been of some assistance. Should you wish to discuss any of these matters in further detail I would be more than happy to do so.

Best wishes



JENNY GILRUTH

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Katy Clark MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

28th January 2022

Jenny Gilruth MSP
Minister for Transport
The Scottish Parliament
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Our reference: ST-JR

Scrapping of Season Tickets

Dear Jenny,

I am writing regarding changes to seasonal ticketing options offered to passengers on the route between Largs and Cumbrae, which are both within the West Scotland region I represent in the Scottish Parliament.

Several constituents have contacted me with concern following CalMac's announcement that all remaining seasonal passes are to be phased out to comply with Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) rules. Last year, annual, six month and three month tickets were phased out, and this year the one month ticket is to be sold out. Last week, I wrote to Robbie Drummond, CalMac's Managing Director, to express my concern that this move would have on regular commuters, particularly residents of Cumbrae. I was informed by Mr Drummond that the move was necessary as passengers had been benefiting from "double discounting" and discounted tickets should be phased out and no longer sold.

However, if this is the case then I believe there needs to be far greater clarity on which rules these season tickets specifically affect, especially given one of Transport Scotland's stated aims is to make tickets more affordable for customers. The *Scottish Ferries Plan 2013-2022* does not advise that seasonal ticket schemes are prohibited, and it pledges: "RET single fares will be competitive with any discounts that would or might be available through any multi-journey equivalent ticket scheme."

In the case of season tickets this is patently untrue. One constituent, who is a regular commuter from Cumbrae to Largs, had bought an annual pass at the cost of £463.40. With this option now removed, the constituent faces an annual cost of £864 if they travel five days a week – an 86% increase – or £1036.80 if they travel six days a week – a 123% increase. They are considering moving away from the island due to this. Given RET has been in place for seven years, it seems absurd that no contingency measures are in place to ensure the removal of such schemes does not inflate commuter costs by such a dramatic extent.

CalMac has argued that "additional discounts on top of what are already cheaper tickets



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should not be sold”, but there is no evidence these are cheaper tickets. Whilst it is undeniably true that overall fares have reduced under RET since 2015, *the Evaluation of Road Equivalent Tariff on the Clyde and Hebridean Network* prepared for Transport Scotland in March 2020 states “it should however be noted that not all island residents experienced a large reduction in fares compared to previous multi-journey books. This is particularly the case in the Firth of Clyde islands where the use of multi-journey tickets was widespread”.

Mr Drummond also informed me that season tickets were not a “popular product”, but I believe promoting these tickets more widely would have led to far greater uptake on Cumbrae. Many constituents informed that they had not even received notice of the change in policy until they sought to renew their passes. The level of communication with island residents has clearly been poor and only bolsters the argument that islanders should be more regularly consulted and better represented on the boards of decision making bodies going forward.

There is also an inequity here: a standard adult return rail ticket from Largs to Glasgow typically costs £10.50 – around 32p per mile; a standard adult return ferry ticket from Largs to Cumbrae typically costs £3.50 – around 72p per mile. Removing these multi-ticket options therefore not only has a hugely disproportionate impact on residents of Cumbrae who commute daily but puts them at a financial disadvantage compared to commuters on the mainland. This undermines the pledge made in the Scottish Government’s *National Islands Plan* to ensure there is a “holistic view of fares across all services and networks”.

These changes also come at a time when residents across island communities are voicing concerns about not being able to access sailings at short notice due to the “first-come, first-served” approach to ticketing, frequent cancellations and breakdowns due to a rapidly ageing fleet. I am receiving more and more correspondence from constituents who are concerned they are being poorly served by what is supposed to be a lifeline service.

I believe the scrapping of these season tickets either needs to be reversed or an interim scheme needs to be put in place for affected residents. I would ask whether you would consider meeting with Transport Scotland and CalMac with a view to reviewing the application of RET rules to ensure passengers are not faced with such an enormous escalation in costs.

I look forward to hearing your response on this important issue as it is one that many Cumbrae residents would urgently like to see addressed.

Yours sincerely,

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Our Reference: 202200277277
Your Reference: Scrapping of Season Tickets

11 March 2022

Dear Katy

Thank you for your email of 28 January 2022 regarding ferry season tickets on the Cumbrae – Largs route.

The roll out of Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) on the Clyde & Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) network concluded in 2015. The introduction of RET has led to an estimated average fare reduction of 34% for passengers and 40% for car traffic. It continues to save travellers across the west coast of Scotland around £25m a year.

One of the key aims of RET was to simplify the historically complex fares regime by replacing all fares with a standard single RET fare for each route. Some legacy ticket types were temporarily retained as a transitional arrangement, however these now need to be removed to allow for the move to a modern ticketing system. The Ferries Plan 2012 was clear that these would be phased out, although it has taken us longer to do this than intended at the time.

Their removal also ensures fairness across the CHFS network with routes now having a consistent fair type. Under RET, passengers no longer have to spend significant sums on booklets of tickets upfront in order to access lower fares, which disadvantaged those on lower incomes. Furthermore, the volume sold of these tickets had reduced significantly since the introduction of RET. In the last full pre pandemic year of 2019 CalMac Ferries Ltd (CFL) sold 453,000 tickets on the Largs-Cumbrae route, of which only 45 were season tickets.

I understand that CFL met with the Cumbrae Ferry Users Group on 26 October 2021 where they provided the group with an update on these ticket changes and the new ticketing system. In addition,

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CFL wrote to MPs, MSPs and other stakeholders on 25 August 2021 to explain the change.

The 12-, 6-, and 3-month season tickets have already been phased out and will not be reinstated. However, as an interim scheme you mention, following further consideration, and consultation with Transport Scotland, CFL will continue to sell the 1-month season ticket further into 2022. This should assist customers in adjusting to these phased withdrawals. In addition, it is worth noting that even with the removal of these season tickets, the standard return fare is competitive as it will be less than it was 7 years ago in 2014 prior to the introduction of RET.

You also noted concerns about reliability. Whilst every effort is made to avoid breakdowns, it is impossible to completely remove the risk of this happening in technically complex vessels. Vessel deployment is an operational matter for CFL, who work throughout disruptions to find ways to continue to provide vital lifeline services to our island and remote communities.

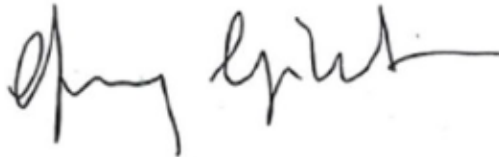
Turning to your wider comments on islands, the Scottish Government recognise that population decline is a real threat to the sustainability of many, although not all, of Scotland's island communities. During the consultation for the National Islands Plan, depopulation was the top priority issue identified by respondents. That is why, through the National Islands Plan, we have committed to address population decline and ensure a healthy, balanced population profile across our islands.

As part of this work, the Scottish Government are participating in a partnership with North Ayrshire Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the three-year Islands Recovery and Renewal Pilot, to support the economic recovery and renewal of North Ayrshire's island communities in line with their unique needs.

The draft Cumbrae Local Island Plan has been produced as a result of this pilot project, and will help to identify how the Scottish Government can support North Ayrshire Council, the island community, stakeholders and partners in improving outcomes for the economic, community and environmental wellbeing of Cumbrae.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely



JENNY GILRUTH

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Katy Clark MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

7 February 2022

Rt. Hon. Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG

Our Reference: PRIVFM-JR

Ferry Services (Public Ownership)

Dear First Minister,

I am writing regarding public ownership of the ferry service, which you may recall I asked about last week at First Minister's Questions. I just wanted to follow up on some of the points which were raised, in particular to repeat my call for the publication of the Ernst and Young report and to ask for a commitment that no part of the current Calmac contract will be awarded to a private company.

In response to my question of whether the Scottish Government would give a commitment to keep ferry services in public ownership, you confirmed that "we will not privatise our public service ferries and, equally, we have no plans to split up the CalMac network". I warmly welcome this commitment. I assume the press reports you mentioned in your answer refer to the [investigation](#) carried out by The Herald newspaper, published on 27 January. The documents seen by the newspaper are not speculative. As has been confirmed by the Scottish Government, consultants Ernst & Young have been tasked by ministers to review governance arrangements for Scottish Government lifeline ferry services. Transport Scotland 'consultancy requirements' documents, seen by the Herald, explicitly confirms that Ernst & Young were asked to do the following:

"Examine and identify governance and structure options for long term consideration to include an assessment of global best practice. This should include an analysis of the challenges and opportunities associated with options for decentralisation (unbundling of routes into smaller packages)."

My understanding from your answer is that you are ruling out an option that Ernst & Young are being paid to consider. If this is the case, I fully welcome this. However, I hope you appreciate the decision to commission private consultants to consider this option has caused considerable alarm among trade unions, amongst others, including the RMT which received direct assurances in 2017 that the Scottish Government would build a case for a permanent in-house operation of the CHFS contract.

I am also concerned that private consultants were commissioned to conduct this analysis,

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with no input from workers or affected communities whatsoever. Indeed, I believe the longstanding failure to include workers or island and coastal communities in key decision making processes – neither are represented on CalMac or CMAL boards, for example – is one of the reasons our ferry service faces such challenges today.

There is no doubt the resilience of CalMac has been tested due to the extraordinary situation we find ourselves in, with Covid-19 causing staffing absences. However, it is not public ownership that has caused the ferries crisis. More than 1,000 ferry sailings have been delayed over the past five years due to mechanical issues. Having spoken to professionals and experts in the sector, it is clear this is due to a long-term failure to invest in new fleet. Just two ferries operating on core service routes have been delivered to CalMac since 2007, and half of the current 31 state-owned vessels are over the typical life expectancy of 25 years old.

The delayed completion of the two commissioned vessels at Ferguson Marine – including the MV Glen Sannox – has only highlighted the urgent need for the Scottish Government to come forward with an updated procurement policy. That must not mean scouring the globe for cheap second-hand vessels or a race to the bottom on conditions by chartering ships from anti-union operators, as was the case with the failed proposal to charter the MV Pentalina from Pentland Ferries.

I am relieved to hear your public commitments on this and look forward to hearing from you on whether you will ensure the Ernst & Young report is published as soon as possible and if you would clarify whether you will guarantee that no part of the current Clyde & Hebrides ferry contract will be handed to a private company.

I look forward to hearing your response.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Clark MSP
West Scotland Region

Minister for Transport
Ministear airson Còmh-dhail
Jenny Gilruth BPA/MSP



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Katy Clark MSP
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Our Reference: 202200281290
Your Reference: PRIVFM-JR

14 March 2022

Dear Katy

Thank you for your letter of 7 February 2022 to Nicola Sturgeon, MSP, The First Minister regarding public ownership of our ferry services. I am responding as this subject falls within my portfolio as the Minister for Transport.

I would like to start by assuring you, that Scottish Ministers remain committed to ensuring the most efficient and effective arrangements to deliver our key lifeline ferry services.

I can confirm that preparatory work by Transport Scotland for the next Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service (CHFS) contract has already begun, although this remains at the early stages, due in part to delays and reprioritisation of resources brought about by the pandemic.

Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service contract

As you will know, our publicly funded ferry services are currently delivered through public contracts, in line with relevant procurement requirements and guidance. This ensures control over service levels, timetables and fares and the contracts are operated by Calmac Ferries and Serco Northlink.

The current CHFS contract is due to expire in September 2024 and work is underway to consider the appropriate approach to future contracts and tendering but remains at an early stage as I noted above. No decisions on the form of tender or timescales have been taken at this point.

As you have noted in your letter the First Minister has confirmed that we have no intention of breaking up the CHFS network as part of any procurement of the next contract. I am aware, however, that not all communities affected are supportive of such a decision.

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The former Minister for Transport and the Islands, Humza Yousaf said in 2017: "it is the Scottish Government's preference to directly award ferry contracts to an in-house provider, subject to the views of local communities and stakeholders" and as part of preparatory work for the next CHFS contract we will engage with the local communities and key stakeholders to understand their views and preference on this matter.

It is also important to note, that the UK is currently operating under an interim Subsidy Control regime and provisions held within the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. This has been the case since the withdrawal from the EU on 31 December 2020 and it is expected that this will continue to apply until autumn of 2022.

Draft UK Subsidy Bill was laid in the UK Parliament on 21 June 2021. Scottish Government and Transport Scotland will continue to monitor progress of the Bill and any future options highlighted through Project Neptune (Tripartite Review) while reflecting on any new opportunities and challenges that may present for procurement of future ferry services.

Project Neptune

As you rightly highlighted in your letter, there is a need for Scottish Government to review how decisions in relation to publicly owned ferry services are made. To address this issue Ministers advised the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee throughout the course of their inquiry leading to publication in Dec 2020 of a report "The Procurement and Construction of Ferry Vessels in Scotland" that, as part of a drive for continuous improvement, a review would be undertaken of the current legal and governance arrangements for the existing tripartite of Transport Scotland, Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) and David MacBrayne Limited (DML) including its subsidiaries.

The consultants (Ernst and Young) were given a wide remit to look at all possible options around delivery of publicly owned ferry services. This included decentralised models, but it is inaccurate to suggest that this one aspect of the brief for the consultants is a likely outcome.

One of the key outputs from Project Neptune is a matrix of different options for governance arrangements to deliver ferry services, setting out the benefits and challenges of each. The final report has now been received and I assure you it is on my priority list for consideration. You may be aware I have already committed to provide a statement to parliament on this matter.

Once the final report has been considered in the coming weeks, there will be further engagement with all key stakeholders, including trade unions, on the content of the report and next steps.

Yours sincerely



JENNY GILRUTH

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Katy Clark MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

3rd October 2022

Jenny Gilruth MSP
Minister for Transport
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Our reference: MSTR-JR

Monthly Season Ticket Removal

Dear Jenny,

I am writing following several letters from concerned constituents regarding the reported withdrawal of monthly passes for users on the Largs-Cumbrae route.

As you will know, I have raised the phasing out of season tickets on numerous occasions as I do not believe the new RET rules for ticket pricing are sufficient or competitive with what came before in terms of multi-journey options. In answer to my recent parliamentary question, you confirmed to me in writing that Transport Scotland and CalMac intend to offer 10-journey products to users of the Largs-Cumbrae service under the new 'Ar Turas' ticketing and reservation system. I will be following the detail and implementation of this closely as it is vital that any discount offered is at least equivalent to what was available before. However, I would appreciate any update you can provide on where discussions have reached and what your estimation is for when the new system will go live.

In the interim, my understanding is that CalMac had agreed to continue to permit the use of monthly season tickets until this system was put in place. This was confirmed in the minutes of the Ferry Users Group meeting of 16th May 2022, again discussed at the Ferry Users Group Meeting of 3rd August 2022 and again confirmed by [REDACTED] CalMac's Area Operations Manager. He also committed to investigating complaints that the file for issuing these tickets had been removed from the port computer system.

However, I have been made aware by constituents and local councillors that [REDACTED] who I understand has taken up the Area Operations role, has since told a member of the Ferry Users Group that these passes will in fact not be retained and that posters had been issued by CalMac advising the public of these changes. I am informed by the Ferry Users group that they were unaware of this until yesterday, when [REDACTED] provided copies upon request.

I have written to Robbie Drummond, CalMac's managing director, about this matter to seek clarity as there appears to have been a disappointing breakdown in communication between islanders and those providing the vital public service they rely on. Constituents tell me that

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the escalation in costs of daily travel for islanders commuting to the mainland without a monthly pass in place is around twice what they were paying before, which has huge ramifications for their day-to-day budgets during this cost of living crisis.

Would you also be able to clarify whether you have held any discussions with CalMac and Transport Scotland about this matter? Will the removal of these passes be reviewed? Alternatively, will a new interim scheme be introduced?

I look forward to your reply so I can furnish my constituents with information on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Clark MSP
West Scotland Region



The Scottish Parliament
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Katy Clark MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

19th October 2022

Ms Frances Pacitti
Director of Aviation, Maritime, Freight and Canals
Transport Scotland
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF

Our reference: AHPRO-JR

Ardrossan Harbour Task Force

Dear Ms Pacitti,

I am writing regarding the Ardrossan Harbour Infrastructure Project and the Ardrossan Task Force. As you will know, I have repeatedly raised issues with the project with ministers and stressed the urgent need for progress. Further postponements will mean a more prolonged move to Troon, which would be damaging for the local economy and residents who rely on the service. Given the longstanding delays and the harbour's strategic importance and the need to plan ahead, I have argued the Scottish Government must explore taking it into public ownership.

I have also repeatedly spoken with islanders concerned by the poor levels of communication regarding the project. I understand the Arran Ferry Action Group has repeatedly requested evidence of progress to little avail. In order to furnish my constituents with information, would you be able to clarify:

- When will the minutes of the Ardrossan Harbour Task Force meeting held in June be published?
- When will the Ardrossan Harbour Task Force next meet?
- Where can my constituents follow the progress of the project?

Regardless of Peel Ports' commercial interests, this is a publicly-funded project for public benefit and it is essential that those who rely on this essential public service are kept informed.

Thank you for reading and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

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Katy Clark MSP
katy.clark.msp@parliament.scot

Your ref:
Ardrossan Harbour Task Force

Our ref:
202200326000

Date:
11 November 2022

Dear Ms Clark MSP

Thank you for your letter of 19 October 2022 regarding the Ardrossan Harbour Infrastructure project and Task Force, noting the requests for progress, improved project communications and responses to questions raised by your constituents.

I can assure you that the project partners have been working to progress the project as quickly as possible and this has resulted in moving to the tender design stage as of April this year. Some of this important work has included the design development of the Passenger Access System, the Landside Public Consultation on the terminal building and the more recent Troon Timetable Public Consultation in August 2022, which will help inform a decision on the temporary operation of ferry services from Troon.

I am aware of your recent written and oral parliamentary questions regarding the project and have responded with the headline answers below:

- The Task Force meeting minutes of 28 June 2022 will be published at the earliest opportunity
- The Task Force is next due to meet in December 2022 and arrangements are currently being agreed between the joint chairs.
- The Ardrossan Task Force and Harbour Infrastructure project information can be accessed via the Transport Scotland webpage. This contains all published Task Force Minutes, project Q&A and links to project partners webpages.

Transport Scotland has engaged with and responded to numerous enquiries from the Arran Ferry Action Group regarding the project, most recently on 11 October 2022, and will continue to engage with the Arran community through the Isle of Arran Ferry Committee as the recognised community body for ferry related matters and member of the Task Force. The Isle of Arran Ferry Committee have also responded to enquiries received from the Arran Ferry Action Group.

The temporary move of the Arran service to Troon will be triggered by either the introduction of the MV Glen Sannox to the route or the commencement of the Ardrossan harbour works following completion of the tender stage, contract award and approval of funding following agreement of commercial terms with Peel Ports Group.

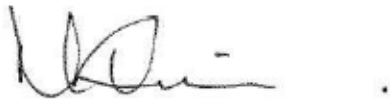
www.transport.gov.scot



An agreement is in place for Troon for this purpose and as an alternative mainland port to support CalMac services. The facilities at Troon have been upgraded with new fenders and a suspended concrete deck in March 2022 and the landside works are expected to be complete by Winter 2022.

I trust that this response is helpful and provides assurance that we and the project partners are doing everything we can to progress the Ardrossan project and keeping the communities informed of progress at relevant stages of development.

Yours sincerely



Michelle Quinn
Interim Chief Executive



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Katy Clark MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

2nd December 2022

Jenny Gilruth MSP
Minister for Transport
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Our reference: AHTFM-JR

Ardrossan Harbour Meeting

Dear Jenny,

I am writing to request a meeting to discuss the delays at Ardrossan Harbour, which you may recall I raised in the chamber with you in September. I have since written to Jim McSparran of Peel Ports and Frances Pacitti at Transport Scotland, met with various stakeholders, and heard from a great many Arran residents about the issue. As far as I can see there does not seem to be progress. It would also be useful to discuss the style of the terminal proposed as many residents have told me they do not want a similar terminal to that built at Brodick.

As you will know, it is over four years since North Ayrshire Council secured approval from Transport Scotland to construct a new terminal building, install a new linkspan, realign the current berth and repair fenders. However, since then the public has had to put with extensive delays due to the failure to strike a deal with private port owner Peel Ports. This has been compounded by poor levels of communication from Transport Scotland, with the Ardrossan Harbour Task Force often taking several months to publish minutes or inform the public.

I appreciate Troon is set to be the temporary mainland port whilst work is ongoing, but at this point islanders do not know what will be finished first: the delayed Glen Sannox vessel or the delayed upgrade to the harbour it is supposed to run from. Given the Ardrossan-Brodick route is one of the busiest passenger routes in the network, the need for progress is urgent. A prolonged move to Troon will impact local supply chains, the viability of local taxi businesses and other transport links.

As you noted in our exchange in September, the private ownership of ports "can substantially slow progress in making improvements". This seems to be the case here, which is why I believe compulsory measures now need to be explored – including public ownership. I hope this is something we can discuss in further depth at a meeting in the near future and look forward to reading your reply.

Yours sincerely,

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West Scotland Region

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Minister for Transport
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Katy Clark MSP
katy.clark.msp@parliament.scot

Our Reference: 202200333040
Your Reference: Our reference: AHTFM-JR

31 January 2023

Dear Ms Clark,

Thank you for your letter of 2 December 2022 addressed to Jenny Gilruth, Minister for Transport asking to meet to discuss the Ardrossan Harbour upgrade project.

Unfortunately the Minister is unable to accept your kind invitation to meet on this occasion. However has instructed that a meeting with Transport Scotland officials be arranged to respond to the points raised in your letter. Please contact [REDACTED] to make the necessary arrangements at [REDACTED].scot.

Yours sincerely

Private Secretary

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Katy Clark MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

28th March 2023

Jenny Gilruth MSP
Minister for Transport
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Our reference: SETIC-JR

Reinstatement of Discounted Season Tickets on the Largs-Cumbrae Route

Dear Jenny,

I am again writing regarding the decision by CalMac and Transport Scotland to remove discounted season tickets from the Largs-Cumbrae route. I understand they will now no longer be sold, and no longer valid after 24 April.

I believe this will have a disastrous financial impact on Cumbrae residents amidst a cost-of-living crisis. I have repeatedly raised that new RET rules for ticket pricing are not sufficient or competitive with what came before in terms of multi-journey options. This is confirmed in Transport Scotland's own RET analysis, which confirms "not all island residents [have] experienced a large reduction in fares compared to previous multi-journey books and "this is particularly the case in the Firth of Clyde islands where the use of multi-journey tickets was widespread". CalMac and Transport Scotland has claimed that the discounted season tickets reflected a "double discount" on RET price reductions for Cumbrae. This is factually incorrect as RET prices were set at the same level as the multi-journey tickets which islanders had been using pre-RET.

Island residents are very dependent on these tickets, with many travelling back and forth daily for work, school, hospital appointments and other commitments. Removing these tickets will only drive depopulation on the long run.

Cumbrae is a small community with only just over 1,000 permanent residents. Retaining these tickets for these residents will not cost much but will make a huge difference. I would urge you to use this final month to identify the funding needed to ensure residents can continue access seasonal discounts going forward.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Clark MSP
West Scotland Region

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Minister for Transport
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Kevin Stewart MSP/BPA



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Katy Clark MSP
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Our Reference: 202300351190
Your Reference: SETIC-JR

5 June 2023

Dear Katy,

Thank you for your letter of 3 October 2022 and your subsequent letter of 28 March 2023 regarding ferry season tickets.

I apologise for the delay in responding to you, which I understand was initially due to a system technicality, while the then Minister for Transport, Jenny Gilruth MSP, was looking into this issue, which I then looked further into when I became Minister for Transport. However, you should have received an update to make you aware that this was ongoing.

When RET (Road Equivalent Tariff) was introduced, some legacy ticket types were temporarily retained as a transitional arrangement, however these now need to be removed to allow for the move to a modern ticketing system. The Ferries Plan, published in 2012 was clear that these would be phased out, although it has taken CalMac Ferries Limited longer to do this than was intended at the time. Their removal also ensures fairness across the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service (CHFS) network with routes now having a consistent fare type. Under RET, passengers no longer have to spend significant sums on books of tickets upfront in order to access lower fares. Furthermore, the volume sold of these tickets had reduced significantly since the introduction of RET. In the last full pre-pandemic year of 2019 CFL sold 453,000 tickets on the Largs-Cumbrae route of which only 45 were season tickets. CFL phased out the Largs-Cumbrae 12 month, 6 month and 3 month season in 2021 and the remaining 1 month ticket season ticket has recently been phased out.

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Scheduled for introduction on 16 May, the benefits of Ar Turas include better 'live' deck space management for use of capacity, better communication around disruption, a standardised, accessible, digitally enabled service both on-line and through an app, and a means to purchase tickets and apply changes instantly.

The comments and depth of feeling from the community regarding this issue have been noted, and I met with Angus Campbell, Chair of Cumbrae Ferry Committee, to hear the community's concerns. Transport Scotland and CalMac continue to discuss the impact of the new ticketing system on some legacy type fares. Following further discussions it is planned that CalMac will make an announcement relating to the Cumbrae service in due course.

Whilst the new ticketing system will be unable to host products which have an unlimited number of journeys attached to them, I have asked officials to explore alternative product options to mitigate this impact. The key point to make is that any product on the new ticketing system will have to have a number of journeys attached to it. Product pricing would additionally need to be taken into consideration.

Meanwhile, Transport Scotland is reviewing fares policy across the network as part of our Fair Fares Review and Islands Connectivity Plan. This will consider a range of issues, including the previously available season tickets. Consultation and engagement will be central to the development of the Plan as a whole and the fares review in particular; this provides the opportunity to ensure that our fares policy continues to address the needs of island residents, businesses and communities.

Yours sincerely,



KEVIN STEWART

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Katy Clark MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

19th January 2022

Jenny Gilruth MSP
Minister for Transport
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Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Our reference: FFI-JR

Discounted Scheme for Young Islanders

Dear Jenny,

Firstly, I want to commend the decision to freeze ticket price levels from April until the end of September. Several island constituents of mine have expressed their concern at the cost of living and it is right we do all we can to protect their incomes as far as possible – including by keeping fare prices down.

However, I also wanted to raise a notable inequity in the current pricing structure, which are having a detrimental effect on both tourism and the livelihoods of island residents. One constituent noted in a letter to me recently that it is now significantly cheaper for a person aged 60 or over to travel to their second home on Arran (£2.90 return) than it is for their 6 year old daughter, resident on Arran to attend a hospital appointment on the mainland (£4.20 return).

I am sure you would acknowledge that if travel costs are prohibitive for islanders this will only accelerate depopulation. However, time and again, island residents are expressing to me that they feel current travel benefits disproportionately favour the elderly as opposed to households with younger family members. At the very least, I believe this should be reviewed insofar as it affects children of school age.

Can I therefore ask whether the Scottish Government will explore the feasibility of a discount scheme that ensures schoolchildren are entitled to at least the same level of discount as those aged 60+ in their communities?

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Clark MSP
West Scotland Region

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Minister for Transport
Ministear airson Còmh-dhail
Jenny Gilruth BPA/MSP



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Katy Clark MSP
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Our Reference: 202300339038
Your Reference: Discounted Scheme for Young Islanders

9 February 2023

Dear Katy,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 January 23 regarding a discounted scheme for young islanders.

Firstly, thank you for your recognition regarding the fares freeze. The Scottish Government is aware of the particular cost challenges faced by our island communities, where the ongoing cost of living impacts are arguably more challenging than in any other part of the country. Additionally, I am mindful of the disruption on the ferry network in recent times - particularly in relation to the Clyde and Hebrides network.

I was pleased to announce a six month fares freeze until October to help people and businesses from Scotland's rural and island communities. It is the right thing for our island communities and I also hope it will go some way to encouraging tourism this summer as island businesses continue to recover from the pandemic.

We also continue to invest significantly in reduced ferry fares for all passengers through Road Equivalent Tariff, with under 16s travelling for half fare and under 5s for free, as well as the recently introduced school bus discount. Our commitment to giving our young people the very best chances to succeed in life can further be evidenced by our policy on free bus travel for all under 22s, including islanders.

Additionally, the existing Young Persons Concessionary Travel Scheme provides 16-18 year old islanders four free ferry journeys to or from the mainland every year, as well as discounted rail travel.

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The ferry concessions scheme for over 60s is provided by [SPT's Concessionary Travel Scheme](#) so you would need to contact them with any queries relating to their scheme.

I can confirm that we do intend to review concessionary travel arrangements and fares through our upcoming Islands Connectivity Plan and Fair Fares Review, so I hope this is of some reassurance to your constituent.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



JENNY GILRUTH

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Katy Clark MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

28th March 2023

Jenny Gilruth MSP
Minister for Transport
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Our reference: SETIC-JR

Reinstatement of Discounted Season Tickets on the Largs-Cumbrae Route

Dear Jenny,

I am again writing regarding the decision by CalMac and Transport Scotland to remove discounted season tickets from the Largs-Cumbrae route. I understand they will now no longer be sold, and no longer valid after 24 April.

I believe this will have a disastrous financial impact on Cumbrae residents amidst a cost-of-living crisis. I have repeatedly raised that new RET rules for ticket pricing are not sufficient or competitive with what came before in terms of multi-journey options. This is confirmed in Transport Scotland's own RET analysis, which confirms "not all island residents [have] experienced a large reduction in fares compared to previous multi-journey books and "this is particularly the case in the Firth of Clyde islands where the use of multi-journey tickets was widespread". CalMac and Transport Scotland has claimed that the discounted season tickets reflected a "double discount" on RET price reductions for Cumbrae. This is factually incorrect as RET prices were set at the same level as the multi-journey tickets which islanders had been using pre-RET.

Island residents are very dependent on these tickets, with many travelling back and forth daily for work, school, hospital appointments and other commitments. Removing these tickets will only drive depopulation on the long run.

Cumbrae is a small community with only just over 1,000 permanent residents. Retaining these tickets for these residents will not cost much but will make a huge difference. I would urge you to use this final month to identify the funding needed to ensure residents can continue access seasonal discounts going forward.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Clark MSP
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Katy Clark MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

13th January 2022

Jenny Gilruth MSP
Minister for Transport
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Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Our reference: ASCI-JR

Arran Supply Chain Issues

Dear Jenny,

I am writing following correspondence with extremely concerned constituents, as well as managers and owners of affected businesses, on the Isle of Arran about difficulties transporting food and vital supplies to the island.

You may recall I wrote a month ago to request a meeting regarding the ongoing delays to developments at Ardrossan Harbour and the uncertainty this is causing on Arran. There are now serious concerns that issues with the infrastructure are now compounding the issues of unreliable sailings, caused by horrific weather and technical issues on the ageing fleet, and leading to worrying shortages.

I understand horrific weather related issues before Christmas resulted in nearly three days of no lorries coming to the island. I have been told upsetting stories about island residents contacting Brodick Co-Op in tears of panic due to low food supplies and workers at local businesses being abused both in person and online. For context, Co-op switched from a local haulage firm around a year ago, and usually book vehicles on the 0700 Ardrossan-Brodick sailing to suit this logistics supply chain. However, the vessel in question now frequently berths overnight in Brodick due to the longstanding fendering issues at Ardrossan, and this is compounded by the unreliable weather. As a result, if this vessel does not sail, my understanding is that the drivers transporting supplies are left on the standby list with all others on that sailing, meaning subsequent sailings may be full and there is no guarantee they will have a place on board.

It is this combination of factors that has led to these supply issues occurring. I have written separately to Robbie Drummond, Chief Executive at CalMac, to enquire what steps they are taking to minimise disruption and to ask whether additional sailings on the Tarbert-Lochranza route would aid in this respect.

As I have raised previously, long-term underinvestment in the fleet and port infrastructure, and the longstanding issues at Ardrossan, have contributed to this situation and I would again formally request a meeting with you to discuss some of these issues in depth. However, I would also ask you to engage with CalMac and Transport Scotland as a matter of urgency to ensure an agreement is made that ensures food and other urgent supplies are prioritised and not pushed back.

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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

I look forward to your reply so I can fully assist my constituents on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

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West Scotland Region

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Minister for Transport
Kevin Stewart MSP



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Katy Clark MSP
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Our Reference: 202300338343

04 April 2023

Dear Katy

Thank you for your email dated 13 January 2023 regarding the concerns raised by your constituents, as well as managers and owners of affected businesses, on the difficulties transporting food and vital supplies to the Isle of Arran.

I fully understand your constituents frustrations during extended periods of disruption, and I want to emphasise the Scottish Government's on-going commitment to supporting vital lifeline services. The Scottish Government recognises the key role ferry services play in supporting the economic, social and cultural development of island and remote mainland communities.

Unfortunately, adverse weather in the days leading up to Christmas resulted in a number of cancellations across the network, including on the Ardrossan - Brodick route. The frustration of communities that rely on the service is understandable but safety, of course, must be the top priority in delivering services.

The decision to delay or cancel a sailing is never taken lightly as CalMac Ferries Limited (CFL) fully recognise the importance of the ferry services to island and rural communities. However, the Master of the ship will always put the safety of passengers, crew and the ship first. His or her right to refuse to sail is enshrined in law under Statutory Instrument 1997 No 2886 The Merchant Shipping (Master's Discretion) Regulations 1997. It is a criminal offence for the owner, charterer or manager of a ship, i.e. CFL or any other person to prevent or restrict the Master from exercising that judgement.

During any disruptions, CFL will prioritise sailings to ensure delivery of essential supplies and export of island products to support island and remote mainland economies.

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CFL forms part of the local resilience partnership. They remain in local contact with communities and hauliers and during periods of disruption will prioritise essential goods on any sailing. This is closely monitored, with feedback being obtained directly from island communities and local resilience partnerships providing a more rounded assessment of impact than transport operators alone can provide.

Former Minister for Transport, Jenny Gilruth MSP, contacted CFL and they confirmed that when the 0700hrs sailing from Ardrossan is cancelled, the standard procedure is to book the Co-op lorries on to the next available sailing. On rare occasions, the lorries are placed on stand-by when there is no available capacity to make a booking.

I am aware the condition of Ardrossan port remains a concern for the island communities. It is the responsibility of the statutory harbour authority to maintain its assets and ensure it is fit for purpose. Transport Scotland continues to work closely with CFL and Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) to resolve these often complex issues as efficiently as possible and to improve resilience across the network.

Partners continue to progress preparation of contract documents and legal agreements for the Ardrossan harbour infrastructure project. Ms Gilruth chaired the latest meeting of the Ardrossan Harbour Task Force on 22 March 2023, the minutes of which will be published in due course. The previous Task Force meeting, held on Arran in January 2023, meeting notes have been published with the accompanying Q&A expected to be published soon. Ms Gilruth also took the opportunity to meet with the Isle of Arran Ferry Committee, Visit Arran and Eco Savvy in January 2023. This allowed her to hear first-hand from the local community, get a better understanding of their views and the work being done on sustainable transport on the island, together with future aspirations for transport as we move towards achieving net zero commitments.

It is imperative that all partners continue to work together to bring about resolution to the improvement works at Ardrossan Harbour as soon as possible.

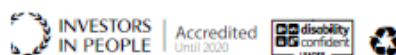
Since this government was elected in May 2021, we have bought and deployed an additional vessel, the MV Loch Frisa, have commissioned two new vessels for Islay and we are now delivering a further two new vessels to help support island communities and improve the resilience of the Clyde and Hebrides network. We remain committed to the construction of vessels 801 and 802, and have also progressed investment in essential harbour infrastructure.

At the same time, we are continuing to work on pursuing all reasonable and appropriate opportunities to enhance capacity and resilience in the short term through additional tonnage. We have committed to investing £580m in the Infrastructure Investment Plan and recently announced a further £115m for additional major vessels.

I share the desires of island communities for sustainable and effective ferry services and as the new Minister for Transport, look forward to continuing constructive engagement with them on future services and vessel replacements. As part of the forthcoming islands connectivity plan, the Scottish Government will set out a long-term investment programme for vessels and ports which the Project Neptune report called for and islanders need to see.

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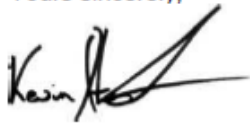
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I recognise having confidence in ferry services can impact upon people's decision on whether to live and work on the islands, and impacts upon the sustainability of the island communities themselves. These human impacts are at the heart of our commitment to continued investment in ferry services across Scotland.

I can assure you that the Scottish Government remains committed to delivering a first class sustainable ferry service to our islands and rural communities.

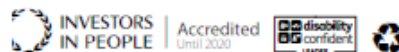
Yours sincerely,



Kevin Stewart

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Katy Clark MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

30th March 2023

Kevin Stewart MSP
Minister for Transport
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Our reference: WSFI-JR

West Scotland Ferry Issues

Dear Kevin,

I would like to congratulate you in your new role as Transport Minister for the Scottish Government. As a representative of the West Scotland region, home to the Isle of Arran and Isle of Cumbrae, I have unsurprisingly had a great deal of correspondence with Jenny Gilruth and Graeme Dey about ports and ferry services whilst they were in post.

I appreciate you will have several important and pressing responsibilities as part of the transport brief. However, I wanted to write without delay about the ferries crisis, which has become a daily source of anxiety for my island constituents. Only yesterday, I received an email from CalMac informing me that several services could not be resumed due to the lack of vessels available. This poses problems for Isle of Arran residents in particular, who rely on a regular two vessel service in the summer months.

A further complication for islanders is the now extensive delay to the commencement of the Ardrossan Harbour upgrade project. Negotiations have been prolonged by owner Peel Ports' high demands for commercial and grant terms. Considering this, the Scottish Government must explore the option of taking the harbour into public ownership, particularly given its strategic importance. The need for rapid progress on this issue is particularly crucial if the MV Glen Sannox is to enter service next year, as has been estimated by Ferguson Marine, and to ensure the temporary move in Arran ferry operations from Ardrossan to Troon has a clear timeframe. This transfer will impact local supply chains, the viability of local taxi businesses and other transport links, and so there needs to be a clear roadmap with islanders consulted every step of the way.

Whilst Covid-19 undeniably worsened the ferries crisis, it does not account for the all-too-frequent breakdowns across the network. More than 1,000 ferry sailings have been delayed over the past five years due to mechanical issues. This is clearly due to a long-term failure to invest in new fleet. Just two ferries operating on core service routes have been delivered to CalMac since 2007, and half of the current 31 state-owned vessels are over the typical life expectancy of 25 years old.

However, bar the two overdue ferries sitting at Ferguson Marine, there does not appear to be any kind of sensible procurement strategy. In total, CMAL has scoured the globe and examined 650 second-hand ships, most of which were found to be unsuitable. Where the Scottish Government has tried to commission new shipbuilding projects, virtually no new

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jobs in Scotland have been created. The project to construct new vessels on the Islay route, for example, was outsourced to Turkey, a country where the Trades Union Congress has said unions organise under a climate of fear, freedom of speech is heavily constrained, and workers face arbitrary arrests and detention.

Moreover, last week, the Scottish Government announced CalMac had chartered the MV Alfred, a potentially defective vessel from the notorious anti-trade union operator Pentland Ferries, to add resilience to the network. As well as breaching existing collective bargaining agreements with CalMac unions, this lease has grave implications for health and safety given this vessel crashed into a Scottish island and was suspended from service only last year, with the results of the Marine Accident Investigation Branch's probe still pending. It was [confirmed to me](#) by your predecessor Jenny Gilruth that neither the Scottish Government nor Transport Scotland or CMAL met with the operator prior to this charter to discuss these issues, which is extremely concerning.

These actions are not the sign of a Scottish Government with a clear plan to replenish the fleet, with communities and workers fully consulted. That is why my party have repeatedly called for a serious industrial strategy to develop capacity along the Clyde so we can build a new standardised fleet here in Scotland. Ferguson Marine has trialed groundbreaking hydrogen-fuelled ferries through the HySeas III project, for example. There is an opportunity for the Scottish Government to build on that potential and ensure contracts to build net-zero ferries are included in its Infrastructure Investment Plan going forward.

This crisis will never be resolved until the Scottish Government moves away from its current short-termist and panic-fuelled approach to procurement. A strategy is needed to address these challenges, with affected coastal and island communities involved every step of the way. I would highly recommend that you meet with passenger groups such as the Arran Ferry Action Group and Cumbrae Ferry Users Group, as well as the trade unions RMT and TSSA, which have repeatedly raised many of these issues to little avail.

I wish you the best luck in the new position and look forward to hearing your thoughts on these issues.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Clark MSP
West Scotland Region

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Minister for Transport
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Katy Clark MSP
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Our Reference: 202300349907
Your Reference: WSFI-JR

20 April 2023

Dear Katy,

Thank you for your letter of 30 March 2023 highlighting a number of issues and concerns regarding ferry services, vessel procurement and investment.

Any disruption to ferry services is unwelcome and in recent weeks and months this has been for a variety of reasons. Weather disruption remains a factor but regrettably we have also seen a number of technical issues and the delay of vessels from the annual overhaul programme. I have, in my first weeks as Minister for Transport, undertaken meetings with both CalMac and CMAL to convey that we need to do better to ensure the continued support and delivery of service to our island communities.

We continue to seek second hand tonnage to supplement the fleet with the deployment of the MV Loch Frisa last year and recent charters of the MV Arrow being examples of our investment in this area. The start of the agreed charter of the MV Alfred has unfortunately been delayed but once deployed this will bring greater resilience to the network.

In regards to the Ardrossan project, I share the frustrations of island communities about its progress. The project is moving through the procurement stage with tender bids and evaluation expected later this year. Ardrossan is a privately owned port and discussions with Peel Ports Group continue, acknowledging that Scottish Ministers have been asked to make a significant funding contribution to the port works. We have to ensure that this is value for money and ultimately is affordable in the current fiscal climate. I can assure you that we are taking all reasonable steps to conclude the commercial arrangements as soon as reasonably practicable. Subject to conclusion of appropriate procurement and agreement between the partners on funding, an indicative programme of construction could see a site start in in Spring 2024.

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As part of my portfolio I am expecting to meet with a number of island community groups over the coming weeks and months, including the Isle of Arran Ferry Committee as the recognised community body for all ferry related matters on Arran. I am looking forward to those engagements and hearing first hand community feedback on all pertinent issues and concerns.

On procurement, I understand that this issue has been the subject of ongoing scrutiny and discussion at the Public Audit Committee and with Audit Scotland. We will continue to engage and progress discussions with Audit Scotland and CMAL, as procurement authority for new and second hand vessels.

Ministers are also considering carefully the recommendations in the Project Neptune report on ferries governance. [REDACTED] Chair of the Ferries Community Board, is currently speaking to island communities to get their views on this and he will report back to Ministers shortly.

I hope this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely



KEVIN STEWART

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Katy Clark MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

23rd January 2024

Fiona Hyslop MSP
Minister for Transport
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Our reference: AHIBJR

Ardrossan Harbour Irish Berth

Dear Fiona,

I am writing with concern following the announced closure of Ardrossan Harbour's Irish berth and to request an urgent update on the updated cost estimate and refreshed business case for the Ardrossan Harbour Redevelopment Project.

As you will have seen, the berth is out of action until at least Wednesday after safety concerns were raised following an inspection by divers, leading to the withdrawal of the MV Alfred. The precise nature of the issue has still not been publicised and I would appreciate any indication of what discussions have been held with Peel Ports and CalMac regarding this. The withdrawal has obviously been compounded over the past 24 hours by all Ardrossan-Arran crossings being cancelled as a result of Storm Isha. Whilst this particular event could not be controlled, you will appreciate that islanders are now extremely exasperated by the sequence of complications that have led to this point. The MV Alfred, the costly procurement of which has itself been mired in controversy, was drafted in to cover for delays to construction of the even more costly MV Glen Sannox, which itself is not able to dock at the port it was built for. The news that the only berth available for the MV Alfred to use just adds to the woes faced by islanders, who have already faced an unprecedented level of disruption over the past couple of years.

Islanders now deserve full clarity on whether the reported safety issues are likely to affect the harbour's redevelopment. I note from your letter to the Ardrossan Harbour Task Force in November that you indicated improvement works did not include replacement or strengthening of the Irish Berth. To what extent is this being revised or taken into account in light of the latest news? And can you clarify whether the outcome of the business case is still set to be delivered in February? Six years on from the announcement of the upgrade, my constituents are anxious for clarity on these points.

The need for progress has now never been so urgent, particularly as the delivery dates for the two Arran ferries under construction at Ferguson Marine finally draw closer. Moving the service to Troon on a prolonged basis would be disastrous and an admission of failure. Not only will it cause further disruption for islanders who rely on the route; it will hugely affect businesses in Ardrossan, local supply chains and various transport links. Serious action

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would need to be taken to mitigate this and I would appreciate any indication of what contingency planning is in place and what discussions there have been with the members of the task force on these matters, particularly as I note the last published task force meeting minutes are from nearly a year ago.

Communities need and deserve a reliable crossing at Ardrossan, with port facilities which are modernised and up to scratch. I would appreciate an urgent response on these aforementioned points so I can furnish my constituents with information.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Clark MSP
West Scotland Region

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Minister for Transport
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Katy Clark MSP
[REDACTED]@Parliament.scot

Our Reference: 202400395132
Your Reference: AHIBJR

7 February 2024

Dear Katy,

Thank you for your email correspondence dated 23 January 2024 about ferry services to Arran.

I am aware of the ongoing frustrations of the island community regarding the Ardrossan port due to disruptions, specifically with the Irish berth, and appreciate you reaching out to update as to the ongoing feedback of the local community.

Rest assured, I want to emphasise the Scottish Government's on-going commitment to supporting vital lifeline services.

You will be aware of the announcement by Peel Ports about the permanent closure of the Irish Berth. Transport Scotland were only informed on Friday 2 February of Peel Ports decision to close the Irish berth permanently. This is extremely disappointing but responsibility for safety lies with Peel Ports as the Statutory Harbour Authority. They are also responsible for the upkeep, maintenance and replacement of the infrastructure at the port.

Current focus is on ensuring that any impact on the Arran community as a result of this closure is minimised. Transport Scotland are in contact with CalMac to build upon the contingency already put in place to allow freight services from Troon, and finalising works at that port as soon as possible to maximise options.

CalMac are in contact with the community and a joint meeting with Transport Scotland, CalMac and the Arran Ferry committee was undertaken on Monday 5 February.

A business case and cost exercise review is being developed to inform a decision around upgrading Ardrossan. This work is of vital importance in defining the scope of works, allowing greater certainty of the

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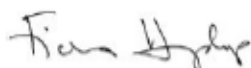


project costs and the financial package required from each of the funding partners, to deliver an improved service for the Arran community. Transport Scotland officials continue to work with project partners and communities on planning for the introduction of MV Glen Sannox to the Arran route, with services initially operating from Troon.

As I had mentioned in my response to Ardrossan Taskforce (dated 27 November 2023), the Scottish Government remains committed to ensuring that the Arran ferry service is fit for the future.

I appreciate you taking the time to write to me on this.

Yours sincerely



FIONA HYSLOP
Minister for Transport

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Katy Clark MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

1st February 2024

FAO Ardrossan Harbour Task Force
Via Email

Our reference: AHUGDJR

RE: Ardrossan Harbour Redevelopment Project Developments

Dear Task Force Members,

I am writing to express deep concern in light of recent developments and to request urgent updates on the project so I can furnish my constituents with information. At time of writing, I note that the task force has not published meeting minutes for nearly a year, so it is difficult to make a full assessment of what stage has been reached in some discussions. However, I have questioned Fiona Hyslop, the Minister for Transport, both in the Scottish Parliament and via written correspondence in recent weeks.

Since procurement was paused in the Summer due to fluctuating costs, I note from published correspondence that the Minister previously advised that the outcome of the business review was expected to be reported to the Task Force in November, later pushed back to February. When [I asked her](#) whether February was still the target, she did not directly answer, merely noting it would be shared once completed. In her November letter to the Task Force, she indicated that "improvement works do not at present include replacement or strengthening of the Winton Pier and Irish Berth", meaning further structural analysis was to be carried out. Last month, the Irish Berth at the harbour was ruled out of action after corrosion was uncovered during a divers' inspection. I understand this is still the case despite Peel Ports previously advising it expected it to be safe to bring the berth back into operation a week ago.

Are members able to advise whether the prospect of replacing or strengthening of the Winton Pier and Irish Berth formed any part of the task force's considerations in light of the initial business case? My understanding is that it was the task force's position that the technical data gathered during the assessment of mainland berthing options reinforced why retaining Ardrossan for the Brodick run was a preferable option over Troon. This is particularly important given the Minister's point that the quay walls were expected to provide support to an LNG tank to be used to help fuel the new vessels. Whilst I appreciate that the MV Alfred, the relief vessel which relies on the Irish Berth had not been leased at this point, presumably a structural assessment of those quay walls should have still been carried out in the early stages, and I am unclear of the reasons if that is not the case. Any clarification on this from the task force would be appreciated.

I am also deeply concerned by the comments made by Mairi McAllan, the Transport Secretary, to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee this week. When questioned

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whether Ministers had considered the possibility that the new vessels under construction at Ferguson Marine will not run from Ardrossan at all, she said: "No decision has been taken on that." This comes despite the First Minister re-stating his commitment to keeping Ardrossan as the mainland terminal for the Arran service as recently as September. As many members will appreciate, the Ardrossan-Brodick service, the busiest CalMac runs, is extremely important to the town of Ardrossan and North Ayrshire as a whole. A prolonged move to Troon would hugely affect local businesses, local supply chains and various transport links. A serious concern initially raised by the council was that two of the train stations in the town could become obsolete if the service was lost. Ardrossan is already one of the most deprived communities in Ayrshire. Would members therefore be able to clarify what considerations have been made of the social and economic value of the ferry service to the town? I know CalMac has previously commissioned socio-economic impact assessments for several islands. As a critical mainland port, Ardrossan would benefit from similar scrutiny.

I hope members will appreciate why clarity on these points is vital. I have been a firm proponent of the project since it was first announced by the Scottish Labour administration at North Ayrshire Council and repeatedly called on the Scottish Government to explore the option of taking the harbour into municipal ownership at a time when the Scottish Government and Peel Ports were at an impasse over commercial and grant terms. Given the lengthy delays that caused, it was tremendously disappointing to see the process paused within weeks of those terms being granted due to cost concerns. Local residents have expressed to me their bewilderment at the frequent interruptions.

For the sake of ferry users, workers, businesses and our coastal and island communities, it is now absolutely imperative that serious progress is made. I would invite members to engage on these points with a view to finally delivering this significant project that will benefit the whole region.

Yours faithfully,

Katy Clark MSP
West Scotland Region

Cabinet Secretary for Transport
Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Còmh-dhail
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Our Reference: 202400396861
Your Reference: AHUGDJR

29 February 2024

Dear Katy,

Thank you for your letter of 1 February 2024 addressed to the Ardrossan Task Force members. I am replying in my capacity as co-chair of the Ministerial Task Force.

I appreciate you taking the time to write and express the concerns raised by you and your constituents about the project, acknowledging that the project remains challenging for all partners involved.

I understand that Peel Ports Group as statutory harbour authority undertakes routine maintenance and inspections therefore they would be best placed to respond to your query regarding structural assessments that have been carried out at the port.

I can confirm that the Ardrossan Task Force members met on 22 March 2023 attended by Jenny Gilruth MSP, the then Minister for Transport. The meeting allowed project partners to provide an update on the tender design stage and next steps for progressing the project to procurement stage. The minutes are published and can be accessed via the link below: [Ardrossan Harbour Task Force | Transport Scotland](#)

As outlined in my letter to Task Force members in August 2023, the decision to pause procurement was confirmed which resulted from issues around project scope being identified during the tender design stage. It was identified that there were some gaps within the original base case submitted by Peel Ports Group and North Ayrshire Council as commercial partners; for example fender replacements at the Winton Pier and Irish Berth knuckle which are required for vessel manoeuvring and berthing at the port.

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The Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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It was confirmed that a business case and cost exercise review would be undertaken by Transport Scotland within input from project partners and this was expected to be completed in November 2023. My letter to the Task Force in November 2023 confirmed that an expansion of the business case work was required and included a socio economic assessment by North Ayrshire Council and that the infrastructure works did not at present include replacement of and/or strengthening of the Winton Pier or Irish Berth. Therefore a structural survey report by Peel Ports was requested which is still awaited. This report will help inform whether the expanded project scope and strengthening and/or replacement of key infrastructure is required.

You have raised the importance of the socio economic case noting that Ardrossan is a socially deprived area and potential loss of jobs. I can confirm that the socio economic assessment led by North Ayrshire Council, with input from the Isle of Arran Ferry Committee has recently been submitted to Transport Scotland and will form part of the business case review as stated.

In both letters to Task Force members (August and November 2023) and more recently when providing updates within the Chamber at the Scottish Parliament it has been made clear that the delay to the project is disappointing. However it is critical that the scope of works is clearly defined in order to have greater certainty of the project costs and financial package required from each of the project partners.

I can confirm that I recently met with Kenneth Gibson MSP and Arran stakeholders which included the Chief Executive and Leader of North Ayrshire Council to discuss their concerns around ferry services and the business case work. It was agreed that Transport Scotland officials will be meeting the project partners including the Council to agree next steps and share the business case work when completed with Taskforce members. A meeting of the Task Force will be convened thereafter.

In my separate response to your letter of 23 January 2024 (202400395132 /Reference AHIBJR) I made clear that Transport Scotland was only informed of the announcement to permanently close the Irish Berth by Peel Ports Group on Friday 2nd February and that this was a decision in their role as statutory harbour authority.

I can assure you that the project partners are progressing the business case review work to finalisation, acknowledging that the recent announcements from Peel Ports Group around the condition and integrity of the existing port infrastructure is under review.

I trust this information is helpful to you and your constituents and I will continued to keep Parliament updated on the project as it develops.

Yours sincerely



FIONA HYSLOP

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