

## The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Harbours Management Board** held **REMOTELY** on Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 3.00 pm.

### **Present:-**

Mr R Balfour	Mr A MacInnes
Mr A Henderson (Chair)	Mr W MacKay
Mr D Louden	Mr D Rixson

### **In attendance:-**

Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure  
 Ms T Urry, Head of Roads and Transport  
 Mr M Bain, Project Manager  
 Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager  
 Mr T Usher, Harbours Manager  
 Mr A MacIver, Principal Engineer  
 Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator  
 Ms O Bayon, Administrative Assistant

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf on Mr B Boyd, Mr J Gray, Mr D MacLeod and Mr A Sinclair.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Item 8 – Mr A MacInnes (financial)

Mr MacInnes also declared a financial interest in any item relating to harbour dues and the purchasing of fuel via Highland Council harbours and piers given his involvement in the seafood industry and as a director of organic sea harvest.

### **3. Minutes**

There had been circulated, and was **NOTED**, the Minutes of Meeting of the Harbours Management Board held on 26 February 2021.

### **4. Uig Harbour Redevelopment - Update**

There had been circulated Report No HMB/7/21 dated 2 August 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

It was confirmed that the contractor, RJ McLeod, had started site mobilisation with site works commencing next week. The tender for the new terminal building was programmed to be issued on 26 November 2021, with works fitting in with the main civil works and confirmation had been received from Transport Scotland, as funders, that the tender was acceptable to be issued. Vessel Delivery was still programmed for April to July 2023, tying in with the completion of the main civil infrastructure works in the summer of 2023.

It was hoped to meet shortly with the local community and harbour users to keep them advised as to what to expect with regard to the works. At these meetings

the community would be provided with further details of the construction works and traffic management arrangements through the community and harbour user liaison meetings. Information would also be published on the Highland Council's Uig Harbour Redevelopment webpage, through community Facebook pages and community and contractor information boards. With regard to the liquefied natural gas the hazardous area zoning had been reviewed and passed to CMAL Vessels.

Turning to Disabled Access to tour boats, the best option appeared to be the use of a powered stair climber for less able users and a minor redesign of the new boat steps with the fenders and crosshead supports moved to the steps rather than the landings. Meetings would take place shortly regarding disabled access involving representatives from the Community Trust, Harbour Users, tour boat operators, Skye & Lochalsh Access Panel, AECOM, Council officers and the Chair of the Harbours Management Board.

In welcoming the commencement of site works, the Board **NOTED** the position.

## 5. Corran Ferry Project – Outline Business Case – Update

There had been circulated Report No HMB/8/21 dated 12 August 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment.

Following an update of recent developments, the following issues were considered:-

- two 32 car vessels were required so that the service could be maintained when one was being serviced;
- potentially Compulsory Purchase might be required. Compulsory Purchases could often be a protract process and it was good to see that the process had already begun to identify what land would be needed. It was confirmed though that officers would try and avoid Compulsory Purchases wherever possible;
- as the two-vessel service would require a full second crew roster, it was likely that the level of fares would need to be increased to cover this additional cost. Defining affordable fares for residents & businesses would be a key element of the outline business case. As part of this work full consideration would be given to the socio-economic study that had evidenced and validated the vital role that the Corran Ferry played in supporting the economically fragile communities. It was important to inform the community about this as soon as possible;
- it was queried if a line was missing from Appendix C on Page 27 of the circulated papers; and
- the lead consultant Stantec's summary report lack reference to network resilience and it was hoped that this could be strengthened. Transport topology in the area was not ideal and the Corran Ferry was integral. The impact of collisions was colossal and the A82, the arterial route from Glasgow to Inverness on the west coast, would be affected by the Coire Glas developments coming on stream in the next few years.

The Board **NOTED**:-

- i. that following on from funding approval (£1.6M - Full Council 24 June 2021) work was now well underway regarding the feasibility and preliminary design for replacement Vessels/Slipways and supporting infrastructure;

- ii. that a Corran Ferry Project Board had been established. The Board would follow a gateway review process to provide oversight and scrutiny throughout the progress of the Outline Business Case. The Terms of Reference were provided in Appendix B of the report;
- iii. there was a requirement for the lead consultant Stantec to continue to work with the Highland Council to develop the Commercial, Financial and Management case of the Outline Business Case (OBC). The Corran Ferry Project Board agreed that this work could be directly awarded via the Scotland Excel framework and the funding (£40k) should come out of the approved Capital Budget (£1.6M). The tasks required to facilitate this work were provided in Appendix C of the report;
- iv. that as part of the Small Vessel Replacement Programme (SVRP) Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) had appointed German custom ferry design consultants Navalue to lead the concept design of 7 replacement Vessels (CMAL) + 2 Corran Vessels (THC). Basic concept Vessel drawings were expected in December;
- v. that The Project Design Unit had issued a professional services contract (8 October 2021) to procure an external consultant to commence feasibility and preliminary design work for the replacement slipways and associated infrastructure improvements. 9 consultants had been invited to quote through the Scotland Excel Framework. Tender return was Thursday 25 November 2021;
- vi. that the Project had concluded that a 2 x 32 car vessel (Ro-Ro) service would be the requirement for the Corran Narrows over a 30-year period (Life of the Vessels) estimated to commence 2025/26. Anything less would not provide sufficient capacity all year round and anything more would be disproportionate in relation to the forecasted demand. Further details and analysis regarding the above were provided in Appendix D of the report; and
- vii. that the Corran Narrows Socio-economic Study (draft summary previously presented to the Lochaber Area Committee on 9 Aug 2021) was complete. The 2 reports below had been sent to Members separately:-
  - 1. Corran Narrows Socio-economic Study (Final Report)
  - 2. Corran Narrows Socio-economic Study (Executive summary)

## 6. Crannog Restaurant, Fort William Town Pier Lease

There had been circulated Report No HMB/15/21 dated 9 November 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

It having been confirmed that the end date of the lease would now be 2079, the Board **APPROVED** the extension of the term of the existing lease by 30 years.

## 7. Lochinver Chandlery Lease

There had been circulated Report No HMB/16/21 dated 9 November 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

The Board **APPROVED**:-

- i. the renewal of the lease for the extended term of 30 years; and
- ii. the inclusion in the lease of the storage yard.

## 8. Staffin Harbour Asset Transfer

**Declaration on Interest:** Mr A MacInnes declared a financial interest in this item as a Director of Organic Sea Harvest who were in partnership with the Staffin Community Trust and Organic Sea Harvest would financially contribute to the future development of the Staffin Harbour and and, having applied the test, confirmed that he would not take part in the item.

There had been circulated Report No HMB/17/21 dated 9 November 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

The general consensus was that the harbour should be transferred to Staffin Community Trust at nil cost. This would also benefit the Council as, while not generating income, it cost money to maintain and the transfer would allow its development in the interest of the community. However, concern was expressed that, should the Community Trust dissolve, the Harbour could be sold on and used for purposes that might conflict with the objectives of the Board. Accordingly, the proposal was to include a Buy Back option in the agreement.

The Board **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee:-

- i. the designation of the harbour and associated land as “surplus to the requirements of Highland Council”;
- ii. the transfer of the assets to the Staffin Community Trust at nil cost;
- iii. the re-assignment of the Crown Estate lease for the seabed below Mean Low Water Springs to the Staffin Community Trust;
- iv. that the transfer of the Highland Council owned assets be dependent on the successful re-assignment of the Crown Estate seabed lease; and
- v. that a Buy Back option be included in the transfer agreement.

## **9. Financial Performance 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021**

There had been circulated Report No. HMB/18/21 dated 8 November 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment and Economy.

It was important that Harbours was not viewed simply as an income generation by the Council and it recognised the need for adequate investment in maintaining its assets.

The Board **NOTED** the financial position to 30 September 2021.

At this juncture, it was highlighted that this would be Mr Mitchell's last Harbour Board meeting. He had been involved with the Board for over 20 years and his guidance and advice had been welcomed. The Board wished Mr Mitchell well for his retirement.

## **10. Debt Management**

There had been circulated Report No HMB/19/21 dated 8 November 2021 by the Executive Chief Officer Resources and Finance.

The Board **NOTED** the current debt position.

The meeting ended at 4.05 pm

