

**15 October 2009**

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**TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE SPOKESPERSON'S REPORT**

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**1. ROAD EQUIVALENT TARIFF**

The Scottish Government's Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) ferry fares Pilot scheme commenced on the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2008. The Pilot scheme operates on the route between Oban and Coll/Tiree and all the existing routes sailing between the Western Isles and the mainland comprising of the ferry services between

- Stornoway and Ullapool
- Uig and Tarbert/Lochmaddy and
- Oban and Castlebay/Lochboisedale

The first monitoring report released by the Scottish Government for the RET pilot operating on all ferry routes in the Western Isles has attracted 23% more cars and 14% more passengers compared with the same period in 2007-2008.

Increases in carryings on the RET supported routes were reported as

- Oban-Castlebay/Lochboisedale: cars up 26% and passengers up 19%
- Uig-Tarbert/Lochmaddy: cars up 25% and passengers up 16%
- Ullapool-Stornoway: cars up 24% and passengers up 13%
- Oban-Coll/Tiree: cars up 13% and passengers up 8%

The Pilot will be monitored on an ongoing quarterly basis and will include the gathering of ferry traffic data; economic data and undertakings of surveys with residents; businesses and ferry passengers. The Scottish Government intend to provide a summary on progress with the monitoring of the RET Pilot scheme at intervals during the Pilot scheme which will operate until Spring 2011.

**2. SCOTTISH FERRIES REVIEW**

The purpose of the Scottish Government ferries review is:

- (i) To develop a shared vision and outcomes for lifeline ferry services in Scotland, in the context of the Government's Purpose, Economic Strategy and National Transport Strategy.
- (ii) To analyse the current lifeline ferry services and network, identifying how well it meets the proposed outcomes and how it links to other modal networks.
- (iii) To inform the Scottish Government's long term strategy for lifeline ferry services in Scotland in time to feed in to the next spending review, and influence the next round of procurement of ferry services and supporting infrastructure.
- (iv) To identify policies to be taken forward to deliver the long term strategy, including the planned investment framework.

The review will be conducted within the context of what is technically, financially and legally possible. Although it has previously been stated that the ferries strategy will be written to 2025, the Strategic Transport Projects Review is written to 2022. The

Scottish Government therefore propose to write the ferries strategy to 2022 to keep the timing of the transport strategies aligned. The review will include all publically funded ferry services in the review. This includes those services funded by the Scottish Government and those funded by Local Authorities. The review will also take cognisance of the commercial services provided. The review will consider the current position as well as considering what changes need to be made to meet needs into the future.

### **Work Packages**

The Scottish Government have split the review into a number of Work Packages. Two of the Work Packages will be led by consultants and Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd and Highlands and Islands Enterprise are leading on the other Work Packages. The Work Packages are as follows -

- Work Package 1 comprises methods of delivery and operation, competition and procurement and freight and will be delivered by Transport Research Institute (TRI), Edinburgh Napier University.
- Work Package 2 comprises fares, funding, cost and affordability, integration, services and routes and will be delivered by MVA Consultancy Ltd.
- Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited will deliver the work on vessels, ports and harbours and accessibility.
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise will deliver work on the economic impact of Ferries.

The work packages will also be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equality Impact Assessments. The Scottish Government will lead on these elements.

### **Timetable**

The original timetable for the Review was predicated on having the EC investigation concluded by May 2009. The Scottish Government have been made aware that the EC are unlikely to conclude their investigation before late autumn 2009. As a result the Scottish Government's timetable for the Ferries Review has been revised to have a draft strategy released by the end of the year. The Scottish Government propose to hold an extensive public consultation on the strategy beginning early 2010 for a period of three months and a final strategy taking cognisance of the public consultation in place by late spring/ summer 2010. The Scottish Government propose to advertise and deliver a series of Road Show events as part of the public consultation exercise and have extended an offer to visit the local authorities effected to give a presentation to elected members to consult on the draft strategy.

## **3. REVIEW OF THE STRATHCLYDE CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME**

In light of SPT's Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Joint Committee's decision at their meeting on 30 January 2009, SPT officers have now begun a process to review the Scheme. Inter-departmental officer-level Steering and Working groups have been established to progress the review. An inception meeting of the Steering Group (SG) was held on 24 June 2009. Initial meetings of the Working Group have also taken place. Preliminary analysis of baseline data on rail concessionary travel in the Strathclyde area was discussed. This included analysis of the monetary value of rail based concessionary travel, current operator reimbursement and the number of rail

trips included and generated by the Scheme. Additionally, a timetable of the work to be progressed by the Steering and Working Groups is presented in Appendix 1.

Furthermore, some initial observations on the rail part of the Scheme are included in Appendix 2.

#### 4. SPT RENEWAL OF SUBSIDISED LOCAL BUS SERVICE CONTRACT

Outline tenders received for the award and renewal of subsidised local bus services were approved for award by the SPT Minute of Operations Committee meeting of 26 June 2009. Those effecting Argyll and Bute are detailed below within the following contract:-

<b>Contract</b>	<b>Services</b>
LS020D Luss/Helensburgh/Balmaha – Alexandria	305/306/309
<b>Operator</b>	<b>Contract Amount</b>
Loch Lomond Bus Services Ltd	£622,128 (package)
<b>Comments:</b> - 3 year contract (part funded by Stirling Council).	

#### 5. NEW SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ROAD SAFETY FRAMEWORK 2010-2020

The Scottish Government has recently published ‘**Go Safe on Scotland’s Roads – it’s Everyone’s Responsibility**’, a road safety framework for the period 2010-2020

In addition to setting road casualty reduction targets, the framework outlines Holyrood’s aims and commitments to improve safety on Scotland’s roads. An expert working group was established to shape a raft of new proposals for Scotland which include action to target young drivers, a pilot of high tech devices which restrict vehicle speed to ensure speed limits cannot be exceeded, and examining the case for introducing greater restrictions on newly qualified drivers.

Carl Olivarius, Road Safety Officer for Argyll and Bute Council was seconded to the Scottish Government for four months to help research and write the final copy.

Child cyclist training in Argyll and Bute, recognised as an example of good practice by Cycling Scotland in their National Assessment has also been cited within the framework document.

The plan also sets out the Scottish casualty reduction targets shown below. The percentage reductions for both the 2015 milestone and the 2020 target are based on 2004-2008 Scottish averages.

<u>Target 2004-08 average</u>	<u>2015 milestone</u>	<u>2020 target</u>
All road users killed	30% reduction	40% reduction
All road users seriously injured	43% reduction	55% reduction
Children killed	35% reduction	50% reduction
Children seriously injured	50% reduction	65% reduction

They are intended to be deliberately challenging, particularly for child deaths, as Scotland’s record is proportionately worse than those of England and Wales.

The Road Safety section are currently preparing a detailed committee paper on the above.

For this year and the next three years, £200,000 of the Roads and Amenity capital block is being targeted at improving known accident sites.

## **6. ARGYLL AND BUTE PROJECT SHORTLISTED IN NATIONAL TRANSPORT AWARDS**

An innovative interactive project designed by Argyll and Bute Council to make cycling theory more engaging for primary pupils has been shortlisted for a major national award. The project is one of three to be shortlisted in the Excellence in Technology and Innovation category at the prestigious Scottish Transport Awards 2009.

Argyll and Bute's Road Safety Section has already won praise for the high standard of practical cycle training given to children at all 80 primary schools in the area, as part of the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme (SCTS) developed by Road Safety Scotland. SCTS introduces children aged 10-12 to basic cycling skills, and aims to give them the knowledge necessary to be competent and safe cyclists. The iCycle idea was born when the Council's Road Safety Section turned its attention to how best boost children's theoretical knowledge of road safety issues. Previously, schools had taught theory in different ways, ranging from setting homework tasks to teaching it in class.

After consulting a sample of teachers, it became clear there was a need for a Council-wide resource to stimulate pupils' interest and be flexible enough to be used by a whole class or an individual. The iCycle scheme uses new technology in the form of classroom whiteboards and laptops to deliver an engaging, exciting and informative cycle safety programme to individuals, groups or whole classes. The new resource developed by Argyll and Bute Council may be rolled out and utilised by other local authorities in Scotland.

The awards recognise and celebrate achievements in the transport sector across Scotland. The winners will be announced at a ceremony in Glasgow on October 29.

## **7. BUTE AND COWAL BUS SERVICES**

Approval was given by the Bute and Cowal Area Committee to use Rural Transport Grant to improve bus services in Bute and West Cowal and this was subsequently approved by the Executive.

In the interim the contracts for the area came up for renewal and the successful tenderer, West Coast Motors, offered an option which achieved the same result but with the loss of some of the Sunday service and the Canada Hill seasonal route. Accordingly, the option was accepted and the funding set aside was used to maintain and improve the Sunday services marginally as well as to maintain the seasonal Canada Hill service.

The revised Bute bus services started on 15<sup>th</sup> June with significant improvements in frequency on both the Rothesay– Kilchattan Bay route as well as town services. The former increased from five occasional journeys to hourly and the latter from hourly to half hourly.

Prior to the re-organisation, patronage on Bute services had been declining slightly but this has now been arrested and comparing the first two months of the revised services with the same period last year there has been a turnaround of 4% in overall patronage.

Routes serving West Cowal were also re-organised from the same date by making better use of the resources available and creating a more regular service. Two buses

are used to provide these services (three on schooldays) and by connecting with each other at Auchenbreck further journey opportunities are created such that on Mondays to Saturdays there is an average of three journeys each way on each side of the triangle formed by Rothesay, Portavadie, Dunoon and back to Rothesay. It is now also possible to commute by bus from Rothesay to Dunoon on a daily basis. Because of the sporadic nature of the previous timetable it has not been possible to make as accurate a comparison of patronage as was possible on Bute but anecdotal evidence suggests that there has been an increase in patronage here as well.

## **8 WINTER MAINTENANCE SERVICE SHORTLISTED FOR APSE AWARD.**

The Roads & Amenity Services Winter Maintenance Team has been shortlisted for the APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence) Service Awards to be held in Cardiff on 10 September. The submission was made in the section of best national service team in roads, winter maintenance and street lighting. The other Councils against whom we are committing include Denbighshire County Council; East Riding of Yorkshire Council; Flintshire County Council; Neath Port Talbot CBC; Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council; and Wrexham CBC.

As Members will remember last winter was very severe and there was a significant overspend in operations. The Service includes a variety of innovative techniques in delivery of this service and I am hopeful that I can report on their continued success at the Executive Meeting.

## **9 OBAN ROUND TABLE TRANSPORT SEMINAR**

On Tuesday 1 September, Stewart Stevenson MSP the Minister for Transportation, Infrastructure and Climate Change attend a Transport Round Table Meeting at the Corran Halls in Oban. The meeting was attended by officials from Transport Scotland, the Scottish Government; Argyll & Bute Councillors; Jamie McGrigor MSP; Alan Reid MP; as well as officers from Argyll & Bute Council.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide the Minister with additional information on some of the major transport issues affecting our area. This included the condition of the roads on Mull (with representatives of the Keep Mull Moving campaign attending); the A82 Action Group (members of the Campaign Group were in attendance) and also the transportation alternatives between Luing and Seil (with members of the Fixed Link Action Group in attendance).

The meeting was very successful and it would be hoped that further meeting will be arranged in the future.

## **10 ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME**

The Road Reconstruction Programme this year has been allocated £6 million. This is more than double the budget allocated to this activity in previous years. Draft proposals for this work were approved by our Area Committees and thereafter the work is managed by Roads and Amenity Services. The programme is generally progressing well and the improvement to some of our roads has already attracted favourable comment from Members and from the public. Unfortunately, after this

year's acceleration of funds from future years the budget for the next two years will revert to close to historical levels. This will not be sufficient to impact on our poor results in the Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey.

**Councillor Duncan MacIntyre**