



## COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

### TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in Council Chamber,  
Council Offices, Stornoway on Wednesday,  
5 February 2025 at 9.30am.

#### PRESENT

Mr Uisdean Robertson (Chair)	Mr Kenneth Macleod
Ms Susan Thomson (Vice-Chair)	Mr Donald Crichton
Mr Kenneth J Maclean	Mr Calum Maclean
Mr Iain A MacNeil	Mr Malcolm K Macdonald
Mr Iain M Macleod	Mr Duncan MacInnes MBE
Mr Paul Steele	Mr Gordon Murray
Mr Paul Finnegan	Mr Finlay M Stewart
Mr Angus Morrison	

#### APOLOGIES

Mr Ranald Fraser	Mr Iain M Macaulay
Mr John Norman Macleod	Mr George Murray
Mr John A Maciver	

#### MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Mustapha Hocine	Mr Donald Macsween
Mr Kenny M Macleod	Mr Rae Mackenzie
Mr Robert Mackenzie	Mr Angus McCormack
Mr Norman Macdonald	Mr Norrie MacDonald

#### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Malcolm Burr	Mrs Anne Murray
Mr Calum Mackenzie	Mr Sandy Gomez
Mr Colm Fraser	Ms Joanna Morrison
Mr Kenneth Morrison	Mr Donald A Macleod
Mrs Linda Cunningham	Mr James Mackinnon
Mrs Elaine Mackenzie	Mr Derek Mackay
Mr John Cunningham	Mrs Shona Hadwen
Mrs Fiona Maciver	

#### Prayer

The Meeting was preceded in prayer by Mr Donald Crichton.

#### MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 27 November 2024	1	The Minute of Meeting of 27 November 2024 was <b>approved</b> .
Minute of Meeting of HITRANS of 8 November 2024	2	The Minute of Meeting of HITRANS of 8 November 2024 was <b>noted</b> .

Minute of Meeting of Hebrides Ferry Stakeholder Group of 3 December 2024	3	The Minute of Meeting of Hebrides Ferry Stakeholder Group of 3 December 2024 was <b>noted</b> .
Minute of Meeting of Western Isles Airport Consultative Committee of 10 December 2024	4	The Minute of Meeting of Western Isles Airport Consultative Committee of 10 December 2024 was <b>noted</b> .
Declaration of Interest	5	There were no declarations of interest.

### PRESENTATION

Outer Hebrides Ferries Q&A	6	<p>The Chair welcomed representatives from Caledonian MacBrayne, CMAL and Transport Scotland to the Meeting. Each organisation addressed the Committee providing an update on their service. An overview of the following topics was provided and Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations for change coming from the Project Neptune Community Consultations</li> <li>• Sound of Barra and Sound of Harris Socio-Economic Study</li> <li>• Islands Connectivity Plan</li> <li>• Fare Fares Review</li> <li>• Road Equivalent Tariff</li> <li>• Small Vessel Replacement Programme Phase 2</li> <li>• Update on Little Minch Ferries</li> <li>• Lord of the Isles replacement and Gasay Port</li> <li>• Little Minch proposed timetable</li> <li>• Booking System</li> </ul>
----------------------------	---	--

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked all the representatives for their attendance and for a very informative discussion.

**It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Q & A Session.**

### HARBOUR BOARD

It was agreed that the public, including the press, not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the Comhairle) related to the Appendix to the Report only.

Designated Person's Update	7	With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 25 September 2024 the Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure submitted a Report providing an update on the Designated Persons (DP) Report for August 2024. The Report stated that the Port Marine Safety Code (the Code) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) publication Safety in Docks: Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) related to the marine and shore side safety of harbours. The Code required an annual internal audit and a three-year independent external audit to verify compliance. The DP had re-visited the ports of Miavaig and Brevig and his report was provided at Appendix 1 to the Report.
----------------------------	---	--

The Report stated that it had been agreed that the Comhairle does not issue Byelaws until a clear nation-wide policy position in the need for Byelaws was stated by the UK and/or Scottish Governments. To meet the requirements outlined in the DP report, the Marine Safety Management System (MSMS), provided at Appendix 2 to the Report, had been updated to include a new Environmental Statement, revision of the organigram to reflect current roles, update to DP details and addition of a section on Dynamic Risk Assessment.

The Report further stated that, in line with the DP's recommendation the following stand-alone documents had been created: Conservancy Policy; Consultation Policy, Dynamic Risk Assessment Procedure, Enforcement and Prosecution Policy; and Safety of Navigation Policy.

**It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:**

- (1) note the External Audit report included at the Appendix to the Report; and**
- (2) note the progress made in addressing the recommendations provided by the Designated Person (DP).**

#### **BUS SERVICES**

Community  
Transport Funding

8

With reference to item 8 of the Minute of Meeting of Comhairle of 1 May 2024 the Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure submitted a Report seeking approval for an updated process for distributing and awarding funding to providers of community transport. The Report stated that the Comhairle had historically funded a number of local organisations to provide community transport. During the 2024/25 budget setting process the Comhairle agreed to the removal of £120k from Community Transport Grants Funding. The local organisations had been contacted in March 2024, advising of the reduced funding and their proposed allocation and that fresh applications would be required for 2025/26.

The Report further stated that in May 2024 the Comhairle agreed to allocate £120k from the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Funding to the Community Transport budget for 2024/25, allowing the local organisations to obtain their previous level of funding. It was understood that as part of the budget setting process, there would be a proposal to retain this budget for 2025/26, funded from the Crown Estate Fund. In the event that the temporary funding was not retained options for dividing the proposed allocation between the various groups were detailed in the Report.

**It was agreed to recommended that the Comhairle agrees to:**

- (1) introduce an Application Form and grant criteria as detailed in the Appendix to the Report;**
- (2) allocate 2025/26 funding to groups based on their percentage share of the 2024/25 budget but if there is reduced funding, ensuring that each group gets at least £1000; and**
- (3) develop a Community Transport Policy to help direct future funding allocations.**

**ROADS**

National Speed 9  
Management  
Review – Public  
Consultation

The Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure submitted a Report seeking approval for the response to the Scottish Government's Consultation on National Speed Management Review. The Report stated that the Scottish Government had launched a consultation on the National Speed Management Review outlining the key objectives and presenting changes to national speed limits on single carriageways for various vehicle categories, as well as both single and dual carriageways for goods vehicles over 7.5 tonnes. A draft response to the consultation was included in the Appendix to the Report.

**It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve the response to the consultation.**

**AIR SERVICES**

Public Service 10  
Obligation  
(Benbecula-  
Stornoway) and  
Western Isles  
Spinal Route

The Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure submitted a Report seeking approval to request that the Scottish Government re-examine their policy position regarding the funding of the Benbecula to Stornoway Public Service Obligation (PSO), and provision of funding towards completion of the Western Isles Spinal Route. The Report stated that the Comhairle welcomed the Scottish Government investment in the Northern Isles of £20 million of specific funding in 2025/26 to support and improve inter-island connectivity.

The Report further stated that the Comhairle sought a similar level of investment to support and develop connectivity in the Western Isles and made the following points in support of such investment:

- a holistic approach should be taken to the provision of support for inter-island connectivity, both existing and planned/desirable, through proper and evidenced island-proofing of transport policy. The Western Isles Spinal Route was a Regionally Significant Network Route.
- the policy position of Scottish Government regarding the financing of the intra-regional PSO (Benbecula to Stornoway) should be reconsidered, noting that the Guidance currently stated that a PSO route that was wholly within a Devolved Administration (DA) boundary was the sole responsibility of that DA. The Benbecula – Barra service should be reinstated, as should a 5-day service between Benbecula and Stornoway, with comparable financial assistance towards the cost of subsidy for the services.
- the Scottish Government contract for inter-regional PSOs had increased in line with inflation from £21m to £31m over the 4-year period, but that there had been no commensurate inflation proofing of the local authority revenue grant that could be used in the subsidy of an intra-regional PSO.
- a recent report by the Scottish Human Rights Commission supported improvement in transport connectivity to essential public services and supplies including healthcare.
- in view of the fact that the majority of passengers on the internal PSO route would be travelling for health purposes and the Comhairle was content to procure and manage the contract, it was a reasonable expectation that there would be direct support along similar lines to the revenue support now being provided to Orkney and Shetland Island Councils for ferries and air services (or fixed links such as tunnels and bridges), to cover or at least support these Councils' essential service costs.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agree:

- (1) to make representation to the Scottish Government seeking a re-examination in the current Parliamentary term of its policy position regarding the funding of internal PSOs; an extension of the Benbecula -Stornoway PSO to five days; reinstatement of the Benbecula to Barra PSO; and further funding towards completion of the regionally significant Western Isles Spinal Route; and
- (2) that Members of the Committee were invited to view a potential replacement aircraft for the Benbecula – Stornoway route at:
  - (i) Stornoway Airport - Wednesday 26 February (Afternoon); and
  - (ii) Benbecula Airport - Thursday 27 February (Morning).
 Members can book onto either viewing by contacting Colm Fraser (Head of Municipal Services) in advance so that airport passes can be arranged.

#### ASSET MANAGEMENT

It was agreed that the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the Comhairle) would be disclosed.

Disposal of Surplus Assets 11\*

With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 27 November 2024 the Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure submitted a Report providing an update on progress with the disposal of surplus assets. An update with the current position in respect of each property declared as surplus was detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

**It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report in relation to the progress detailed in the Appendix to the Report.**

#### PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Reports Outstanding 12

The Chief Executive submitted a Report detailing those Reports outstanding arising from the decisions of the Committee.

**It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.**

