



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in Council Chamber,
Council Offices, Stornoway on Wednesday, 18
June 2025 at 9.30am.

PRESENT

Mr Uisdean Robertson (Chair)	Mr Donald F Crichton
Ms Susan Thomson (Vice-Chair)	Mr John A Maciver
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 Angus Morrison	Mr Finlay M Stewart
Mr Ranald Fraser	
Mr John Norman Macleod	

APOLOGIES

Mr Kenneth Macleod	Mr George Murray
Mr Iain M Macaulay	

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Mustapha Hocine	Mr Rae Mackenzie
Mr Kenny M Macleod	Mr Angus McCormack
Mr Robert Mackenzie	Dr Frances Murray
Mr Donald Macsween	Mr Norrie Macdonald

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Malcolm Burr	Mr James Mackinnon
Mrs Anne Murray	Mrs Dolina Macleod
Mr Calum Mackenzie	Mrs Katie Macaskill
Mr Colm Fraser	Mrs Shona Hadwen
Mr Sandy Gomez	Mr Derek Mackay
Mrs Elaine Mackenzie	Mrs Fiona Maciver
Mr Iain N Campbell	Mr Niall Houston
Mr Robert MacLennan	Mrs Joanna Morrison
Mr Donald Maciver	

Prayer

The Meeting was preceded in prayer by Mr Finlay Stewart.

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 30 April 2025	1	The Minute of Meeting of 30 April 2025 was approved .
Minute of Meeting of HITRANS of 25 April 2025	2	The Minute of Meeting of HITRANS of 25 April 2025 was noted .
Declaration of Interest	of 3	There were no declarations of interest.

PRESENTATION

Ferries
Presentation

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The Chair welcomed to the meeting Mr David Hamill from Calmac who provide an operational update on the Calmac Fleet, and Mr Lewis Hammell from CMAL who provided an update on the new vessels.

Mr David Hamill, Calmac provided an update on the following vessels: MV Hebrides; MV Loch Portain; MV Loch Seaforth; and MV Caledonian Isles.

Mr Hamill also gave an update on the Passenger Access System at Stornoway stating that Calmac were committed to working with Stornoway Port Authority to assist them in finding a suitable solution following the failure of the Passenger Access System. A luggage van was currently in place to assist passengers with luggage embarking and disembarking the vessel.

Members raised concerns that the Passenger Access System had been non-operational since December 2023 and suggested that Stornoway Port Authority send out clear communications to the public on the current situation and on any progress and timescales for passenger access solutions at the Stornoway Port.

Mr Lewis Hammell, CMAL gave an update on phase 2 of the Small Vessel Replacement Programme and an update on the vessels under construction in Turkey for the Little Minch routes.

In respect of the Small Vessel Replacement Programme phase 2, there had been public engagement events held in Harris, Uist and Barra, and there would be further public engagement events held before the September meeting of the Committee. The business case was expected to be completed and submitted to Transport Scotland by the end of the year, prior to the procurement process commencing in early 2026. It was intended to seek funding to build three vessels. It was in the early stages of design and options were still being considered. There would be an update on progress presented to the September meeting of the Committee.

In respect of the Little Minch Vessels, the MV Isle of Islay had completed her first set of sea trials; the MV Lochmor was likely to be launched in the summer; and the MV Claymore was structurally complete with all major equipment on board and the outfitting was at a good stage. Mr Hammell stated that a business cases in respect of the MV Lord of the Isles and MV Gassay had been presented to Transport Scotland and a response was awaited.

Members were afforded the opportunity to ask question of both guests. The Chair thanked Mr Hamill and Mr Hammel for their attendance.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the updates from Calmac and CMAL.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Outcome Delivery
Report: Assets and
Infrastructure

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With reference to item 7 of the Minute of Meeting of 27 November 2024 the Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure submitted a Report to present the final annual outcomes of the 2024/25 Departmental Strategic Priorities together with the outcomes of the 2023/24 Local Government Benchmarking Framework performance indicators for the Assets and Infrastructure Business Unit.

The Report stated that there was one key area of strategic risk identified with a high rating, and three risk rated Medium. One risk remained High after risk actions had been implemented and this was in relation to Climate Change Adaptation. The Report further

stated that the Business Plan was aligned to all four strategic priorities and progress on the outcome delivery plans were detailed in the body of the Report.

The Report concluded that the Assets and Infrastructure Business Unit had maintained good controls on business planning, governance, and budget management over the year. In addition to its core functions and responsibilities, the Business Unit's key tasks are working to review, update and implement the Comhairle's Corporate Strategies and political priorities while delivering efficient front-line services on behalf of the community across a broad service portfolio and seeking to take best advantage of new and emerging opportunities.

It was agreed to recommend, insofar as the Committee's interests were concerned, that the Comhairle note the Report.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Waste Update Strategy 6

With reference to item 8 of the Minute of Meeting of 30 April 2025 the Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure submitted a Report seeking approval to update Comhairle's Waste Strategy which covered the period 2025-2030. The Report stated that there were significant external drivers impacting waste collection and disposal over the next five years therefore a draft Waste Strategy covering the period 2025-2030 had been presented to the April series. There had been minimal changes from the draft to the final version which was detailed at Appendix 1 to the Report.

The Report stated that the first action from the strategy was to comply with the ban on Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) to landfill deadline which would come into force on 1 January 2026 although officers had approached the Scottish Government and SEPA to see if there is the possibility of an extension until April 2026. This was to allow time to see if the trial of the treatment system being installed in Uist demonstrated that it would be an effective longer-term solution for Lewis and Harris, prior to entering any longer-term contracts for the haulage and disposal of waste to energy from waste plants.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agrees to approve the Waste Strategy detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

ABATTOIRS

Stornoway Abattoir Update 7

With reference to item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 25 February 2025 the Head of Municipal Services submitted a Report providing details of the throughput and financial performance of Stornoway Abattoir for the 2024 operating season and seeking approval for the charges proposed for the 2025 season. The Report stated that the Stornoway Abattoir was a non-statutory service provided to the crofting and farming industries in the Western Isles. The 2024 operational season for Stornoway Abattoir ran from 12 August until 20 December 2024, providing a slaughtering service for Sheep, Cattle and Pigs. The Report intimated that the abattoir had received complementary feedback from Quality Meat Scotland and Food Standard Scotland following the 2024 audits.

The Report stated that since 2018 there had been approval to increase Abattoir charges gradually until the service reached a cost neutral position. Over the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years, £40k was removed from the Abattoir's budget, with income targets being set to "fully fund" the service. It was now evident that the income being generated would not cover the operating costs of the Abattoir on an annual basis, leaving any overspend having to be absorbed by the Municipal Services business unit. The Comhairle agreed in February 2025 to utilise £50K of Crown Estate Fund to support the Abattoir in 2025/26 while other options to increase income generation were explored.

Appendix 2 to the Report set out the proposed charges for 2025 with an increase by the standard inflation increase of 5%.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle approve the proposed charges for 2025 as outlined in Appendix 2 of the Report.

BUS SERVICES

Lewis and Harris 8
Bus Contracts 2026
Update

The Head of Municipal Services submitted a Report providing an update on the timeline for the tendering for the Lewis and Harris Bus Contracts which were due to be in place for October 2026. The Report stated that the 2025/26 Budget for the Lewis and Harris bus contracts was circa £4.2 million and that the procurement process would be planned around this figure considering any annual inflationary increases. It was accepted that budgets may be reviewed as part of the 2026/27 budget setting, and this would be considered as part of the process.

The Report further stated that an Officer Transport Working Group including staff from Transport, Education, Legal and Finance would be established; however, there would be benefit in having a short-term Member Officer Working Group to facilitate discussion and support elected member input into key stages and considerations of the design process.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle agrees to:

- (1) **note the key deadlines and proposed programme for the tendering exercise for the Lewis and Harris School and Public Bus Contracts due in October 2026;**
- (2) **establish a short-term Member Officer Working Group to consider the key stages and design process for Lewis and Harris Bus Contracts; and**
- (3) **appoint the following Elected Members onto the short-term Member Officer Working Group:**

**Angus Morrison
Norman Macdonald
John Norman Macleod
Donald F Crichton
Iain M Macleod
Uisdean Robertson (ex officio)
Susan Thomson (ex-officio)**

INFRASTRUCTURE

Electric Vehicle 9
Infrastructure
Charging Update

With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 8 February 2023 and item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 25 September 2024, the Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure submitted a Report providing an update on the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure fund (EVIF) application to Transport Scotland and Scottish Futures Trust, along with work undertaken to date on the local electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure network, and proposals for the future delivery of the EV infrastructure network throughout the Western Isles.

The Report stated that the new EVIF programme launched in January 2022 replaced all previous funding programmes and potentially offered £60m over future years, with approximately half of this funding anticipated to be invested from the private sector. The EVIF programme had the potential to allow significant improvements to be made to the EV charging network in the Western Isles and by refreshing and replacing aging infrastructure throughout Phase 1 of the programme, it was felt that this would attract more opportunities of future investment by commercial partners.

It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle:

- (1) note the progress made on the Scottish Governments new public Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF) programme, and works undertaken to date;**
- (2) note the grant funding allocation provided by Transport Scotland for the EVIF programme;**
- (3) approve progressing Phase 1 of the EVIF programme to deliver the project outcomes as set out within the Report.; and**
- (4) agree that Officers should continue to engage with Transport Scotland, HITRANS and neighbouring Authorities on future funding options through EVIF.**

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Reports Outstanding	10	The Chief Executive submitted a Report detailing those Reports outstanding arising from the decisions of the Committee.
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It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report.

PRIVATE ITEMS

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 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 30 April 2025 the Chief Officer, Assets and Infrastructure submitted a Report providing an update on progress with the disposal of surplus assets. An update on the current position in respect of each property declared as surplus was detailed in the Appendix to the Report and the income from the sale of surplus assets to date was detailed within the Report.
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It was agreed to recommend that the Comhairle note the Report in relation to the progress detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

