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Dear Jackie,

Thank you for your email of 5 April 2023 to Roddy Macdonald, Director of Transport Scotland Ferries Directorate in relation to the Kilcreggan Ferry Terminal project. I have been made aware of your correspondence and wished to respond directly.

Work on this complex programme, which includes new vessels and associated infrastructure works at Gourock, Dunoon and Kilcreggan, is well underway. The objective is to develop resilient vessel and port design options. The Kilcreggan infrastructure is being designed to allow the Dunoon concept vessel to provide additional resilience for the Kilcreggan service which will maximise operational flexibility.

Argyll and Bute Council has confirmed that the proposed preferred option at Kilcreggan will accommodate the PS Waverley, either in the same location and orientation to the existing arrangements or on the pontoon. Liaison with PS Waverley will continue once the preferred option is confirmed. Preliminary vessel designs are being developed by CMAL, with these being used to inform development of the options as presented. Once vessel design parameters are confirmed, Argyll and Bute Council will refine the infrastructure design. Current design proposals are preliminary only, as it would be inefficient to develop fully detailed designs until both the preferred option and vessel designs are confirmed. The infrastructure specification will be gradually refined to reflect the emerging vessel specification and other technical work such as marine ground investigations and in response to feedback from statutory consenting bodies.

The following details clarify the decision not to use the existing pier at Kilcreggan in the new infrastructure:

- Listed building consent is required for changes to a listed building which affect its character as a

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building of special architectural or historic interest. Required works represent 'significant change' to its appearance and form.

- The head of the existing pier is too short to accommodate a 40 m vessel with moorings each end of the vessel. That is, the vessel would overhang and would be subject to motion on the berth. Reliable moorings are required to ensure provision of a reliable service in all-weather where the vessels can sail. It is true that the Waverley at 71 metres long can berth on the existing pier but this is only an occasional occurrence, in good weather and with specific tidal constraints representing existing and acceptable restrictions within which the Waverley Company choose to operate.
- The height of the pier is currently too low to be compatible with the design vessel at higher tides. This means that, at the highest tides, a steep gangway would need to be deployed, which would not provide acceptable and safe access gradients for all. As a ferry terminal is a long-term asset, allowance also has to be made for sea level increases due to global environmental changes over the design life of the ferry infrastructure. Given the listed status of the existing timber pier, it is unlikely that consent would be granted to raise the deck level of the pier. This will be confirmed or otherwise through consultation with determining authorities.
- The fenders, which act to absorb the impact forces of the ferry on the pier, are too low. This means that sailings will be disrupted or cancelled at particularly high tides. As above, given the listed status of the existing timber pier, increasing the fender height in conjunction with a raised deck is unlikely to be consentable.
- Given that the new vessels are anticipated to be larger than the existing, there are significant reservations over the structural capacity of the existing pier to resist associated vessel loads over the required design life of 60 years.
- Frequent heavy use by larger vessels could also shorten the life of the existing structure.
- Costs to address issues above and consenting issues make ongoing use of the timber pier a high-risk strategy that cannot be recommended.
- Service outage is not acceptable during construction, making it difficult to perform significant works on the existing structure. Feedback at the Reference Group meetings confirms that a significant service outage is unacceptable. Workers from Faslane / Coulport use the service for commuting.
- If the existing structure is to be used in future, ongoing maintenance would lead to increased disruption of the ferry service when compared to other options which are based on provision of new infrastructure with lower maintenance requirements.
- The proposed preferred option leaves the existing pier in its popular existing form for future recreational or community use, providing added value to the village.

I also note your concerns regarding the environmental impact to the local area. I can confirm that the environmental impact surveys have not taken place as of yet. Argyll and Bute Council is still in the early stages of the process and the surveys will be carried out at the appropriate time. This process can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months to complete depending on what is found during the survey. Analysis on hydrology and coastal erosion will also be included as part of the survey process.

With regards to engagement with the local community, the stakeholder engagement carried out by Argyll and Bute Council has been focused on understanding the problems that Cowal and Rosneath residents and visitors face when using the ferries. The outcome of this engagement has been combined with desk-based research to identify a statement of transport and infrastructure problems and set Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) to guide future investment. TPOs are effectively a statement of the outcomes that the business case is seeking to achieve, e.g., improved ferry reliability, a more

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comfortable passage etc. The TPOs, together with pre-set criteria in the STAG Guidance, have been used to test the long-list of options for Dunoon and Kilcreggan emerging from the work that Argyll and Bute Council's Project Team has been undertaking. The process is ongoing with the wider stakeholder groups, Community Councils and the local residents. This provides them with the opportunity to review the process from start to finish and comment on the options and the emerging preferred option. It is important that the valuable opinions of the many people who rely on the ferry service are heard during this process.

In terms of the related policy work, Transport Scotland is leading on the Islands Connectivity Plan. This includes a community needs and market assessment of all routes across the entire Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service and the Dunoon and Kilcreggan routes are being prioritised. The programme Working Group has endeavoured to progress work on the vessels and infrastructure as efficiently as possible, focussing on the overall objective of developing a resilient vessel and infrastructure solution, without pre-empting the outcome of the assessment. As soon as the outcome of the assessment is known, engagement will take place with the communities of Cowal and Roseneath.

With regards the cost of the programme, a business case will be presented to Transport Scotland's Investment Decision Making Board of Directors, which will include a full analysis and breakdown of the cost of both the vessels and associated infrastructure. Some previously estimated costs are likely to have increased due to various factors out with the control of the Programme Working Group. The financial element of the business case will be robustly scrutinised to ensure value for money is being provided to the taxpayer. Once complete the decision will be sent to Ministers for approval. I can also confirm that in person engagement will be carried out before any final investment decision is taken and I very much look forward to hearing what the local community has to say about the ferry terminal project.

Yours sincerely



KEVIN STEWART

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