

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Harbours Management Board** held in the Leader's Meeting Room, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Wednesday 28 June 2017 at 11.10 am.

Present:-

Mr M Finlayson	Ms A MacLean
Mr A Henderson	Mr H Morrison
Mrs L MacDonald	Mrs T Robertson
Mr W MacKay (by video conference)	Mr A Sinclair

In attendance:-

Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
Mr M Mitchell, Finance Manager, Finance Service
Mr T Usher, Harbours Manager, Community Services
Mr A MacIver, Principal Engineer, Project Design Unit (Item 4)
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Preliminaries

Mr A Henderson and Mr H Morrison, having been duly nominated and seconded, were unanimously appointed Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board respectively.

In welcoming new Members to the Harbours Board, the Chairman highlighted the income that the Board generated for the Council. A review of the Council's harbours and piers was underway and Members were encouraged to promote community involvement where possible.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Dr I Cockburn and Mr C MacLeod.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

3. Minutes

There had been circulated, and were **NOTED**, draft Minutes of Meeting of the Harbours Management Board held on 27 January 2017.

Arising from the Minutes, it was confirmed that, in relation to the Uig Ferry Redevelopment, a useful meeting had taken place with the Ullapool Trust. Furthermore, in relation to the Service Redesign for Harbours, an officer project group had now been established and consultants had been engaged to assist with the process, with a view to reporting back to the Redesign Board on the various future options for the management of harbours.

The Board **AGREED** that a Briefing Paper be submitted to its next meeting updating Members of the review of the management of Harbours.

4. Uig Harbour Redevelopment

There had been tabled an update report by the Director of Community Services providing information about the redevelopment of facilities at Uig Harbour to accommodate the new larger ferry vessel for the Uig, Tarbert, Lochmaddy triangle, scheduled to enter service in October 2018. In so doing, details were provided about the funding arrangements, the revised master programme, the key activities completed, the next steps requiring to be taken and the key risks/challenges. In addition, various options for the different areas of the development were outlined including the marshalling area, the approaching structure for pedestrians and vehicles and the linkspan.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- various options would be submitted to Transport Scotland together with their relative costs. In so doing, it was recognised that CMAL could have a different preference for a specific project than the Council;
- the timetable for the next steps was tight and any slippage would have a knock-on effect on the rest of the works. It was important therefore that the project was kept on track and the Board advised of delays as they arose so that Members could take mitigating action;
- it was essential to keep the local community and local stakeholders informed. In this regard, Members were advised that the community liaison meeting held in Lochmaddy had been well attended and the concerns of hauliers about the anticipated disruption, given the lack of suitable alternative routes, had been aired;
- although CMAL, CalMac and Transport Scotland had met with the local Transport Forum it was also important that the local Members were advised of progress, bearing in mind that 3 out of the 4 were newly elected; and
- consideration should be given whereby passengers wanting to leave their cars in Uig could pre-book parking spaces.

The Board:-

- i. **NOTED** the current position; and
- ii. **AGREED**, to keep Members abreast of developments, the Briefing Note scheduled to be submitted to the Steering Group also be circulated to the Board

5. Uig Fish Farm Licence Application

There had been circulated Report No HMB 9/17 dated 22 June 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

Members were reminded of the background to the request from a fish farm operator for a licence to moor fish farm cages within the Statutory Harbour Limits in Uig Bay.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- the fish farm operator would be aware of the work taking place at Uig and it might be more appropriate for him to delay the mooring of the farm cages until the major capital works had been completed or to introduce measures to protect the fish;
- there would be a need for on-going dredging although it was unclear at present how often this would be required;
- a request had been made that the Council only dredge during ebb tides. Whilst this had been agreed, it had been pointed out that if this caused any delays the fish farm operator would be liable to meet the Council's costs; and

- the project had a number of economic benefits, including job creation, and it was therefore important to try and accommodate the fish farm and to build a good working relationship with the operator.

The Board **AGREED** to recommend to the Places Committee that it:-

- i. approves the offer of a licence under the prescribed terms and conditions for a period of three years; and
- ii. agrees to undertake not to unreasonably withhold a further licence for this installation following a review at the end of the three year term.

6. Harbour Dues for Financial Year 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No HMB 10/17 dated 21 June 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

In discussion, clarification was sought, and received, as to how the charges for fish farm cages within Statutory Harbour Areas had been arrived at. In addition, it was confirmed that these charges had been publicised and if operators objected to the proposed charge they could submit a challenge to Scottish Ministers. However, given the significant profits generated by fish farms, it was unlikely the proposed charges would cause any difficulty.

The Board **NOTED** the 10% increase to charges as per previous Highland Council decision and **AGREED** to recommend to the Places Committee that it approves:-

- i. the introduction of charges for the siting of fish farm cages within Harbour Areas; and
- ii. the publication of the Schedules in accordance with the Highland Council Harbours Act 1991.

7. Financial Performance 2016/17

There had been circulated Report No HMB 11/17 dated 2 June 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

As they were categorised as a “Significant Trading Organisation, Highland Council Harbours were required to operate on a “Break Even” or “Surplus” position over any 3 year period. A surplus had been achieved although it fell short of its target. Fuel sales had caused concern but this was a result of fluctuations in prices as opposed to volume of sales. Officers could vary the rates if necessary but care needed to be taken that the local market could sustain any such increase.

The Board **APPROVED** the financial performance for 2016/17.

8. Debt Management

There had been circulated Report No HMB 12/17 dated 23 June 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

Having been informed that the debt position was significantly better than it had been historically, the Board **NOTED** the current outstanding debt position for piers and harbours as at 1 June 2017.

The meeting ended at 12.40 p.m.

