

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Harbours Management Board** held in the Committee Room 1, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 8 September 2017 at 10.30 am.

Present:-

Dr I Cockburn	Mr C MacLeod
Mr A Henderson	Mr H Morrison (by tele conference)
Mrs L MacDonald (by video conference)	Mrs T Robertson
Mr W MacKay (by video conference)	Mr A Sinclair (by video conference)
Ms A MacLean	

In attendance:-

Mr W Gilfillan, Director of Community Services
Ms C Campbell, Head of Performance and Resources
Mr T Usher, Harbours Manager, Community Services
Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure, Development and Infrastructure Service (Item 4)
Mr A MacIver, Principal Engineer, Project Design Unit (Item 4)
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr M Finlayson.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

There had been circulated, and were **NOTED**, Minutes of Meeting of the Harbours Management Board held on 28 June 2017.

4. Uig Harbour Redevelopment

There had been circulated Report No HMB 13/17 dated 30 August 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

Members were provided with a presentation outlining the progress made in delivering new facilities at Uig Harbour to accommodate the new larger ferry vessel for the Uig, Tarbert, Lochmaddy triangle. Consultation events with stakeholders and communities had taken place and the project was now moving towards design stage with construction expected to commence in late summer 2018 and a completion date of September 2019 predicted. Members were also provided with details of the redevelopments of Lochmaddy and Tarbet harbours where a broadly similar process was being followed.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- there was a considerable amount of work underway and the need for this to tie in with the other two harbours, agents and the operating agent, CalMac, was emphasised;
- the information Open Day had been well received and it was encouraging that local people were engaging with the project;
- additional information was sought, and provided, as to the dimensions and locations of wave screening that was being considered at Uig harbour;
- Harbour Revision Orders were costly so it was important to include any issues that could arise at a later stage;
- clarification was sought as to the Environmental Impact Assessment. In response, it was explained that these were carried out to determine what mitigating measures were required and to ensure that the effect of development was minimal. Sometimes requirements could prove both restrictive and costly and an example of this at Uig was the need to identify identical spoil grounds;
- despite media reports to the contrary the fishermen did not, at this stage, appear overly concerned. However, this might change as detail of the proposed dredging etc was made known;
- the new vessel would have 50% more capacity and it was essential therefore to manage the marshalling of vehicles to avoid any impact on the trunk road; and
- an update was provided regarding the on-going discussions with the fish farm operator in relation to his request for a licence to moor fish farm cages in Uig Bay.

The Board otherwise **NOTED** the current position.

5. Proposed Maintenance, Repair and Improvement Works for 2017/18

There had been circulated Report No HMB 14/17 dated 30 August 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

A presentation was provided on work, both on-going and completed, and which was accompanied by a series of photographs. In addition, details were provided on projects which needed to be addressed and how these might be prioritised given the limited budget available.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- whilst recognising the financial pressure that the Council's Capital Programme was facing, it was acknowledged that without repairs harbour users would be deterred from using Council harbour facilities, thus impacting on the local economy;
- the sheetpile wall across the berthing face at Lochinver was corroding above the waterline and it was likely to require to be replaced, at some considerable cost. It was suggested that UHI should be approached to carry out a study examining the sheetpile wall and to come up with potential solutions;
- clarification was sought, and received, as to the reasons for the increase of costs for dredging at Nairn Harbour;
- Sleat Community Council had been pro-active in highlighting difficulties with the Armadale-Mallaig CalMac ferry service. However, by using the MV Loch Fyne, many of these concerns had been allayed. The Armadale and Mallaig ports were outwith the Council's control but the Chairman was involved in discussions and he undertook to keep the Local Member informed of developments;
- it was hoped to start producing ice at the new Lochinver Ice Plant next week. In this regard, discussion took place as to the changing market demands and the types of ice that fishermen now required; and
- proposals for the renovation of Kinlochbervie fish market were warmly welcomed. 90% of the £1.3m project costs had come from the European Maritime Fisheries

Fund and this demonstrated the good work of the Harbours team. These types of positive initiatives should be highlighted in the media, especially to raise awareness of the Council's involvement in harbours.

The Board:-

- i. **NOTED** the position of the works currently underway and those proposed;
- ii. **AGREED** to approach UHI with a view to carrying out a study examining the corrosion of the sheetpile wall at Lochinver; and
- iii. **AGREED** that positive initiatives be highlighted in the media to highlight the good work of the harbours team and the financial benefits generated.

6. Service Redesign Board – Briefing Paper

There had been circulated Report No HMB 15/17 dated 30 August 2017 by the Director of Community Services.

During discussion, it was recognised that many harbours were underutilised. Members had a role to play in encouraging interested parties in communities to come forward with ideas about how these harbours might be used, as in many instances these facilities were of more importance to the economy and local history of the locality than the Council as a whole.

Support was expressed for the transfer of the operation to an Arm's Length Organisation (ALO) given the income harbours generated. By transferring to an ALO this income could be reinvested into projects thus benefiting local communities. However, It was important to consider all types of operating models to ensure that this investment would be made and not considered solely as profit. Transferring an operation to an ALO was a complex matter and there other factors to take into account including the impact that the Community Empowerment Act would have in regard to the transfer of assets and BREXIT which might discourage foreign vessels from using our harbours. All these issues would be considered in the report commissioned by the Redesign Board and it was suggested that the consultants, Stewart & Parsons, be invited to a Harbours Management Board meeting to present an overview of their findings. In this regard, the report previously prepared by them for the Harbours Management Board on the development of a Strategic Business Plan would be of benefit to new Members of the Board.

The Board **NOTED**:-

- i. the report presented to the Redesign Board;
- ii. the brief provided to the consultant incorporating the objectives of the Council Redesign Board;

and **AGREED**:-

- iii. that the consultant be invited to a future meeting of the Board to present an overview of their report;
- iv. that new Members of the Board be provided with a copy of the Consultant's previous report on the Strategic Business Plan.

7. Financial Performance 1 April to 31 July 2017

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

Having been informed of various fluctuations in fuel sales and increases in harbour dues as a result of strong fish prices, the Board otherwise **NOTED** the financial position to 31 July 2017.

8. Debt Management

There had been circulated Report No HMB 17/17 by the Director Community Services.

The Board **NOTED** the current outstanding debt position for piers and harbours as at 1 September 2017.

AOCB

The Chair referred to the previous practice of holding meetings at various locations around Highland, affording Members an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the authority's harbour facilities. Cognisance had to be taken of budget constraints but it was hoped that some visits could be arranged for the summer months.

The meeting ended at 12.10 p.m.