

Response ID ANON-H1EX-J2RN-J

Submitted to A Modern and Sustainable Ferry Service for Scotland - A major inquiry into current and future ferry provision in Scotland
Submitted on 2022-08-24 21:38:15

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3 What is your name?

Name / Ainm:

Spokes: The Lothian Cycling Campaign

4 What is your email address?

Email / Post-d :

johnrobson87@gmail.com

5 Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation / Buidheann

A. Needs

1 What do island residents, businesses, and other ferry users need in the short, medium and long term from Scottish Government-supported ferry services?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

As Spokes Lothian represents an area not directly served by ferry services we have responded to Q2 onwards.

2 Are current services meeting the needs and sustainability of island and remote rural communities and businesses? This includes the provision of secure employment for those working for ferry services.

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

In order to meet the Scottish Government's Net Zero, Climate Change, Road Safety and 20% Car KM driven reduction target ferry operators need to adapt to the challenge of these. There will be a difficult balance to strike with the Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) as a policy background to make ferry service provision decisions within.

Spokes Lothian acknowledges it is likely urban areas will need to reduce car KM's driven further than 20% in order for rural and island communities to balance the challenge of the greater distances involved in these areas.

However island communities and businesses need to adapt to the opportunity that comes with more sustainable transport and tourism. As those choosing to cycle to or tour between island destinations have a lower impact on the islands themselves and possibly benefit the islands more because they cannot bring as much as a motor vehicle. From increases in active travel on islands these can be more secure employment, without the negative impacts experienced from (for example) campervans.

With the climate emergency, we believe that society should be looking much closely at what the Scottish Government provides, and why. Every ferry terminal seem to be filled with oversized leisure vehicles, camper vans, 4x4s and the like. The drivers of these vehicles pay nothing like realistic prices for the journey on the ferries, taking into account the huge vessels that have to be provided, and the infrastructure at the ports. Spokes asks is this a just use of limited public resources in relation to the benefit to cost ratio. The islands themselves probably derive little benefit from these larger type of leisure vehicles, which cause traffic jams on the rather narrow, steep and winding roads on most of the islands; and the vehicle owners stock up at cheaper supermarkets before departure to avoid buying goods locally, and do not pay for local accommodation. They also can cause a hazard to vulnerable road users in island communities.

The islands could instead be served by smaller and more frequent ferries incapable of taking these huge vehicles, and possibly taking fewer vehicles overall; passengers could travel around the islands by local public transport such as electric or hydrogen powered buses and active travel modes as well. Freight to the islands could also be more organised on a much smaller scale, using e-cargo bikes in many cases, and traveling on the smaller but more frequent ferries.

As now, we are all beginning to pay the costs of these past policy decisions. The ferry policies are all part and parcel of this. The current policies of providing everything to everyone must be given a thorough re-evaluation in light of the declared Climate Emergency.

3 Are current services meeting the needs of mainland communities and businesses, including visitors?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes represents cycle users across Edinburgh and Lothians, of which many use CalMac and other operator ferry services in Scotland. As such we think that it is important in this consultation that the views of ferry users with cycles are represented.

Spokes acknowledges that as such this is predominantly an issue with standard cycles on group cycle tour routes such as the "five ferries" in Argyll. However cycle users not part of these tours get caught up in the same issue

Short Term

Ferry companies should gather data on cycle use and provision to ensure reliable journeys for passengers who need to take their cycle onboard. Many cycle users from Spokes area use ferries as part of low impact tourism to the Highlands & Islands and as such preplan travel weeks/months in advance. We are aware of capacity constraints on cycles on the Ardrossan to Brodick Arran CalMac ferry service where cyclists can be turned away due lack of space onboard. Transport Scotland's sustainable transport hierarchy puts active travellers incl. cycles higher than private motor vehicles, however evidence suggests this hierarchy is not implemented in situations such as this. Spokes believes that the sacrificing of one motor vehicle space on busy crossings could allow 12 or more cycles onto a ferry if facilities allowed. In the short term we believe options to tackle the issue should be explored on services where this is a known or possible issue. However data is needed for an accurate picture to be acted upon.

Medium Term

All ferry terminals should have secure cycle storage for staff, commuters, cycle hire (e.g. Brompton hire partnership HITRANS example) and provision of Ebike charging facilities wherever EV car chargers are provided as a minimum.

Spokes also believes ferry operators should work closely with other train, bus and coach operators to coordinate timetables. For example Scotrails Highland Explorer to Oban or Firth of Clyde stations, and new operators such as Ember who are planning to expand the network that takes cycles on electric coaches.

Reallocation of some existing ferry space could be trialled to allow for flexible use by cycles to increase capacity for standard and non-standard cycles at peak periods. As per Cycling by Design 2021 information on the types of non-standard cycles can be found. All ferry operators should be making ferries more inclusive to all types of cyclist, looking at best practice examples from around the world.

Long Term

New ferries and terminals must have dedicated spaces for cycle and facilities to suit cycle user needs whilst waiting and traveling. New ferry design should consider how cycle capacity can be increased in the future on a temporary basis to suit varying demand.

When waiting for a ferry there should be secure cycle storage and shelter, drinking water, ebike charging (where other EV charging is provided) at terminals.

Spokes Lothian is aware from a member they were unable to get drinking water at the new Brodick Ferry Terminal.

On board showers and changing facilities should be provided (as per MV Finlaggan) and possibly areas for ebike battery charging. We are aware ScotRail allows ebike charging on the Highland Explorer, whilst Caledonian Sleeper does not so it would be good to have a consistent policy across all public transport providers.

4 Are service needs different at different times of the year?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes believes that no matter the time of year the needs of cycle users need to be catered for.

5 Which needs are better met by other modes of transport, e.g. air, where available?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Dependant on the provision of safe cycle infrastructure to / from ferry terminals and distances to/from ferry both cycles or eCargo cycles could be the optimum mode for many short trips. e.g. on Cumbrae or Iona smaller vehicles could better suit island needs and demand on limited deck space for vehicles.

A clear policy as to how ferry operators can carry non-standard cycles for personal and commercial use would be useful to see. These should be in line with those within "Cycling by Design 2021" and published online so information is available to infrequent users planning trips.

Also for passengers a secure luggage carrying eCargo cycle / van could transfer passenger luggage to and from terminals for those with limited mobility, or fresh produce / deliveries which need to get from the ferry to local destinations quickly by sustainably.

6 How should the Scottish Government support council-run ferry services?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes has no comment on this

7 How can ferry users and island communities be involved in decision making at strategic and operational level?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes has no comment on this

B. Institutions and funding

1 What institutional and funding arrangements would most likely deliver service patterns, vessels, and crewing arrangements that meet the needs of current and potential future ferry users?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes has no comment on this

2 Can the current tri-partite arrangement (Transport Scotland, Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL), Ferry Operator) for managing most ferry service provision be improved?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes has no comment on this

3 Can current tendering arrangements be improved, e.g. through service unbundling?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes has no comment on this

4 Can Scottish Government subsidies be better deployed to meet the needs of current and future ferry users?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes has no comment on this

5 Are current services providing best value for the taxpayer?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes has no comment on this

C. Vessels and crews

1 What size and types of vessels are required?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes has no comment on this

2 What type of sustainable propulsion systems (including energy-use and moves to low carbon systems) would meet the needs of ferry services?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes has no comment on this

3 How can we ensure ferries are compatible with harbour facilities?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes has no comment on this

4 What type of onboard crew accommodation is required?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes has no comment on this

5 Current procurement criteria and processes: what are their strengths and weaknesses? Are they "future proofed" to accommodate new technologies and the need for sustainable low-carbon travel?

Please provide your response in the box provided.:

Spokes has no comment on this