

Action Notes: Ferry Services

Clyde & Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS): Health, Accessibility & Social Care Working Group (HAS)

Notes from meeting 30/04/15, Scottish Govt. Victoria Quay, Edinburgh by Bill Johnston (a full minute to follow from Transport Scotland).

Present

- Alan Malone/Robert Spratt, Transport Scotland (Procurement)
- Marsali Craig, Mobility & Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)
- Caroline (by phone link) NHS Highland (Argyle & Bute)
- Arthur Cowie, Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance.
- Bill Johnston, SOPA.

Summary of the Procurement Framework

- The Scottish Govt. is tendering for Clyde & Hebrides Ferry Services 2016-24.
- The 8 year contract is longer than previous contracts, so the details of the tender and final contract need to be very specific and suggestions from interested groups will be very important.
- Scale of the contract implies one large operator as opposed to a number of smaller operators. (pre-research has identified to potential operators).
- The specification will be based on the Ferries Plan, 2013-2022: identifies 26 destinations in the network; routes/timetables/fares & costs predicated on the plan and will be non-negotiable; service quality & innovation will be negotiable.
- Communication and engagement strategy will be formal and will not 'unravel' the extensive consultation for the Ferries Plan; any local contributions will be via statutory Advisory Groups.
- Key milestones: Invitation to tender June 2015; Submission of final tenders by December 2015; Anticipated award of contract end of May 2016.

In discussion it was clear that Scottish Govt. is keen to focus the procurement process on encouraging competition between operators and thereby driving standards above minimum levels and beyond statutory regulations.

Note: A template for the procurement document will be circulated to the W/Party. This will be a practical focus for suggestions about the content and expression of elements concerning accessibility etc.

Key SOPA areas raised:

(i) Integrated Transport System

SOPA 2014 Assembly called on Scottish Govt and transport providers to work together to provide a integrated transport system. I raised this for discussion and the following points emerged:

- The Procurement team is liaising with colleagues in the Transport Integration team.
- Issues of 'joined up' transport such as e-ticketing and co-ordinated timetables are being included in the procurement process and will be reported as the process develops.
- Older people's specific 'aspirations' should be fed into the W/Party.
- A joint conference in the Autumn was suggested to extend discussion.

Overall those present were supportive of an integrated approach

(ii) Demographics

I raised the importance of taking a longer term perspective, given the anticipated growth in the ageing population of the next 20 years. The following points were made:

- The ageing population in the Highlands and Islands, including inward migration of retirees, is a key factor for the areas served by ferries.
- Ageing, disability, accessibility, care and service standards are interlinked and should be treated as such during the procurement process.
- There is a need for the NHS to become more involved in the discussions.

Overall those present were supportive of the importance of ageing as a factor in service planning.

Future meetings of the W/Party

Transport Scotland will arrange meetings:

- Locations can vary round the country; video/'phone contributions can be arranged.
- Expenses can be claimed from Transport Scotland