

SUPPLEMENTARY WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

Following the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee meeting on 25 January 2012, Transport Scotland have provided further information on several points raised in discussion.

Col 620 - 621

In response to a question about RET raised by Alex Johnstone, the Minister stated that in more than 90 per cent of cases the benefit from subsidy paid to hauliers was not passed on to businesses or consumers. The Minister noted that he would get his officials to provide the exact figure. I can confirm that in 93 percent of cases the full costs of RET savings were not passed through the supply chain to customers.

Col 628

In response to a question about the size and scope of the accessibility improvement fund, the Minister explained that it would be based on what we get back with regard to the Ferries Plan. The Minister stated that if the information was of interest we would be happy to supply it to the Committee as soon as it becomes available. This information will not be available until after we have analysed responses to the draft Ferries Plan consultation and reached decisions about what services will be provided during the period of the Ferries Plan, i.e. to 2022. We will of course provide the Committee with this information as soon as it is available.

Col 628

In response to questions raised by the Convenor about environmental issues, we agreed to provide further information. This is set out below:

Increased risk of ferry collision with cetaceans

The risk of death or injury to cetaceans as a result of collision with vessels is recognised globally, by the International Maritime Organisation, the International Whaling Commission and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, amongst others. *Scotland's Marine Atlas* identifies the risk of death or injury from collisions with vessels as a pressure for some species, but notes that this risk is considered to be slight. The key issue arising from the proposal in the Draft Ferries Plan is the increase in the number of vessel movements on existing and/or new routes. As vessel movements increase, the risk of a vessel colliding with a cetacean increases. The strategic environmental assessment concluded that there was uncertainty around the risk of increased collisions between ferries and cetaceans and set out proposals to further investigate this issue.

Increase in coastal erosion

Scotland's Marine Atlas identifies erosion from vessel wash as a pressure for coastal habitats. At present there is little or no data about vessels affecting coastal and/or seabed erosion, apart from work done on the fast ferry link between Scotland and Northern Ireland, at Loch Ryan. The strategic environmental assessment reviewed the potential for increased vessel movements (both on existing and new routes) to increase coastal erosion. In summary, the results show that there could be an increase in erosion at sensitive locations, but that this is uncertain. Accordingly, the strategic environmental assessment set out proposals to further investigate this issue.

Proposals for further investigation

The Scottish Government will explore, with ferry operators, harbour authorities, statutory advisers and others if increased risk of ferry collision with cetaceans and of coastal erosion is an issue.

Marine spatial planning

The Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 sets out requirements for marine spatial planning. The consultation draft of the National Marine Plan is currently being prepared by Marine Scotland. Officials from the National Marine Plan team have been working closely with officials from Transport Scotland (Ferry Operations; Ports and Harbours) in the preparation of the plan. In addition, the Scottish Government's Environmental Assessment Team (who undertook the strategic environmental assessment of the Draft Ferries Plan) are undertaking the Sustainability Appraisal of the draft National Marine Plan.