



Isle of Arran Ferry Committee

Attention: Edward Mountain,
Convener -
Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

cc: Paul Wheelhouse MSP
Minister for Energy, Connectivity and
the Islands.

Date: 5th January 2021.

Dear Sir,

Arran Ferry Committee welcomes the RECC Report which gives justification to much of what the Arran Ferry Committee and Arran community has been saying for quite some time namely that islander's views "have not been given weight in decision making" and must be given "a much stronger role in providing input to the design of future new ferries" and that "a better balance in decision making" should be in place.

What is being delivered bares no comparison to what was requested for our route.

When the final vessel designs were communicated, they were advised as being designed for the routes when all aspect of the service were considered, which has subsequently been shown to be incorrect with a requirement for further investment in port infrastructure at Ardrossan now being necessary to accommodate the new vessel.

It may be too late to influence any significant changes to current vessel design, and we must hope that the indications for improved service levels from the investments delivers the much-needed resilience which is required to aid the island's recovery and future sustainability.

AFC also note that the Report "supports a recommendation for a more standardised approach to the design and for the construction of smaller ferries as a means of improving network resilience, reducing costs and increasing frequency of services." and we are very willing to participate in any such discussions to ensure future designs and services provide value for money for the public purse and address the environmental challenges for the future.

Questions of design, rate of fleet replacement and energy sources all need to be considered in a timely manner with a commitment from government to commit to a future policy statement which all island communities will rely on for their future sustainability.

Arran Ferry Committee will continue to voice views from the community and work with all parties to ensure that, from this calamitous episode, lessons are learned and we can finally receive the levels of service and capacity which we have not enjoyed for some time.

Regards,

Iain Thomson

Chair
Arran Ferry Committee