
Report To:	Environment and Regeneration	Date:	31 October 2024
Report By:	Director, Environment and Regeneration	Report No:	ENV066/24/SJ/NM
Contact Officer:	Neale McIlvanney	Contact No:	01475 712402
Subject:	Consultation Response – Gourock Ferries		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 This report updates members on the submission made by Inverclyde Council to the Transport Scotland consultation on ferry service provision from Gourock to Dunoon and Roseneath.
- 1.3 The consultation closed in early October, and therefore the report seeks to homologate the consultation response submitted by officers.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

Stuart W Jamieson
Director, Environment & Regeneration

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Transport Scotland launched a consultation on the ferry service provision from Gourock to Dunoon and Rosneath in September 2024. The consultation was supported by community events. The background documents for the consultation formed an options appraisal of services on the routes to be able to develop a business case for future services considering frequency and provision of infrastructure.
- 3.2 In response to the consultation, officers reviewed the technical documents and submitted a response accordingly. As noted above, this was due to timescales for response, which closed before members could consider a draft response. This report is therefore to allow Environment & Regeneration Committee to consider and homologate the response submitted by officers.
- 3.3 The consultation response submitted by officers can be viewed at Appendix A. In summary, the consultation response expresses that options for service delivery should not be brought forward where they effect a reduction in service capacity or resilience, given this would conflict with national, regional and local policy aspirations for connected, inclusive communities – particularly as contained within the Inverclyde Alliance Plan. The response invites further engagement with officers to influence the emerging proposals.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	X	
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

5.3 Legal/Risk

None.

5.4 Human Resources

None.

5.5 Strategic

The consultation response reflects a range of strategic priorities.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report is related to a consultation response; however, the draft response highlights the need for equalities impact assessment to be carried out.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts, positive or negative, which relate to this report.

None.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.
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5.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
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6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Appendix A – Consultation Response Gourock/Dunoon/Rosneath Ferry Services

Appendix A

Transport Scotland Consultation Response – Gourock Ferries

Inverclyde Council

8th October 2024

The following provides Inverclyde Council's response to the live consultation on the Cowal/Roseneath Ferry consultation being carried out by Transport Scotland. Inverclyde Council's views are expressed insofar as the consultation materials impact on Gourock and Inverclyde, more broadly.

It is noted that the consultation is exploring options related to investment in ferry infrastructure and related timetable matters on the routes under consultation. It is expressly stated in the information that the analysis presented is related to outline business case stage proposals, and therefore the Council anticipates further opportunities to provide commentary on emerging proposals as preferred options are identified and other options are discounted in the process of forming further stage business cases.

The Inverclyde Alliance Plan 23-33 outlines that Inverclyde is experiencing a range of socio-economic challenges including depopulation, ageing population, social and economic deprivation, health challenges and below average earnings compared to national indicators. Accordingly, the plan focuses on the themes of Empowered People, Working People, Healthy People and Places, A Supportive Place, and a Thriving Place – all of which have direct and indirect relationship to transport and connectivity. The Inverclyde Local Development Plan also reflects the requirement for successful places to be well connected. Further, the ambition to connect regions in an inclusive national economy is also embedded in national policy documents, notably the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

In line with the policy context outlined, as a strategic position, Inverclyde Council supports investment in transport infrastructure and optimisation of soft transport infrastructure (e.g. timetabling and accessibility) to support its wider strategic aims and ambitions.

It is noted that the commentary on options related to Gourock and Cowal states that there would be disbenefit to users through any service reduction, however this is counterbalanced by cost to Government of maintaining higher service levels. The options analysis suggest mitigation may assist to reach balance in this instance through behavioural change and logistical support, such as deploying buses to move passengers. This, it is noted, would be requiring of support through promoting behavioural change.

While promotion of behavioural change to sustainable transport means is supported by the Council, it should be recognised that this would be an inappropriate solution to offsetting connectivity challenges that may already exist being exacerbated by reduced service capacity and reduced service resilience. As outlined in the policy context above, connecting rural and deprived communities, which may already experience more barriers to multi-mode transport connectivity, is a key priority of national, regional and local policy, and service reduction would conflict with this policy context. Accordingly, the Council would express significant concern with the suggested reduction in service capacity (and suggested mitigation) as set out in the consultation document and note that this would reduce access to opportunity for those living and working in Inverclyde and the Inverclyde visitor economy.

Given the potential impact on communities, the Council would highlight the need to equalities impact assessment to inform decision making.

The Council would welcome the opportunity to further engage and influence the options development, analysis and short-listing process.