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Net Zero, Transport and Energy Committee
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8 February 2024

Dear Convener,

Response to letter dated 10 January titled - Glen Sannox (Hull 801) and Glen Rosa (Hull 802)

The Committee wrote to the Cabinet Secretary Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work & Energy on 10 January 2024 with a list of questions and I understand that a response is on its way to you on these issues. However, given the responsibility for vessel replacement sits within my portfolio I thought it would be more appropriate for me to reply directly on the question below (Question 16 on your list) posed regarding the Small Vessel Replacement Programme (SVRP).

The Committee sought an update on the status of the programme, including timescales and the impact any delays have on the improvements to Scotland's ferry service called for the report on a Modern and Sustainable Ferry Service for Scotland.

The Small Vessel Replacement Programme (SVRP) will see Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd procure up to ten small vessels across two phases which will serve the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service network. The programme will provide modern, standardised vessels that are capable of as close to zero emission operation as possible.

Ministers are currently considering the outline business case for the Small Vessel Replacement Programme. This is an important issue and an update will be provided once a decision on investment has been taken. This is expected to be taken in due course.

Despite recent interests in the reprofiling of budgets, the delivery dates for SVRP remain currently unchanged. As we have previously indicated, the first vessel is currently expected to be delivered in the third quarter of 2026 with further vessels at four to six month intervals thereafter until 2028.

The Committee will also be aware that part of the SVRP also relates to work required at ports, most importantly ensuring that sufficient grid connections are available to enable the

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vessels to charge whilst berthed overnight. The committee may find it helpful to note that CMAL are already engaged in detailed discussions with Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) and Scottish Power on these required works and are also liaising with Harbour Owners where these are not in CMAL's ownership.

Significant community engagement has taken place in developing the specification of the Phase 1 vessels. This has influenced passenger / vehicle capacity which in turn has led some aspects of the indicative vessel design/specification. Feedback on passengers facilities such as inclusion of a private area for passengers travelling unwell and storage for mail deliveries amongst others., has all been incorporated in design.

Engagement with communities is an important element of the project development and two public webinars were held in August 2022 and February 2023. Following this, a series of in-person public engagement events were undertaken over a two-week period across the SVRP network (11 locations) from 28 August to 8 September 2023. Trade Union engagement is also key and most recently occurred on 3 October 2023 with another session planned in the coming months. Presented information during these engagements is available on the CMAL website; [Small Vessel Replacement Programme | CMAL Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd \(cmassets.co.uk\)](https://cmassets.co.uk)

Further engagement sessions will also be planned on Phase 2 of the Small Vessel Replacement Programme this year.

I note the committee has a continued interest in this matter and I will write to update you further once a decision has been taken on the Business Plan.

Yours sincerely,

FIONA HYSLOP

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