



Minutes of the Caithness Transport Forum

Date: 10/09/2019

Time: 10:00

Location: Smith Room, Pulteney Centre, Wick

Present

Trudy Morris	Caithness Chamber of Commerce (chair)
David Swanson	Caithness Chamber of Commerce (minutes)
Peter Faccenda	Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership
Mike Lunan	Friends of the Far North Line
Bill Mowat	Gills Harbour
Alex Macmanus	Highland Council
CLlr Willie Mackay	Highland Council
Inglis Lyon	Highlands & Islands Airports Ltd
Dougie Cook	Highlands & Islands Airports Ltd
Julie McGee	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Inspector Alasdair Goskirk	Police Scotland
Sandy Mackie	Scrabster Harbour
Kris Bevan	Serco NorthLink Ferries
David Beaton	Stagecoach North Scotland
John Deighan	Thurso & Wick Trades Union Council
Marco Bardelli	Transport Scotland
Paul Linhart-MacAskill	Transport Scotland
Paul Flynn	Transport Scotland

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all present for attending.

1.2 Apologies were received from:

Allan Tait	Caithness Voluntary Group
Julie Marker	Caithness Voluntary Group
Cllr Donnie Mackay	Highland Council
Cllr Matthew Reiss	Highland Council
Cllr Nicola Sinclair	Highland Council
Derek Glasgow	ScotRail
Gail Ross MSP	Scottish Parliament
Daniel Laird	Stagecoach North Scotland
Davie Alexander	Thurso & Wick Trades Union Council
Ian Cormack	Wick Harbour
Malcolm Bremner	Wick Harbour

2. Minutes of last CTF meeting 13.06.2019

2.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the last meeting

3. Review of actions from last meeting

CTF(2018)M001/A005 - *Frank Roach to provide details of station analysis once carried out.* **ONGOING**

This remains ongoing – no detail was provided by Frank for the meeting

CTF(2018)M003/A006 – *Brian Gordon to feed back to Forum on RET rollout when more information available*
ONGOING

Trudy Morris noted that the Chamber had recently met with the relevant Cabinet Secretary and understood that this remained ongoing but that an announcement was hoped for soon. Paul Linhart-MacAskill noted that this was the case and that they would update under the relevant agenda item.

CTF(2019)M001/A010 – *David Swanson to coordinate with relevant partners on future rail / bus / ferry connectivity*
ONGOING

Trudy noted that this remains ongoing, it is hoped that this and action **M002/A004** below could be combined to find a solution but work remains to be done to scope out the issues and investigate potential solutions.

CTF(2019)M001/A013 – *Cllr Nicola Sinclair to feed back to the Forum on discussions around additional roads maintenance budget* **ONGOING**

No further information on this matter was received.

CTF(2019)M001/A019 – *Chamber to invite Inglis Lyon to meet with the Forum* **COMPLETE**

Inglis was invited and present at the meeting.

CTF(2019)M002/A001 – *Trudy Morris & Roger Saxon to seek update from DRS on Georgemas freight trial* **COMPLETE**

This was done but the trial has been delayed yet again and no further information has been received to propose a new date.

It was agreed that the Chamber would write to DRS on this matter.

CTF(2019)M003/A001 – Chamber to write to DRS regarding delays to Georgemas freight trial

CTF(2019)M002/A002 – Chamber to collate expressions of support for sleeper & battery train projects **ONGOING**

David Swanson confirmed that he had been in contact with Frank and that he had asked for an email on behalf of the Forum expressing support – David confirmed he would send this to Frank shortly following the meeting.

CTF(2019)M002/A003 – Daniel Laird to provide details of proposed changes to services **COMPLETE**

This was done, these were circulated to the Forum for comment and the new timetable has been in place since 19 August.

CTF(2019)M002/A004 – Stagecoach and Chamber to discuss electric vehicle pilot **ONGOING**

Trudy noted that the Chamber has had very early discussion with Daniel Laird at Stagecoach regarding the Scottish Government Green Bus Fund, and got an understanding of some of the issues around areas such as capital vs. operational funding and expected lifespan of certain vehicles.

CTF(2019)M002/A005 – David Liston to provide details of alterations to X99 vehicles **COMPLETE**

Daniel Laird provided an update on this as follows:

- *Additional bell pushes have been fitted to the vehicles so that there is approximately one bell push for every 2 rows of seats; a significant improvement on the previous set up.*
- *We have installed additional signage on the vehicles to advise customers to stay seated until the bus comes to a stop and to advise the driver if they have difficulty in using the toilet on board the vehicle.*
- *We have installed a guard rail over the staircase leading to the toilet which can be lifted up for accessing the toilet- this was installed on the other vehicles of the same type in Aberdeenshire and has been successful in preventing slips into the staircase.*
- *We have completed refresher training with all the drivers on the service and our periodic 'CPC' training for drivers in Caithness features a dedicated course to advanced safe driving for coaches on long distance services. This course was originally designed for Megabus drivers operating on motorways; however we have had it adapted to suit long distance driving on A roads, such as on the X99 service.*

David Beaton provided a further update, noting that Stagecoach had invited several passengers who had raised issues to visit the depot and inspect the vehicles. He further noted that he would be more than happy to meet with local Community Councils to discuss the service and any issues with them.

CTF(2019)M003/A002 – Chamber to provide David Beaton's details to Association of Caithness Community Councils

CTF(2019)M002/A006 – Derek Glasgow to feed back on catering issues on Far North Line **COMPLETE**

Derek has fed back that this is an issue with regards to available cover for Wick – it was agreed that the Chamber would write to ScotRail on this matter.

CTF(2019)M002/A003 – Chamber to write to ScotRail regarding lack of cover for catering on Wick services

CTF(2019)M002/A007 – Marco Bardelli to ask BEAR Scotland to look at footway in Thurso near Royal Hotel **COMPLETE**

Marco Bardelli confirmed that he had spoken with BEAR on this and that they would inspect the footway. He noted that BEAR would also be meeting with shopkeepers in Thurso to discuss issues around flooding.

Marco noted that he was happy to take feedback on any areas where members felt improvements could be made to roads or footways.

CTF(2019)M002/A008 – Chamber to secure Police Scotland representation at future meetings COMPLETE

This was done and Inspector Goskirk was present at the meeting.

CTF(2019)M002/A009 – Highland Council to investigate pedestrian access at Harbour Place once works on wall recommence ONGOING

Jonathan Gunn was not present to update on this, and Alex Macmanus noted that he had received no update

CTF(2019)M002/A010 – Dougie Cook to provide figures on Wiking Helicopter flights at Wick COMPLETE

Dougie provided an update on this as follows:

- *June total 18 flights (9 outbound 9 inbound)*
- *July total 32 flights*
- *August total 34 flights*

Dougie noted that they are seeing an increase of flights to the windfarm and less training now as expected, but that recent developments in legislation may hamper the use of the helicopter and that he would update on this under the relevant agenda item.

CTF(2019)M002/A011 – Allan Tait to provide information on Local Development Officers' work on transport for discussion at next Forum meeting COMPLETE

A report was provided and circulated. Nobody from Caithness Voluntary Group was present to discuss this and it was agreed that an agenda slot would be provided at the next meeting to allow for this to happen.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1 Trudy invited Inspector Goskirk to give an update on Police Scotland's role with regards to dangerous parking in Wick and Thurso.
- 4.2 Inspector Goskirk noted that many issues relating to parking are now under Highland Council as part of the decriminalisation of parking across Highland, and that Police Scotland's role is often to signpost to Highland Council as the appropriate enforcement body.
- 4.3 With regards to dangerous parking, he noted that from a Police Scotland perspective this is defined as being where there is an immediate risk to life, and that they do have powers to act in this case.
- 4.4 Inspector Goskirk gave a broader insight into Police Scotland's priorities for road policing, noting a recent operation where they have worked to reduce road deaths and casualties in the region. He noted that a priority is to influence driver behaviour and understanding with regards to e.g. speeding, use of mobile phones, and drink / drug driving. With the latter, it was noted that this ties into wider regional initiatives to address drug and alcohol dependency.

- 4.5 Inspector Goskirk finally noted that locally they have seen a reduction in speeding and noted initiatives such as the rollout of the 20mph limits across Wick.
- 4.6 Mike Lunan queried the official definition of “dangerous” with relation to parking. He also noted that British Transport Police have been successful in bringing down the length of railway closures due to incidents to around 90 minutes, whereas for road traffic accidents this length of time is often much longer – he cited a recent single-vehicle RTA where the A9 was closed for 6 hours.
- 4.7 Inspector Goskirk noted that the definition of dangerous driving can be found within Section 2 of the Road Traffic Act and noted that in Scotland the decision of whether driving or parking is considered “dangerous” is assessed by a Sheriff. He agreed to provide Mike with further information on this

CTF(2019)M003/A004 – *Inspector Goskirk to provide Mike Lunan with further information on definition of dangerous driving / parking*

- 4.8 With regards to the second point raised, Inspector Goskirk noted that it was not possible to compare road and rail, and that a decision taken to close a road is never done lightly. He noted that Police Scotland always consider how to minimise disruption and are aware of the limited options for diversion on stretches of the A9. He further noted that where an accident is serious or fatal, the main priority is to identify how this occurred, and that this is not a process which can be rushed.
- 4.9 Inspector Goskirk noted that the introduction of digital scanners for RTA investigation had brought down the length of road closure required. He emphasised that Police Scotland are always aware of the potential for disruption and work to minimise this.
- 4.10 Trudy Morris queried whether any road safety initiatives were being brought in specifically on the A9 north of Inverness, noting increased traffic levels as a result of the North Coast 500 and an increased number of accidents in recent months.
- 4.11 Inspector Goskirk noted that the focus is on speeding and driver awareness and that the motorcycle unit had been deployed around the route over the previous weekend.
- 4.12 Marco Bardelli noted that he concurred with Inspector Goskirk regarding the difference between road and rail, and his feeling that road traffic accidents are likely to involve significantly more variables than incidents on the railway. He further noted that casualty reduction is a high priority for Transport Scotland, and that many times it can be difficult to identify the exact cause of an accident as many factors can be involved, especially where elderly drivers are involved.
- 4.13 Marco further updated that BEAR Scotland are often amongst the first responders on the scene of RTAs and that every serious RTA is followed up with an investigation and site visit to address any potential road issues. With regards to the length of closure time, Marco noted that the first medical interventions in serious accidents are now undertaken at the scene, prior to transferring patients, and that this also impacts on the length of closure.
- 4.14 Cllr Willie Mackay noted that the road policing unit in Dingwall have access to the digital scanners mentioned and that these have been successful in bringing down the length of closures. On the issue of parking Cllr Mackay noted that Highland Council are now enforcing parking restrictions including improper parking in car parks. He also noted that the 20mph restriction in Wick has been well received.
- 4.15 Inspector Goskirk noted that Police Scotland are investing in new technology and that they have a new standardised system across the force for recording and sharing data relating to RTAs. He echoed Marco’s point regarding elderly drivers, noting that there are social factors to this, and that this is something Police Scotland are looking at nationally. He further noted that Chief Inspector Wilson chairs the Road Safety Partnership which is looking at a range of options and initiatives.

- 4.16 Trudy Morris thanked Inspector Goskirk for his update and noted that the point around elderly drivers emphasised the need for good public transport links in the area.
- 4.17 David Swanson noted that much of the focus of the discussion had been on driver safety and queried what was being done to address safety of pedestrians, particularly with regards to unsafe parking.
- 4.18 Marco agreed that focus on pedestrians can be missed and that Transport Scotland are looking at active travel as part of their wider strategy. He noted that with regards to trunk roads, the majority of fatalities are drivers.
- 4.19 Cllr Mackay noted that the 20mph zone was brought in in part to address pedestrian safety.

5. Development Officers Update

- 5.1 Trudy Morris invited attendees to note the written update provided by Julie Marker (**Appendix A**)
- 5.2 Trudy noted that Caithness Voluntary Group hoped to send someone to the next meeting to discuss this report with Forum members, but that in the interim the Chamber would pass on details to relevant transport providers.
- CTF(2019)M003/A005** – *Chamber to pass details of Development Officers update to relevant transport providers*
- 5.6 Bill Mowat noted that Dunnet & Canisbay Community Council were currently tendering for a similar post.

6. Transport Updates

6.1 Scrabster Harbour

- 6.1.1 Sandy Mackie provided an update on behalf of Scrabster Harbour (**Appendix B**). He asked attendees to note in particular
- That 2019 has started well overall
 - The cruise season has ended, and this involved the largest vessel ever to dock at Scrabster
 - The St. Ola Pier project continues, and it is hoped work will start in 2020
 - The Scrabster Harbour Trust AGM will take place at the end of September
- 6.1.2 Trudy thanked Sandy for his update and noted that it was good to hear more positive news from Scrabster. She queried whether there had been any cancellations of cruise ships during the season.
- 6.1.3 Sandy noted that there had been two cancellations due to weather, but that Scrabster had also gained a visit due to a weather-related cancellation at another port.
- 6.1.4 Cllr Mackay queried the port charges for cruise vessels at Scrabster, noting that he had heard these were higher than those at Kirkwall.
- 6.1.5 Sandy noted that there were a number of factors involved in setting charges and that Scrabster consider how other ports are charging as part of this.
- 6.1.6 Peter Faccenda noted that the main attractor for cruise ships is not port charges but what excursions are on offer, and that it is important for the area to develop these.

- 6.1.7 Bill Mowat raised a point regarding access to historic monuments for coaches.
- 6.1.8 Trudy noted from Sandy's update that fuel volumes are down 15% and queried this. Sandy noted that this was partly due to changes in fishing activity and partly due to seasonal factors.
- 6.1.9 Trudy noted the recent fire at the premises of Scrabster Seafoods and queried whether they had to divert shipments elsewhere. Sandy noted that a few had been diverted but that Scrabster Harbour was actively working to enable Scrabster Seafoods to operate from the harbour while issues are resolved.
- 6.1.10 Bill Mowat queried whether the majority of landings at Scrabster were by hook and line fishing and queried whether Sandy could give a breakdown of these figures. Sandy noted that the majority were caught by traditional methods and that he would try to give some breakdown of the figures.

CTF(2019)M003/A006 – *Sandy Mackie to give breakdown of landing methods for whitefish at Scrabster*

6.2 Wick Harbour

- 6.2.1 A written update was provided (**Appendix C**).

6.3 Gills Harbour

- 6.3.1 Bill Mowat provided a written update (**Appendix D**). He drew attendees attention to the progress of the *MV Alfred*, and noted two additional points not contained in the report.
- 6.3.2 The first of these related to MeyGen. Bill noted that the plans for electricity generated at MeyGen were for this to be fed into the grid via a substation at East Mey and then onwards via both underground and overhead lines. He noted that planning consent for this had been refused and that a Public Local Inquiry was due to be held.
- 6.3.3 On MeyGen, Bill noted that the parent company, SIMEC Atlantis, was now looking at options for selling generated electricity locally, and that they were keen to hear from any heavy energy users in the area.
- 6.3.4 Peter Faccenda noted that the HIE energy team were in touch with SIMEC Atlantis.
- 6.3.5 Bill then raised an issue relating to the possibility of the A9/A99 bypassing Wick, noting that it had been 31 years since he first raised this possibility. He noted the discussions around traffic issues in the town centre, with particular reference to HGVs, and that it was unusual for a trunk road not to bypass a town of Wick's size.
- 6.3.6 Cllr Mackay noted that HGVs should not have any issues passing through the town centre following the introduction of double yellow lines.

6.4 Pentland Ferries

- 6.4.1 No attendee was present and no update provided.

6.5 Serco NorthLink Ferries

6.5.1 Kris Bevan provided an update on behalf of Serco NorthLink Ferries. Of note:

- Last year saw over 150,000 passengers on the Scrabster-Stromness route, an increase of 25% since 2013.
- Over the past summer, there had been an increase of around 2,000 / 7.5% passenger carryings and a similar increase in cars
- Over the past year, the *Hamnavoe* has carried around 63,000 lane metres of freight
- Reliability is at 98% and punctuality (within 10 minutes of schedule) is at 93%
- The off-peak timetable commenced at the start of September
- They have seen significant capital investment from Transport Scotland recently, including in harbour tugs, stabiliser fins, and onboard Changing Places facilities
- The *Hamnavoe* is due to have work started soon on a Changing Places facility
- NorthLink were at a range of shows this year, including the Caithness Show, promoting their services and the area
- They have taken on this year's apprentice intake and have focused on employing locally – in addition they have gained a range of standards including Living Wage and Investors in People / Young People
- A meet the buyer event was held recently at which a number of Caithness businesses were in attendance

6.5.2 Trudy thanked Kris for his update. She queried whether the apprentices would be retained under TUPE regulations in the event of a new company taking over the Northern Isles Ferry Services contract. Paul Linhart-MacAskill confirmed this was the case.

6.5.3 Trudy queried how many from Caithness applied for apprenticeships – Kris noted he could provide this information.

CTF(2019)M003/A007 – *Kris Bevan to provide details on number from Caithness applying for apprenticeships*

6.5.4 Mike Lunan asked if there was any update on the contract and whether Brexit would change anything with regards to State Aid issues. Paul Linhart-MacAskill noted he was not in a position to make an announcement on a preferred bidder today. He noted that the judicial review on the case brought by Pentland Ferries had been found in Transport Scotland's favour, as had the appeal. He noted that an outstanding complaint before the European Commission remained to be resolved.

6.5.5 With regards to State Aid matters, Paul Flynn noted that these would fall to the Competition and Markets Authority in the event of a no deal Brexit and that this would not affect the issues.

6.5.6 Paul Linhart-MacAskill noted that he understood the frustration and anxiety caused by the delays.

6.5.7 Paul Linhart-MacAskill further noted that he understood the Cabinet Secretary had been up in the area to meet with stakeholders and that the discussion had been positive. On the matter of Road Equivalent Tariff, he noted that the complaint before the European Commission has to be worked through and that an updated would be provided as soon as possible.

6.5.8 Paul Flynn noted that Transport Scotland is in ongoing dialogue with the European Commission regarding the case. He emphasised that it is not simply a case of Pentland Ferries vs. Scottish Government and that both parties are following legal advice.

6.5.9 Bill Mowat noted his understanding that Pentland Ferries were not offered RET but an alternative mechanism, and that this was not felt to be State Aid compliant.

- 6.5.10 Paul Flynn explained that there was a distinction between “true” RET and the mechanism offered in this case. He noted that Scottish Government had to follow legal advice and avoid risking market distortion. In this case, the mechanism had to allow Pentland Ferries to set their own fares to avoid any issues of price-fixing, while still bringing the overall price down.
- 6.5.11 Sandy Mackie noted that he wished to record Scrabster Harbour Trust’s frustration at the delay in introduction of RET. He also queried what provisions were in place to extend the Northern Isles Ferry Services contract in the event that an operator is not appointed by 31 October when the current contract ends.
- 6.5.12 Paul Linhart-MacAskill noted that provisions are in place to ensure no disruption to connections and continued lifeline services past 31 October 2019 if needed. The contract award will be announced as soon as possible.
- 6.5.13 Trudy queried whether there would be any delay in the event of the contract going to a new operator – Paul Linhart-MacAskill confirmed that normally a mobilisation period occurs following contract award and that the normal time period for this has been constrained.
- 6.5.14 Bill Mowat noted Gills Harbour’s frustrations at the delay in introduction of RET.

6.6 ScotRail Alliance

- 6.6.1 No attendee was present and no update was provided.

6.7 Direct Rail Services

- 6.7.1 No attendee was present and no update was provided.
- 6.7.2 Trudy Morris noted that she would continue to liaise with the Dounreay Stakeholder Group regarding the commercial freight trial.

6.8 BEAR Scotland

- 6.8.1 Marco Bardelli provided a written update on behalf of BEAR Scotland / Transport Scotland (**Appendix E**). He also provided a brief verbal update to the Forum, on works at Berriedale, noting that blasting works would be required to complete the road alignment. This was expected to begin at the end of September and would require two to three blasts over a 10 day cycle. He noted that more information would be issued once the schedule is clear.
- 6.8.2 With regards to traffic management, Marco noted that the management currently in place would be removed on 11 October and that some may be put back in place in the new year. He noted that it had worked well, but that some cyclists had an issue getting through in a timely fashion and that a solution was now in place to assist those who required it.
- 6.8.3 With regards to trunk roads in general, Marco noted that the programme of works was ongoing per his report and that a new programme is due for release in November.

6.9 Highland Council

- 6.9.1 No attendee was present and no update was provided.
- 6.9.2 Alex Macmanus complimented RJ McLeod on their communications regarding works at Berriedale.
- 6.9.3 Alex Macmanus provided a brief update on behalf of Highland Council, noting that 20mph restrictions were now in place throughout Wick and that this had required around 300 signs to be replaced. He noted that there may still be some requiring replacement and asked the public to bear with Highland Council through this process.
- 6.9.4 Alex further noted that local members had agreed the roads programme for 2019/20 – he agreed to share the programme of works with the Forum. He further noted that the winter maintenance programme was due to start soon.

CTF(2019)M003/A008 – *Alex Macmanus to share Highland Council programme of works with the Forum*

6.10 Stagecoach

- 6.10.1 David Beaton provided an update on behalf of Stagecoach North Scotland, noting that there had been good feedback on the new timetables but that a couple of small retimings may be necessary. He further noted that the new timetables have fixed outstanding issues with the 78 Thurso town service, and make clearer the connection from Wick-Gills Bay via John O’Groats.
- 6.10.2 With regards to the X99, David noted that he was keen to meet with Community Councils and Highland Council officers to discuss this and provide updates. As previously agreed the Chamber would provide David’s details to the Association of Caithness Community Councils to enable this.
- 6.10.3 David noted that Stagecoach had bid for some Panther coaches and that some of these would be brought to Caithness in January 2020. He reiterated that they were aware of issues with the X99 and were working to mitigate these where they could.
- 6.10.4 Bill Mowat welcomed the introduction of additional buzzers on the X99 and queried whether these would be brought in on school buses – David noted that this was already the case for school buses.
- 6.10.5 Alex Macmanus queried whether a Megabus service was now running to Inverness. David noted that this is not a new service, but that 10 seats had been made available on the X99 for booking via Megabus.
- 6.10.6 Bill Mowat noted that it used to be possible to book Inverness-Gills via Citylink but that this was no longer possible – David agreed to investigate this.

CTF(2019)M003/A009 – *David Beaton to investigate issue with Inverness-Gills booking*

6.11 Wick John O’Groats Airport / HIAL

- 6.11.1 Dougie Cook thanked Inglis Lyon for attending the Forum and provided a brief update on behalf of Wick John O’Groats Airport / HIAL. He noted that the latest offer to resolve industrial action by ATCs had been rejected and that work to rule would continue. This was not expected to affect Wick directly, but could have knock-on effects – Dougie noted that Loganair removed 14 flights from Wick-Edinburgh over the summer due to action elsewhere.
- 6.11.2 Dougie noted that the opening hours of the airport remain in consultation and that both he and the HIAL senior management team had been meeting with various stakeholders to engage on this.

- 6.11.3 With regards to centralisation of Air Traffic Management, Dougie noted that this was ongoing and that one of the Wick ATCs was on the change management team.
- 6.11.4 Dougie updated the Forum that works to move the BOWL hangar have been approved by the CAA and are awaiting signoff at SSE board level. The helicopter provided by Wiking is now being used to travel to the field, but recent changes in regulation require that a boat now be in the field at the same time as the helicopter. Dougie noted that this is a UK-wide issue and that this would affect all offshore windfarm.
- 6.11.5 Trudy enquired as to the responsible body for this regulation – Dougie noted that this would be the CAA. It was agreed that the Forum would write to the CAA on this matter.

CTF(2019)M003/A010 – Forum to write to CAA regarding regulations for offshore wind helicopter operations

- 6.11.6 Dougie provided an update on figures, as follows:
- Passenger movements are down 16% in August and 10% year-to-date – this is largely due to a reduced Wick-Aberdeen schedule
 - Aircraft movements are up 25% in August and 1.7% year-to-date – Dougie noted the efforts of Far North Aviation here to increase oil and gas, ferry, and training flights.
- 6.11.7 Dougie noted that the Loganair schedule reductions were now complete.
- 6.11.8 Dougie updated on the new customer feedback (“Smiley Box”) system, noting that of 158 votes since June, the vast majority are positive, and those negative votes have been on days with cancelled flights. He noted that issues with the flight information display advised at the last meeting had now been resolved.
- 6.11.9 With regards to staffing levels, Dougie noted that one security team member remained on long-term sickness absence. Air Traffic Controllers remain at four, but he hoped to have on trainee validated next week and a further trainee validated by July 2020. Their Deputy Senior Air Traffic Controller is now able to carry out training.
- 6.11.10 Dougie noted that there continues to be high levels of investment in the infrastructure at Wick, noting investment of around £300,000 in the loop taxiway and additional investment in airfield drainage along with heating and cladding on the main building. He also noted that they would be trialling a switch to a more environmentally-friendly deicer.
- 6.11.11 Trudy thanked Dougie for his update and noted that the aircraft movement figures demonstrated the importance of general aviation to Wick. She gave a brief update on the Chamber’s work on air services, noting that they had met with the Cabinet Secretary and had a commitment to work on solutions and not to make any moves which would affect staffing. She noted that HIAL and the relevant agencies had also committed to working together to look for solutions.
- 6.11.12 Trudy further noted that Eastern Airways had intimated an intention to cut Wick-Aberdeen services back to a single daily flight, but that they seemed recently to have drawn back from this position. She noted her feeling that Loganair and Eastern were focused on competition elsewhere, to Wick’s detriment.
- 6.11.13 Inglis Lyon noted that Loganair need to look at development in other locations due to the types of jets they are flying, and that Eastern have historically been very reliant on oil and gas traffic. He noted his feeling that there is a need to find a long-term, sustainable solution to the issues facing Wick.
- 6.11.14 With regards to the increase in aircraft movements, Inglis praised the work done by Drew Murray at Far North Aviation since he has taken over the business.
- 6.11.15 John Deighan noted that the Dounreay Stakeholder Group has always lobbied for services at Wick, and that the Trades Union Council backs the airport.

- 6.11.16 Trudy noted that the Cabinet Secretary had held up Wick as an exemplar with regards to its staff. She further noted that she had fed in to the NDA's socio-economic strategy regarding their investment in Wick and the need for long-term solutions.
- 6.11.17 Bill Mowat thanked Inglis Lyon for coming to meet with the Forum. He also noted that the oil and gas market is feeling more positive than in previous years.
- 6.11.18 Trudy noted that businesses would like to fly out of Wick and that good air services could capture a number of missed opportunities.

7. Press Communications

- 7.1 Trudy Morris noted the generally positive news and noted some wider developments including the new Programme for Government and 2040 net-zero aviation commitment for the Highlands & Islands.

8. Any Other Business

- 8.1 Trudy Morris noted some future focuses for the Forum looking ahead to 2020:
- Working within the Scottish Government's new climate emergency agenda to find appropriate transport solutions for the region.
 - Feeding in to a range of national consultations including the National Infrastructure Commission, Strategic Transport Projects Review update, and National Transport Strategy.
 - Working to find solutions to enable feeder services, gap-filling, etc. in areas where public transport services are not commercially viable.
 - Looking at solutions to intermodal travel and ticketing.
- 8.2 Sandy Mackie provided further information on a point raised earlier regarding charges for cruise ships. He noted that ports charge both by tonnage and by number of passengers, and that Scrabster was 1p per tonne more expensive than Kirkwall, but 67p per passenger cheaper.
- 8.3 Bill Mowat noted the UK Government's slowed investment in tidal stream electricity and his feeling that this needs more investment. Trudy noted that this was not really a matter for the Forum.
- 8.4 Inspector Goskirk noted that he would welcome any input from transport providers on areas where they felt there may be disruption due to Brexit.

9. Date of Next Meeting

- 9.1 It was noted that this would be in early December and that a date and venue would be confirmed as soon as possible.

10. Actions ongoing from previous meetings

CTF(2018)M001/A005 - Frank Roach to provide details of station analysis once carried out. **ONGOING**

CTF(2018)M003/A006 – Brian Gordon to feed back to Forum on RET rollout when more information available
ONGOING

CTF(2019)M001/A010 – David Swanson to coordinate with relevant partners on future rail / bus / ferry connectivity
ONGOING

CTF(2019)M001/A013 – Cllr Nicola Sinclair to feed back to the Forum on discussions around additional roads maintenance budget **ONGOING**

CTF(2019)M002/A002 – Chamber to collate expressions of support for sleeper & battery train projects **ONGOING**

CTF(2019)M002/A004 – Stagecoach and Chamber to discuss electric vehicle pilot **ONGOING**

CTF(2019)M002/A009 – Highland Council to investigate pedestrian access at Harbour Place once works on wall recommence **ONGOING**

11. Actions arising from this meeting

CTF(2019)M003/A001 – Chamber to write to DRS regarding delays to Georgemas freight trial

CTF(2019)M003/A002 – Chamber to provide David Beaton's details to Association of Caithness Community Councils

CTF(2019)M002/A003 – Chamber to write to ScotRail regarding lack of cover for catering on Wick services

CTF(2019)M003/A004 – Inspector Goskirk to provide Mike Lunan with further information on definition of dangerous driving / parking

CTF(2019)M003/A005 – Chamber to pass details of Development Officers update to relevant transport providers

CTF(2019)M003/A006 – Sandy Mackie to give breakdown of landing methods for whitefish at Scrabster

CTF(2019)M003/A007 – Kris Bevan to provide details on number from Caithness applying for apprenticeships

CTF(2019)M003/A008 – Alex Macmanus to share Highland Council programme of works with the Forum

CTF(2019)M003/A009 – David Beaton to investigate issue with Inverness-Gills booking

CTF(2019)M003/A010 – Forum to write to CAA regarding regulations for offshore wind helicopter operations

Appendix A – Local Development Officers

Thurso Locality Plan – Thurso Development Officer - Joan Lawrie Joan@cvg.org.uk

Public Transport

Key Issues raised:

Within Thurso

1. Public transport within the town has improved of late with the introduction of smaller buses and this has been welcomed.
2. However, young mothers, particularly from the Ormlie area which falls into bottom 20% SIMD report that buses cannot generally take them to cheaper supermarkets.
3. Also reports that buses are frequently unsuitable for prams/accessibility or just not enough spaces.
4. Drivers often unwilling to help those with accessibility issues or taking prams/children on bus.
5. No bus timetables available at stops, electronic noticeboard on Olrig Street is too high and lettering too small to read.
6. Large concern in those survived is if NHS redesign goes ahead there is a lack of public transport options to Dunbar from areas of the town.
7. Currently taxis are generally required to get to health appointments either at GP surgeries or Dunbar and these are prohibitive to many.

Travelling out with Thurso

1. Unreliability of both bus and train services when travelling south.
2. Well served in terms of Wick to Thurso service however costs can be prohibitive.
3. Difficulty in getting to work outside of Thurso, for example recent large infrastructure projects outside of town have had no transport links.
4. Unable to leave Thurso via public transport after 4:30pm
5. Costs of travel south on both bus and train, however, acknowledgement that Highland Railcard helps with the costs even on just one journey.
6. X99 bus is very difficult to get on and off and nearly impossible for those with access issues.

General Comments

1. Condition of buses
2. Condition of Thurso Rail Station and lack of parking
3. While not strictly public transport a strong desire to encourage active travel in the town and outside linked to Castletown and Halkirk of good walking and cycling paths.
4. Greener travel, if we are surrounded by renewable energy why is it not being used to power our public transport service?

Wick Locality Plan – Wick Development Officer - Jennifer Harvey

jennifer.harvey@ppwick.org.uk

Public Transport

Bus Service Inequalities to users;-Timetables ,reliability, accessibility, breakdowns, cost etc

Accessibility

Bus to Inverness not suitable for disabled passengers- only three disabled seats down stairs and more upstairs. To get upstairs it's a steep narrow staircase which is not easily negotiated if you have a walking aid or even if you're just a larger built person.

Disabled users state that they can't guarantee a booked seat in advance or speak to a person as it is an automated number where you have to leave your request and someone call you back. When the bus has arrived if there isn't a seat available or users are equally as disabled and can't free up a seat for them they have not boarded the bus.

If the bus went up to Raigmore more often to pick up for Caithness would be more ideal;- Other wise they have to board one from Raigmore or get a taxi to the town then make their way to depot for bus home . Appointments can run on or people may need further tests where they can either miss the bus or have to wait for the next one. Buses are too infrequent and most are having to rope in alternative transport. If there are someone going for hospital appointment they are then not attending and receiving the care or treatment until they can rearrange alternative transport.

A lady with a walking aid who could not get up the stairs due to arthritic worn hip was heading to Raigmore to see consultant about a hip replacement. She has no family in Caithness to take her so was reliant on the bus. She thought she had negotiated with disability helpdesk that she would be assisted to a disabled seat . However on the bus arrival there were no seats and no one in a position to free one up for her . This has meant that she had to return home , cancel her appointment and has a lengthy wait for a new one.

We need more seats on lower level or accessible buses going to Inverness.

Timetables and cost

In the town of Wick bus stops were removed without prior notice so people were waiting at bus stops they used for years- for a bus that never came.

There are too few buses linking Wick with rural routes.

One boy living in Wick whos friend lives in John O Groats has commented ;-

Im 14 and my best friend and I like to do gaming or play football after school. We take it in turns to go to each other's homes once a week and usually stay for tea. If going to Groats we take school bus. However to get home my parents or his have to drive us as the last bus leaves groats at 18.20 or Wick at 17.30 which leaves us no time to do anything. There is no service at the weekends so if we meet up our parents need to make that 32 mile round trip which can take up to 50 plus minutes.

The cost of travel is also High for a service that is unreliable, infrequent, inaccessible people need to travel for work, shopping, hospital appointments

Tourists arriving at Wick by plane or train face same pressure with bus links.

If they book into a hotel at John O Groats as they intend to go to Orkney next day. Passengers will be able to get a bus from Wick out there on a week day no later than 17.30(this does not tie in with other transport arriving in Wick)There is no weekend service the reality of this is that they are having to get a taxi and this can be an unexpected cost.

Reliability

Buses are continually breaking down in the county making people late for work , college and getting home at night. They have to wait until another bus comes to their rescue and also taxis have been called to get folk home. This has happened with service and Dounreay buses regularly. We have had buses at the side of the road with broken engines, fires etc. If people are paying for a service they should at least have buses that are road worthy and not be left inconvenienced

Rural Locality Plans. Castletown and Lybster-Dunbeath-

Berriedale — Rural Development Officer - Julie Marker - Julie@cvg.org.uk

Public Transport

Key Issues raised from residents:

Castletown

1. Inadequate buses to get to appointments and back to do school run, some parents report missing appointments because the times just do not operate with any consideration to school drop off and pick up times.
2. Taxis are too expensive
3. Buses are expensive
4. No buses after 7.15pm in the evenings, this limits work opportunities.
5. Buses to Inverness not suitable, just three seats downstairs so people with poor mobility, carrying babies or with disabilities have to climb the stairs. Toilet is inaccessible for anyone

with mobility issues, one person reported that a woman had travelled on the bus but was unable to use the toilet and was deeply distressed as she had soiled herself.

6. Buses in poor condition.
7. Bus times do not coordinate with ferry times.

Lybster-Dunbeath-Berriedale

1. Bus shelter at Lidl, can't sit in the shelter because bus drivers can't see passengers. One 86 year old woman had to wait two hours for the next bus as the bus drove past.
2. Another time, a bus driver (she thinks called Sian) collected a woman in her own car and took her home as she saw her waiting for a bus over an hour. The driver carried her shopping in to her home.
3. Students in Dunbeath catch bus to go to college in Thurso at 7am to get to college at 8.40am, bus gets them home in the evening at 7.30pm. 16 and 17 year olds are making this journey every day, once they are 18 they either move into Thurso or elsewhere to avoid these issues.
4. Poor transport means little chance of obtaining work – young people or those unable to buy cars.
5. School buses arrive late and young people are marked as late through no fault of their own.
6. No late buses from Wick, young people unable to participate in activities.
7. No buses through to Wick on Sundays.
8. Buses frequently break down.
9. So many windfarm funds in this area, why is no one accessing them to improve transport and even create jobs?

Appendix B



CAITHNESS TRANSPORT FORUM 10th SEPTEMBER 2019 SCRABSTER HARBOUR UPDATE

Scrabster harbour is managed by Scrabster Harbour Trust, established in 1841 and governed by its own legislation. The Trust seeks to serve the local community and all surpluses created are reinvested into the port.

1. TRAFFIC STATISTICS

The traffic statistics for the first quarter of financial year 2019-20, the period to 30th June 2019 were as follows:

- Total vessel arrivals 561 compared with 562 in 2018-19
- Total vessel tonnage 2.312 million tonnes compared with 2.232 million tonnes in 2018-19
- Ferry Passenger numbers were 52,583 up 7.5% on the previous year
- Fish box landings 59,142, a decrease of 12.5% on last year. A factor in the reduced landings has been increased Rockall cod quota which has lead to the more landings on the West coast.



DRAFT

- Oil and gas vessels arrivals are 25% up on the same period last year.
- Similarly, the weekly Faroese fish cargo volumes are 24% higher.
- Coastal tanker fuel volumes are 15% down.
- Included in other activity for the period were shipments of large JGC Engineering manufactured control containers ultimately bound for the Moray East Wind Farm. The port also supported the mobilisation and demobilisation of the vessels involved in the latest pipeline bundle towout from S7's year at Wester.

Overall the Trust, for the first quarter of the new financial year, is ahead of budget forecast.

2. CRUISE

The 2019 cruise season is due to finish on 16th September with the visit of the Phoenix Reisen vessel Amadea. The total expected vessel tonnage for the season amounts to 193,133 GRT carrying 3,408 passengers.



The August cruise calls included the largest vessel ever to berth at Scrabster, the luxury 5-star Seabourn Ovation. The vessel measured 210m in length and had a tonnage of 40,350. As part of the Ovation visit the first cruise fish market tour was organised with the vessel chef and 25 passengers attending. Scrabster Seafoods put on a fish filleting display which was well received by the audience. Fresh fish was purchased which the chef took back to the ship to cook.

3. DEVELOPMENTS

The project to redevelop the existing St Ola Pier received a further boost in June with the award of £3 million of grant funding from Highlands & Islands Enterprise.

The applications for a Marine Construction licence and a Marine Dredging licence were submitted to Marine Scotland in July. The applications are supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment identifying the potential impacts of the proposed project and, if necessary, proposing mitigations reduce or eliminate the impacts.

In advance of the applications being submitted, a Public Consultation event was held at the harbour on 14th June 2019. The event was well attended with 45 individuals participating. All participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback and comments on the project. The public reaction was overwhelmingly supportive of the project.



The procurement process to select a preferred contractor continues. The current programme remains unchanged with a preferred bidder being selected by the end of November 2019, with the construction works beginning early 2020 and being complete early summer 2021.

4. TRUST AGM

The Trust will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Friday 27th September 2019. The meeting is open to the general public.

Appendix C

Wick Harbour

Business update for Caithness Transport forum. Sept19

Overview

- Wick Harbour has seen continued growth in both leisure and commercial business throughout 2019 and that trend looks likely to continue, with more opportunities opening within the offshore energy market.

Offshore wind

- Beatrice Offshore Windfarm has now completed its construction phase and is now moving onto O&M operations. Since mid-March, there have been up to 14 Crew Transfer Vessels (CTV's) based in Wick harbour utilised on the windfarm. This will in all probability reduce to around 5 vessels over the winter months and then ramp up again spring 2020.
- Moray East windfarm is now under construction. It is hoped that Wick Harbour can attract CTV traffic associated with this project as it develops. Moray West windfarm has also been given the go ahead and hopes are again high that we can accommodate CTV's and survey vessels which will be required during construction and then maintenance of this project, which is planned to get underway in 2021/22.
- Further offshore wind business may come in the form of floating windfarms which have been mooted for construction off the east Caithness coast.

Cargoes

- The harbour has seen a steady cargo trade since spring 2019, with cargoes of pipes and towheads for the Subsea7 fabrication yard and general shipments of lime, fuel oil etc. Unusually, there have been no onshore windfarm shipments this year.

Fishing

- Fish & shellfish landings by value have increased through 2019 and the onset of a squid fishery close to Wick has seen steady landing from various vessels over the past few months. This in turn passes on to trade for local hauliers.

Leisure

- Visiting yachts are up in number by around 10% from last year. We have still to work out yacht days (total number of days yachts berth) but that is also expected to show in increase.
- Locally, the marina is proving very popular with local vessel owners and each year runs at almost full capacity.

- The harbour has had two visits from the *MV Hebridean Princess* cruise vessel and has also on numerous occasions played host to the sailing ship *Thalassa*, which takes its passengers (mostly German & Dutch) on a cruise around northern distilleries.

High Water Protection Gate

- Tenders for the HWPG t are now complete and being assessed. All being well, it is hoped that this project will get underway in spring 2020. On completion, this wouldl make Wick Harbour a much safer place to berth in all weathers and hopefully be the catalyst in our efforts to attract new business.

Modernisation/improvements

- Navigational improvements, in the form of buoyage, transit marks and new Port Closed Signals have been established in Wick Bay and harbour over the last year, making approaches for both visiting and local vessels much safer.

Appendix D

Gills Harbour, GILLS BAY, KW1 4YB Report 09.2019.

1) MV *ALFRED*: The brand-new 85-metre catamaran ROPAX ferry *Alfred* will provide customers on the busy short-sea route linking Gills Bay in Caithness to St. Margaret's Hope in Orkney with a touch of cruise liner-style comfort after she is anticipated to commence her one-hour scheduled Pentland Firth crossings in late October, 2019.

At present, Scotland's most modern 'Mainland to Island group' ship is being sailed across the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, with an expected 'estimated time of arrival' in the middle of the next month.

Pentland Ferries Ltd director Ms Kathryn Scollie ... oldest daughter of the family company's MD Andrew Banks ... revealed some interesting fact about facilities on board.

That was as *Alfred* commenced her voyage 'home' from the Strategic Marine pty's shipyard in Vung Tau, Vietnam, where she was built to a 'route-specific' design by British naval architects BMT Nigel Gee, of Southampton.

Facilities on board include two lounges with seating, two cafeteria lounges, a children's play-area, an indoor sun lounge where passengers' 'pet dogs are welcome', an outdoor seating area and a wheelchair lift.

Ms Scollie said: 'We are sure that our customers will really appreciate the enhancement of service that this will bring'.

Alfred has carrying capacity for 430 passengers and 98 cars, or 54 cars and 12 articulated trucks or coaches.

Named after Mr Banks's late father ... who in the late 1960s conceived the idea of reviving the ancient sea-route in a modern guise ... crews will commence familiarisation with the *Alfred* soon after her arrival. The short-sea crossing from Gills is now the busiest seaway across the Pentland Firth from Caithness and the most profitable seaway from the Mainland to any Scottish island group. *Alfred* has been built at no cost to the public purse and will not require a UK taxpayer's subsidy for her thrice-daily, year-round, services.

In the meantime, Pentland Ferries Ltd's current flagship, the 70 metre, 2009-built *Pentalina* has been sailing at or near to capacity throughout the 2019 summer.

2) CONTRACT LET TO LOCAL FIRM: Gills Harbour Ltd has let a contract to provide modern facilities linking the 'original' 136 metre long Gills Pier to the water inside its Inner Basin at all 'states of the tide' to a small Canisbay steel-specialist firm Vauldale Engineering, following a competitive tender.

GHL is grateful to the financial support it received for the project ... that includes a new electricity supply to the Pier for users ... from the EU's fisheries-related FLAG fund, whereby local representative Ms Sarah Lamb's assistance proved invaluable. It also acknowledges financial input from the Greencoat Stroupster WF fund, as per Foundation Scotland's local officer, Ms Eilidh Coll, of Brough, Dunnet.

Vauldale is headed by Mr Gordon Begg who is 'putting down roots' in the area with a new family home being built at Newton, John O'Groats. Much of the work there is being undertaken by John O'Groats Joiners, a company headed by GHL director Mr William Miller.

3) VIP VISITORS: Sir Edward Mountain MSP for the Highlands & Islands and Mr Jamie Stone, MP for Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross were separately VIP visitors to the harbour over the summer Parliamentary break. Both offered to provide whatever assistance they could to help community-owned GHL grow in the Gills Bay Economic Development Area. The surrounding area is now so designated by the Highland Council and adopted by the Scottish Government with approval for the former's CaSPlan (Local Plan) being given by the latter late in 2018.

Both representatives asked for a visit and tour and their continuing interest is much appreciated by GHL.

4) MEYGEN SITE PROGRESS: Work is expected to commence next month (10.19) on preliminary work in installing two new 2 MW turbines at SIMEC Atlantis Energy's (SAE's) world-leading MeyGen tidal stream electricity-generating 'demonstration' location, in the Pentland Firth's Inner Sound.

The seabed site lies under c. 30/35 metres of water-depth, just under two miles from the Harbour. Power output from the new turbines will be brought together in a new sub-sea 'hub'. This 'first' for a tidal generator will see a single cable from the two generating turbines being laid to the company's receiving 'shore station' at Canisbay's Ness of Quoys, on the shore of Gills Bay, one mile East of the harbour.

Industry sources indicate that it is unlikely that the Government will grant a deal to SAE for a significant 'Contract for Difference' for MeyGen in the Summer 2019 round, one that has already been delayed by a (unrelated) legal challenge by an onshore aero-generator.

This is largely because tidal stream electricity is at an earlier stage of development ... and is thus more expensive ... than other renewable sources including on-shore and offshore wind.

This 'Project Stroma' 4 MW extension to the original 6 MW from four turbines, is using SAE's in house designed ARL 2000 turbines which will be assembled at Global Energy's base at Nigg. But several 24/26 metre workboats will be needed on scene to provide essential services during the installation & commissioning phase. Gills Harbour is expecting to be utilised by these vessels during construction, expected to be completed by October, 2020.

GHL aims to be able to offer all-tides, all- weathers facilities for powerful mini-ship work-boats by 2021/2022. An additional 70 MW of capacity is already consented there by Marine Scotland.

Appendix E – Transport Scotland

Caithness Transport Forum

Transport Scotland update

September 2019

A9 Berriedale Braes Improvement

Work is progressing well and the project remains on programme for completion of construction in spring 2020.

In terms of current activities on site, the contractor RJ McLeod is working their way through the rock excavation necessary to form the cutting for the new road. In tandem with this they are continuing with piling near the existing hairpin bend for the new retaining structure which will eventually protect the new road alignment from the risk of potential future slope failures.

Traffic management continues to be limited to temporary traffic lights when absolutely essential for reasons of safety and for unavoidable situations such as utility diversion work in the existing road and for tying-in work at each end between the old and new roads.

Trunk Road Maintenance

Maintenance schemes on the A99 and A9 north of Cromarty Bridge for financial year April 2019 to March 2020

Route	Scheme	Status	Dates	Approx. Value	Traffic Management TTL = temporary traffic lights Convoy = TTL with 10mph escort
A99	Thrumster	complete	8 th - 12 th April	£140,000	Daytime convoy
A9	Ardullie to Evanton	complete	28 th Apr - 9 th May	£180,000	Night-time convoy
A99	Latheron	complete	26 th - 28 th Aug	£133,000	Daytime convoy
A9	Clyne Milton	complete	2 nd - 3 rd Sep	£40,000	Daytime convoy
A9	Thurso Footway Improvements	on site	21 st Feb - 30 th Sep	£80,000	some Daytime TTL
A9	Dunbeath	on site	4 th - 10 th Sep	£145,000	Daytime convoy
A9	Latheronwheel to Latheron	programmed	11 th - 23 rd Sep	£235,000	Daytime convoy
A9	Upper Latheron	programmed	24 th - 27 th Sep	£115,000	Daytime convoy
A9	Loch Stemster	programmed	30 th Sep - 4 th Oct	£110,000	Daytime convoy
A9	Brora	programmed	6 th - 17 th Oct (dependent on Scottish Water)	£225,000	Night-time convoy
A9	Wick Footway Improvements	programmed	1 st Oct - 20 th Dec	£70,000	some Daytime TTL
A9	Brora Footway Improvements	programmed	6 th Jan - 31 st Jan	£32,000	Daytime TTL
A99	Latheron Retaining Wall repairs	new scheme	7 th - 11 th Oct	£20,000	Daytime TTL
A9	Tain Bypass Signing renewal	programmed	Sep - Oct	£63,000	Occasional TTL
A9	Tain Bypass Speed Limit reduction to 50mph	awaiting legal process	Feb - Mar	£10,000	Verge works only
A9	Skiach Junction Signing Upgrade	design ongoing	Dec - Jan	£25,000	Verge works with off peak TTL

A9	Rosskeen Junction – barrier upgrade	design ongoing	Dec	£10,000	Daytime TTL
A9 A99 A835	North Coast 500 Tourist Signing	programmed	21 st Oct - 20 th Dec	£140,000	Daytime TTL
A9 A99	Road Markings – refresh of all hand applied markings – arrows, slow, give ways etc.	ongoing	May - Oct		Various, mostly stop/go boards

Information on BEAR Scotland's works programme

can be found at –

<http://bearscoot.com/News/8673/North+West+Unit+Road+Improvements+2019+Programme+Underway/>

and an interactive map (updated monthly) showing the main schemes at – <https://maphub.net/BEARScotland-NorthWest/BEARNW>

