

NET ZERO ENERGY TRANSPORT COMMITTEE – FERRIES REVIEW

Submission from Laurence Odie, Yell Community Council

Following on from our meeting which I was drafted in quite late on, I thought it useful to put my concerns in writing.

SHETLAND INTERISLAND FERRIES

We have had a good service in the past growing over the last 50 years or so, but the current service for most of the Isles is currently out of date, unsustainable and unreliable. They are very old vessels, very expensive to run, there have also been a lot of breakdowns in recent years and this will only escalate.

Most of the ferry crossings a commuter service has developed allowing residents to travel to other Isles on a daily basis to work. As well as allowing service providers to access the islands (plumbers, joiners, etc).

On the Island of Yell there is a large salmon factory processing 19.7 thousand tons of fish last year, this equals 5 – 6 large Artic trucks crossing the ferries each day. It is also very important that they arrive in Lerwick in time to be loaded on the Northlink vessels heading to Aberdeen. They also transport from Mainland Shetland to the factory in Yell about 4,000 tons of salmon for processing. At other times in the year Salmon is sent from Yell to Orkney for processing about 2,000 tons. In all about 26,000 tons of fish cross on the Yellsound ferry each year.

Whitefish landed at the port of Cullivoe is also taken to the Lerwick market as well as the Mussels grown and processed in Yell.

Young people are moving from the Isles to Mainland Shetland to avoid the inconvenience and reliability of the ferry service.

In all the transport link to the Mainland Shetland is not only important for the Island but also to Mainland Shetland and to Scotland as a whole.

I believe that the most sustainable and cost-effective way to provide this important transport connection is by providing a fixed link. This could be provided to several of the main Islands. While there is a one initial high cost it will provide savings in the longer term and help with NET ZERO.

Our neighbours in Norway started building under sea tunnels decades ago and have been followed successfully in the Faroes.

SHETLAND TO ABERDEEN AND ORKNEY

There is an urgent need for more capacity on this route both for overnight Cabins, Car Space and Commercial Vehicles.

To be able to travel with your car and in comfort you have to book months in advance. Commercial vehicles especially the trailers of fish (Salmon, Whitefish & Shellfish) which leave Shetland daily are also extremely important. Non-perishable

and animal feed get left on the Quayside whenever the ferry is full. At certain times of the year a lot of livestock leaves Shetland, this puts more pressure on the service.