

Ardrossan Harbour

September 2025

Commercially Sensitive

Unsolicited Bid and Outcome

- Following an unsolicited bid in 2015 to the Scottish Government (SG) from the owners of the Port of Troon, (ABP) to relocate the services to Troon, the Scottish Transport Minister requested a full evaluation of the joint proposal from Peel Ports Group (PPG) and North Ayrshire Council (NAC) compared with ABP's.
- In April 2017, the decision was made that Ardrossan was the preferred location to service Arran, given the strong case put forward by PPG and NAC.
- Publicly, both parties committed in 2017 to spending £15.5m, of which PPG were replacing the link span and making a £2.2m contribution towards the new terminal building, totalling £8.4m of investment.
- From 2017 to 2020, various iterations of the redevelopment took place before the final scheme was agreed. During that time, it became apparent that the new ferries would not be capable of berthing in Ardrossan in its current configuration.
- The larger ferries therefore introduced a third stakeholder to the scheme, in Transport Scotland (TS) who would contribute to the additional works to accommodate the vessel.
- This was in addition to public partners CalMac who acts as network operator and CMAL as network and vessel owner.

Tendering and Cost Certainty

- The enlarged scope included realignment of the dock wall and additional dredging to achieve the necessary water depths. This brought additional complexities such as state aid rules and new project risks, which delayed the documenting of the development and grant agreements.
- The complexity is demonstrated by the requirement for approx. 21 new legal agreements, across 5 entities (of which 4 are public bodies).
- By 2021, PPG had offered to fund all works, for a commercial return, but it was concluded by SG that the scheme had to be delivered at the lowest cost to the public purse.
- By late 2022/early 2023, PPG jointly funded with TS a cost exercise. The aim was to allow public partners to progress the project to a full public procurement exercise. Another change of Minister occurred around this time.
- By late 2023, TS engaged a consultant to undertake a cost exercise, on an enlarged scope, which included the then defunct Irish berth.
- By 2024, the Transport Minister asked for a business case review, due to spiralling costs, calling back into question the decision around Ardrossan's future.
- By spring 2024, TS and ABP completed infrastructure works in Troon, to accommodate the ferry during the redevelopment of Ardrossan at c£3m.

Where are we 2025...

- Glen Sannox has commenced operation from Troon, whilst the MV Caledonian remains out of service for repairs (it was expected back in service March 25), resulting in no ferries operating from Ardrossan in 2025.
- Early 2025, NAC sought to reopen the original investment principles, due to spiralling costs.
- Islanders, represented by the ferry committees are distraught; poor vessel conditions and a lack of decisions are impacting day visitors and general visitor numbers; thus, livelihood of islanders and businesses are significantly impacted.
- Ardrossan community; created an action group, publicly marching to the Harbour, Holyrood and recently Clydeport HQ.
- Transport Minister announced 19th February confirmation that SG were exploring options on purchasing the Harbour. And CMAL were empowered to negotiate an acquisition on behalf on the Scottish Government.
- There was good initial progress, but further legal checks has slowed progress, however we now re-engaged and within a few months of concluding the legal formalities.