

Richard Leonard MSP  
Convener  
Public Audit Committee  
Scottish Parliament

25 November 2022  
By email

Dear Convener

### **New vessels for the Clyde and Hebrides: Arrangements to deliver vessels 801 and 802**

Thank you for your letter dated 10 November 2022, seeking my response to one of the points raised in Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited's (CMAL's) correspondence to the committee, dated 21 October 2022.

As you are aware, following the BBC's Disclosure investigation into the 801/802 vessels project, I wrote to the committee on 6 October 2022 setting out three potential areas of audit interest should I decide that additional audit work is necessary. My letter was clear that I will consider CMAL's and Transport Scotland's own investigations into the BBC allegations when determining the scope and timing of any audit work.

CMAL's correspondence to the committee refers to one of the three areas of audit interest that I set out in my letter:

- The circumstances that allowed Ferguson Marine Engineering Limited (FMEL) to progress beyond the pre-qualification stage of the procurement, despite being unable to meet the mandatory requirements.

In relation to this point, I would like to clarify that I was referring to the broad requirements of the pre-qualification stage of the procurement, not specifically to question 44 of CMAL's Pre-Qualification Questionnaire.

I would also like to clarify that I have not yet drawn any conclusions on any of the areas of potential audit interest identified in my letter of 6 October, including whether FMEL met the mandatory requirements. As you would expect, I will not be in a position to form a view on this until I have concluded any additional audit work.

Finally, as CMAL has mentioned in its correspondence, it did not have the opportunity to comment on my letter of 6 October 2022. Should I decide that further audit work is necessary, this will be subject to a detailed scoping exercise. In line with Audit Scotland's standard practice, this will include discussions with CMAL, Transport Scotland, and any other relevant stakeholders.

I hope that committee members find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

**Stephen Boyle**  
Auditor General for Scotland