

Written submission from Alex Wright by e mail, 12 October 2022

I was Calmac's naval architectural consultant for approx 25 years, designing vessels and developing designs in the early stages of construction. I am fully conversant with the Calmac fleet and the design and procurement process, having undertaken projects on almost every vessel in the Calmac fleet.

Others may have different views, I am looking at this from 4 aspects

1. The procurement process and the awarding Fergusons the preferred bidder status.
2. The inability of Fergusons to undertake the design and build for the cost and delivery tendered
3. When Scottish Government took Fergusons into public ownership in August 2019 and their after the turn around director gave delivery dates for the vessels of this year and now we find that 802 has now been put back to 2024.
4. Undoubtedly these vessels will be delivered but in reading the various reports they will not achieve the original makeup of the deadweight (initial load draught having already being increased) and the specified speed. I understand the proposal to fit a ducktail on Ship No 802 has now been decided against. The fitting of a ducktail was clearly a method of trying to achieve the specified design speed at the loaded draught . Why was it then decided to dispense with ducktail, if it was required to achieve the specified speed.

At this time I have concentrated on item 1 above. Items 2, 3 and 4 I will leave for others.

There must now have been millions of words written about these vessels and still there have been few direct answers to the questions that really matter.

Was Ferguson's tender package the correct choice to be the preferred bidder?

1 .1 The tender evaluation was based on 50% cost and 50% on quality
It is well documented that Ferguson Marine tendered the highest cost, therefore were attributed the lowest score for cost. From the BBC Disclosure programme, it appears that Ferguson Marine initially tendered on a larger vessel and then were permitted to consider a smaller displacement vessel and reduce the cost accordingly. I believe these options are referred to model 10 and model 20 in the Disclosure programme. In the last tender evaluation in which I was involved (Finlaggan) the score weightings were different.

1.2 The SOTR¹ prepared by Calmac appears to have been obtained by Fergusons and reflected in their tender specification being substantially similar to the SOTR, which again was highlighted in the Disclosure programme.

1.3 Calmac had an input into the technical scoring of the tender evaluation and no doubt their assessment was based on their SOTR. As Fergusons specification was similar to the SOTR their scoring for technical specification would result in a high score. No other tenderer had access to the SOTR

1.4 How exactly were costs translated into scores in the cost evaluation of the overall tender evaluation. The fact that Fergusons were apparently allowed to reduce their cost, would that significantly increase their scoring.

1.5 Having been involved with vessels in Remontowa, Flensburg, Fergusons and Cammell Laird, I find it impossible to believe that Fergusons can be marked substantially higher than the other tenderers on quality. There would normally be 6 separate technical sections of the tender evaluation and yes Fergusons would achieve a high score on the specification aspect (see item 1.2 above). I don't see how Fergusons achieved higher scores for say delivery, capability, experience, availability, quality standard, General Arrangement, contract etc.

1.6 Why were some tenderers eliminated from final evaluation. Were there minor departures from specification requirements. It would be normal to have discussions with tenderers to see why they have failed to comply and if possible, what steps could be taken for them to be included. Were their scores used in the assessment? which if included, would they have affected the score of all tenderers. I think to tender for vessels such as these would cost tenderers up to £50000, depending on their submission, so a significant outlay and not to be considered.

I believe that the Audit Committee is made up of entirely of MSPs which seems rather limited/ restricted considering the complexity of some of the topics they are required to investigate

I have no "axe to grind" with any of the parties involved with this ferry issue, having undertaken tasks for Calmac, CMAL and Fergusons in the past. I am not seeking any financial gains or have a vested interest in any particular ferry design.

My only interest is to see some pride return to the ferry services on the West Coast of Scotland and for the ferry users to get the service they deserve. The failure to control the cost and delivery of these vessels and the misuse of our public money is overwhelming and has stimulated the interest of the general public, who deserve to know what has gone wrong in the building these ferries.

I believe that it would improve the outcome and assist the Committee if they sought answers/information from persons who know the industry. I believe I can be of assistance to the Committee if you think this would be beneficial.

¹ Specification of Operational and Technical Requirements