



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Stuart McMillan MSP

Public Audit Committee

Room T3.60

The Scottish Parliament

EDINBURGH

EH99 1SP

By email only

Email:

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29 September 2022

Dear Mr McMillan,

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

As you will be aware, the Public Audit Committee has been scrutinising the significant issues highlighted in the Auditor General for Scotland's (AGS) report, [New vessels for the Clyde and Hebrides: Arrangements to deliver vessels 801 and 802](#). This has involved gathering a wide range of oral and written evidence to inform its scrutiny of the report.

At its meeting on [16 June 2022](#), the Committee took evidence from the former Director of the former organisation, Ferguson Marine Engineering Limited (FMEL), Jim McColl. During the evidence session, Mr McColl referred to his engagement with you, as the constituency MSP for Greenock and Inverclyde, before FMEL submitted a bid to Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) for a contract to design and build two new vessels by the deadline date of 31 March 2015.

During evidence, Mr McColl explained that you had approached the Scottish Government on the issue of a Builder's Refund Guarantee (BRG) and had received correspondence from the then Minister for Transport and Islands, Derek Mackay, explaining that CMAL had on occasion taken an alternative approach to a BRG.

On [8 September 2022](#), the former Minister for Transport and Islands confirmed during oral evidence to the Committee that he had issued correspondence to you regarding CMAL's procurement process.

It is of great concern to Committee Members that elements of this correspondence have been reported in the media, yet we have been unable to use it to inform our scrutiny, as the correspondence has not been made public.

To support transparency as well as parliamentary scrutiny, it would be helpful to establish what information you sought, and subsequently received from the Scottish Government regarding the procurement process for ferry contracts, as well as any specific information you received about the contract to design and build two new vessels in 2015. We would therefore be grateful if you could provide copies of all correspondence between you and the Scottish Government before 31 March 2015 on these matters.

The Committee looks forward to receiving your response by **17 October 2022**, to allow our consideration of the report to continue as timetabled. Should this date present any difficulties, please contact the clerks as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Leonard". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Richard Leonard MSP,
Convener**