

Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport
Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson na h-Eaconamaidh, Turasachd agus
Còmhhdhail
Rt Hon Stephen Flynn MSP
An Fhìor Urr Stephen Flynn BPA

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Willie Rennie MSP
Convener - Transport Committee
Scottish Parliament

Via email transport.committee@parliament.scot

6 October 2026

Dear Convener

Campbeltown Ferry Service

I am writing to you to update you on a decision regarding the currently-suspended CalMac ferry service between Campbeltown and Ardrossan.

As you may be aware, the service did not operate in the 2023, 2024, 2025 or 2026 seasons, however, following discussions that I have had with Jenni Minto MSP and, previously, Jim Fairlie MSP as responsible Minister had with Ms Minto and Cllr John Armour of Argyll and Bute Council, Transport Scotland officials worked with CalMac and CMAL over potential options for a restoration of the service for Summer 2027 and beyond.

This work focussed on factors including: the needs of the wider current fleet for dedicated resilience vessels to ensure services can continue in times of outage whilst new tonnage is being added; the very limited range of vessels currently in the fleet that are compatible with the Campbeltown port facilities; the plans for the removal from service of older vessels in the current fleet; and the limited availability, as well as high costs, of chartering a suitable vessel specifically for the Campbeltown service.

I have considered the updated analysis and advice provided to me by Transport Scotland and CalMac – taking account of the estimated wider impacts and costs of each. This indicates that any reinstatement option would present significant challenges in terms of network resilience, vessel availability, affordability, value for money and longer-term sustainability.

Therefore, on balance, I have taken the difficult decision that Campbeltown's ferry service should not be reinstated for Summer 2027. I have asked officials to work towards developing options for delivering a service in future years beyond 2027, but it must be noted that any

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

αβχδ αβχδεφγ α

potential reinstatement must consider a number of factors including network resilience, fleet availability, port infrastructure investment as well as available financial resource.

I realise that this decision will be a considerable disappointment to the community, and to local businesses which have benefitted from the service when it operated, but I hope that you will understand the difficult choices that need to be made in the context of constrained budgets; ensuring best value for the taxpayer and maintaining resilience across the network - with priority going to ferry-served communities that are not served by a road link.

Please note, I have also sent similar letters to Jenni Minto MSP, Kenneth Gibson MSP and Cllr Armour. CalMac will also be issuing wider communication on this topic via usual channels.

Yours sincerely

STEPHEN FLYNN