

Cross-Party Group on Maritime and Shipbuilding

Date and Time: Tuesday 18 March 2025 at 6pm

Minute

Present:

MSPs:

- Paul Sweeney MSP (Chair)
- Lorna Slater MSP
- Graham Simpson MSP
- Stuart McMillan MSP

Invited guests:

- Leonore Frame, Developer Engagement /Category Manager Cables - Specialist, Offshore Wind Delivery Team, Scottish Enterprise

Non-MSP Group Members:

- Andy Harmer
- Blair Moglia
- Brian Fulton
- Duncan Cunningham
- Stuart Gallacher
- Thomas Dowse
- Malcolm Warr
- Mike Bullock
- Allan Dickson
- Gary Connely
- Prof. Erkan Oterkus
- Leonore Frame
- Prof Evangelos Boulougouris
- Gauvain Haulot (only able to join for the start of the meeting)
- Derek Sloan

Apologies:

- Ross Nimmo
- Callum McCallum
- Rory McGregor
- James Trolland
- Patrick Carnie

Agenda item 1: Welcome

- Paul Sweeney MSP welcomed everyone in person and online to the meeting and stated that it was the 2024 AGM for the CPG for Maritime and Shipbuilding and introduced guest speaker Leonore Frame, Developer Engagement /Category Manager Cables - Specialist, Offshore Wind Delivery Team, Scottish Enterprise

Agenda item 2: Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes from last September 2024 were approved.

Paul Sweeney flagged that Brian Fulton and Kevin Hobbs were on the call and although we are currently in the 10-day stand still period for the CMAL Small Vessel Replacement Programme tender, he asked if any update could be provided on the process.

Kevin Hobbs proceeded to provide an update:

We conducted a two-phase procurement process, starting with an international tender involving 13 shipyards. By September 2025, we narrowed it down to six: Ferguson Marine, Remontowa, Damen, Cemre, Asenaf, Chile and Cammel Laird. On January 24, we received five tenders, excluding Asenaf, which withdrew due to capacity issues.

Our team independently evaluated technical and commercial aspects (pricing/contracting) of the tenders. Technical competency accounted for 65% of the evaluation and commercial aspects for 35%. Remontowa emerged as the clear winner, with three yards being highly competitive and two less so.

Paul thanked Kevin for providing a helpful overview of the process and opened the room to questions.

Stuart MacMillan asked about the 10th of March Commercial date and whether CMAL had had conversations with all the yards prior to the confirmation date.

KH: No, we only speak to the lead bidder first.

Stuart MacMillan inquired whether additional information would be made available to the public after the 10-day standstill period and once the contract has been signed.

KH: No, however we will give each of the yards their ranking as to where they came in their ranking from one to five in both their technical and commercial ranking to provide feedback.

Graham Simpson asked: what particularly impressed you about the Remontowa bid?

KH: It's multi-faceted really. There's maybe 150 different aspects. We have to be convinced that the yards can deliver on time, within budget, and to the required quality standards. Remontowa impressed us with their comprehensive project management plan, their experience in building similar vessels, and their commitment to innovation and sustainability. They provided detailed timelines, budget forecasts, and a robust risk management strategy that addressed potential challenges effectively. Their technical expertise, combined with their commercial competitiveness, made them the standout bidder.

PW: How do you see this as a demand signal just understanding in terms of section 12 of the procurement act and a competitive tender, is there opportunity to have parts made in Scotland and shipped out?

KH: For an example regarding the 4 vessels under construction in Türkiye, the stabilising fins are constructed in Scotland and then sent to Turkey. However, it is essential to adhere to the established process. These new vessels will undergo every single dry docking over the next 30 years in Scotland. In terms of maintenance, aside from crewing costs, we anticipate spending a million pounds per year per vessel. Consequently, there will be significant Scottish involvement throughout the vessel's lifespan, likely exceeding the initial construction cost. There remains substantial value in Scotland even if the vessels are not built here.

PW: Financial products have been mentioned such as Builders Refund Guarantees – has this been a problem?

KH: Each of the yards stated they can obtain bank guarantees, as these products are more established in Europe and globally than in the UK.

Emek: What opportunities will be presented to university students – is this part of the tender?

KH: We can share this after 10 days, however I will say, these things are usually in the contracts, however the uptake hasn't always been great.

Mike from NLB added that it has been more positive regarding the construction of the new Polestar with individual students instead of companies and they now have 7 students who have agreed to go out to their build in Spain.

Paul thanks Kevin for his update and congratulated him and his team for his efforts. Kevin left the meeting.

Agenda item 3: Agenda item 4

The Scottish Cable Story in Energy Transition: Developer Engagement /Category Manager Cables - Specialist, Offshore Wind Delivery Team, Scottish Enterprise

Paul Sweeney introduced Leonore Frame, who shared a comprehensive update on undersea cables.

Questions:

Lorna Slater: Have you observed or are you planning for different weather days?

LF: Weather windows is a challenge in the planning and installation of windfarms, so this is something that the teams need to work around. There's been some bad winters. However, I don't have the data on long term trends.

LS: What is the state of play for very long subsea sections? Does this mean larger vessels?

LF: Example 400km cable – I believe this one has 3 connectors – they try and limit the joints as these are points of failure. About 9 new vessels are coming on the scene from next year to facilitate laying. They will carry 3 large carousels at a time to allow for more cables to be laid and it will enable less connections to be made.

Paul Little: Where do you get the crew from these vessels and when we provide the skills for this, are we upskilling and reskilling or are we front skilling?

LF: It's a mixture of all. They are looking for local people but are struggling – they are really looking for electrical skills in particular.

SM: Have you had any dialogue with Marine Scotland regarding vessels? Because of their risk with regards to cables, is there an option to use their vessels by way of protection?

LF: I am not aware of this, however I will pass this onto my relative colleagues within these companies.

SM: How are cables getting to the port of Blythe?

LF: One example came from Athens, then to Blythe. The come by sea on carousels/reels.

Agenda Item 4: AOB

Derek Sloan provided an introduction to DFDS and an update on their new ROPAX route from Rosyth to Dunkirk.

DFDS is launching a new ROPAX route from Rosyth to Dunkirk with a crossing time of 20 hours and a port stay of 4 hours. This service is expected to start in March 2026. We want to contribute 8 million road miles off the road which will significantly contribute towards decarbonisation. We are also looking for funding, but we are very enthusiastic and we are more than happy to do a full presentation on a later date.

Next meeting date: June 25, 2025

We may have additional activity in the diary in addition to this. If there is anything else that may be of interest to the CPG, please let us know and we will be happy to share.

Expression of thanks to Kevin Hobbs, Leonore Frame and Derek Sloan for providing updates.