Haskoning UK Ltd.
Water & Maritime

CMAL SVRP Portavadie Marine Plan Policy Assessment

6. Scotland's National Marine Plan

Provide details of how the proposed activity is in accordance with Scotland's National Marine Plan including references to relevant policies. This should include consideration of the General Policies and any Sector Polices.

GEN 1 General planning principle:

Tourism is an essential boost to the economy of the isolated Scottish communities, it stimulates related sectors including food and drink, retail, heritage sites, transport, and accommodation. Cal Mac ferries play a crucial role in the facilitation of transport to the isolated Scottish areas, and as a result is a critical component in the economy. One of the benefits of the proposed development will facilitate a more reliable electric ferry service to the Kintyre Peninsula , the ferry service is a lifeline for not only tourists but for local residents too, whilst already an established activity, investment into futureproofing the ferry service adheres to GEN1, (4.6) as it will allow for growth of the tourism industry of Kintyre Peninsula serviced by the Portavadie ferry terminal.

GEN 2 Economic Benefit:

The proposed development aims to increase the reliability of the ferry services by replacing the old existing ferries, which are reaching the end of their operational life, with electric vessels to service the Kintyre Peninsula. Due to the highly seasonal influence of the tourism economy, any losses during the peak season could be financially devastating for local businesses.

Uncertainty in transport can underpin the security of investments in businesses, confidence in supply chain planning and event reliability. The proposed development which will allow the facilitation of the introduction of electric vessels will provide a more reliable service, as electric vessels have simpler propulsion system which requires less maintenance downtime and lower risk of mechanical failure.

GEN 3 Social benefit:

The proposed development aims to boost the local economy and the social benefits associated by providing the necessary infrastructure for electric vessels. Introduction of a more reliable ferry service will not only benefit the coastal communities but will also benefit those who travel to and use the marine and coastal environment of the Kintyre Peninsula. The electric ferries are anticipated to provide a clean and more reliable service, with less maintenance downtime and reduced likelihood of mechanical failure safeguarding transport links for the communities utilising these services.

Throughout the construction of the proposed development, any disruption to the passenger services will be kept to an absolute minimum, any disruption that does occur throughout the construction process will be mitigated with alternative routes and transport. Whilst the Kintyre Peninsula is entirely accessible by

car, the inclusion of the ferry from Portavadie to Tarbert significantly reduces the journey time. There are other ferry routes which would be available for the local communities to utilise including the Campbeltown to Ardrossan ferry.

GEN 5 Climate Change:

Ferry operations contribute to greenhouse gas emission, which contributes to climate change, both whilst in port overnight and vessels in operation. The decarbonisation of the vessels associated with this proposed development will see a considerable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The introduction of the electric ferries will be a significant step in the decarbonisation of Scottish transport links.

The design of the proposed development has considered future worst-case scenario projections for sea level rise to prevent inundation of the infrastructure from either climate change induced sea level rise or storm surges.

Whilst it is expected that isolated communities economies, such as those on the Kintyre Peninsula, are expected to be hit hard by the effects of climate change. Increasing the confidence in business investment within these communities and inside the tourism sector of these areas is likely to provide more opportunities for resilience against future climate change impacts.

GEN 8 Coastal process and flooding:

The design of the proposed development has been done in consideration of worst-case scenarios of coastal change and sea level rise. The on-shore infrastructure, including the expansion of the marshalling area and widened slipway have been designed to be less vulnerable to flooding and erosion as predicted by climate change models.

GEN 9 Natural heritage

There is a SSSI and SAC within 5 km of the proposed development: Tarbert to Skipness Coast SSSI which has qualifying features of bryophyte assemblage and upland oak woodland, at its closest point it is located 4.6 km from the proposed development and Tarbert Woods SAC, which has qualifying feature of western acidic oak woodland, at its closest point is located 4.6 km from the proposed development.

A review of the data available on the Scottish Government National Marine Plan Interactive map reports the following Priority Marine Features (PMFs) within 2 km of the port at Portavadie[1]:

- Kelp and seaweed communities on sublittoral sediment
- Burrowed mud
- Northern feather star

The estimated at sea population is low for grey seal and relatively high for harbour seals in the area around Portavadie (Carter *et al.,* 2022). The Rubha nan Sgarbh designated haul out site for harbour seals is approximately 36 km east of Portavadie.

[1] https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/snh::gems-scottish-priority-marine (Accessed October 2025)

Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) are regularly reported from Loch Fyne, including the area around Portavadie (Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust, 2024). Other cetacean species commonly report from Loch Fyne include bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncates*), short-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) and minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) and with other species including basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*), recorded on occasion.

The proposed dredging is temporary and for a short period only, it is not expected to create harmful levels of underwater noise. No impacts on the protected sites or species are predicted as a result of the works. The proposed works will be subject to Standard Best Practice Mitigation measures and Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) to ensure that the potential impact for species mortality, injury or disturbance are mitigated for and therefore not significant.

GEN 10 INNS

There are three species records of Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) in the Argyll marine region;

- Leathery sea squirt (*Styela clava*)
- Common cord-grass (*Spartina anglica*)
- Carpet sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*)

Spread of INNS would be managed using standard mitigation measures in line with recommendations in the Scottish Government Code of Practice on Non-Native Species, a precautionary approach will be taken for materials/ equipment used.

GEN 13 Noise

The implementation of Best Practice Measures and CEMP will manage potential noise impacts to human receptors from any construction works. Any impacts expected from increased vessel traffic during the proposed development construction is not anticipated as the activity is in line with the current use of the port.

The proposed development facilitates the use of electric vessels. The type of vessel anticipated for use in the SVRP is a small battery powered vessel with a traditional hull design. The main reduction in vessel noise will be seen by human receptors whilst the vessel is idling in port, diesel engine vessels produce a significant amount of airborne noise. The battery generation of the ferry's engine significantly and noticeably reduces the amount of airborne noise produced. The use of the battery powered engine in idling will see a reduction in underwater noise whilst the vessel is stationary in port. Whilst the underwater noise is marginally reduced in vessels with hydrofoil design due to their propulsion technology enabling them to "fly" over waves, reducing drag and wake, resulting in a smoother and quieter ride for passengers. Other designs have a reduced ability to lessen the underwater noise generated by their propulsion, as propulsion and engine noise is only a small factor in the underwater noise creation of vessels. The small battery powered vessel anticipated for use in the proposed development will still see a reduction in underwater noise generated by current baseline levels of the diesel engine vessels.

GEN 14 Air quality

The closest human receptor to the proposed development is 30 m away. During the construction application of the standard dust control and management techniques, as laid out in the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) guidance document and CEMP would ensure that no significant effects arise in respect of dust or fine particulate matter. During operation, the proposed development will facilitate the introduction of electric ferries to service the crossing between Portavadie and Tarbert, the introduction of the electric ferries will drastically reduce the emissions to air of the vessels through the elimination of diesel fuelled engines.