



ICIA Screening Questionnaire

1. Description of Proposal

The proposal is to introduce planned maintenance time into ferry timetables across the network, in line with the CHFS3 contractual commitment that all vessels are provided with sufficient scheduled time to undertake essential maintenance activities. This has been defined as either a minimum of 6 hours per week or one full day per month of dedicated maintenance time, incorporated within the published timetable.

The introduction of maintenance windows represents a change to previous operating arrangements under CHFS2, where such time was not formally required within timetables. As a result, this approach is being phased in across routes, with implementation tailored to individual service patterns, operational constraints and levels of demand.

The primary objective of the proposal is to improve the reliability and resilience of ferry services by enabling planned maintenance activities to be carried out safely and effectively. Modern vessels consist of thousands of individual components, many of which require regular inspection, servicing or repair. While some maintenance can be undertaken while vessels are in operation, a proportion of essential work can only be completed when the vessel is alongside and not in active service. Providing dedicated maintenance time allows defects to be addressed at an early stage, reducing the likelihood of escalation into more serious failures and avoiding unplanned cancellations or extended periods out of service.

The proposal also reflects wider operational requirements, including compliance with safety standards, statutory inspection regimes, and crew working time regulations. Without planned maintenance windows, maintenance and repair activity can place pressure on crew working hours, potentially leading to subsequent service disruption where vessels are required to be withdrawn to ensure compliance with rest requirements.

Implementation of maintenance windows will require adjustments to existing timetables and may result in a reduction of services on some routes. It may include changes to sailing frequency, timing, or daily service patterns, and will be developed on a route-by-route basis. In all cases, changes will be informed by demand analysis, operational data, and engagement with local communities and stakeholders, with the aim of minimising disruption and maintaining appropriate levels of connectivity. Where the introduction of maintenance time has the potential to affect service levels, options to mitigate impacts will be considered as part of the timetable development process.

2. Which community / area / route could be affected?

This screening questionnaire is being conducted for users of the Barra-Eriskay service.

3. Questions

Answer

Rationale/ Explanation / Decision

Q1. Could the proposed change potentially impact an island community?

Yes

- The proposal relates to ferry service timetables and the introduction of planned maintenance windows, which may affect sailing frequency and timing. As ferry services provide essential connectivity for island communities, including access to services, employment, education and freight, there is potential for impact.



3. Questions	Answer	Rationale/ Explanation / Decision
<p>Q2. Could this proposal affect island communities in a significantly different way to other islands or to users of the service who live on the mainland, because of:</p>	<p>No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of planned maintenance windows may result in some adjustments to sailing frequency and timing on certain routes. • This could affect aspects such as commuter travel, school transport, access to healthcare and other essential services, as well as the movement of freight and lifeline supplies. However, these changes will be developed on a route-by-route basis, informed by demand analysis and engagement with local communities, with the aim of minimising impacts on residents, key workers, and essential journeys. • While island communities are more reliant on ferry services and may be sensitive to changes affecting same-day travel, connectivity and service availability, the proposal is intended to improve overall service reliability and resilience. By enabling essential maintenance to be carried out in a planned way, it reduces the risk of unplanned breakdowns, cancellations and prolonged disruption, which can have more significant impacts on school travel, commuting, delivery of essential goods and access to services. • Potential impacts relating to capacity, accessibility, costs and the operation of lifeline services will be considered as part of timetable development, including maintaining appropriate provision for essential travel, freight and key user groups. • Overall, the proposal is expected to provide longer-term benefits through improved reliability and reduced disruption, and does not disproportionately disadvantage island communities compared to current arrangements.
<p>Q3. To what extent could the proposed change potentially impact an island community?</p>	<p>2 - Low - Some difference for island communities, but the effect is small, localised or easily managed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Barra–Eriskay route provides an important local connection within the Barra and Uist island group, supporting access to services, supply chains, and community activities. • The route plays a role in facilitating healthcare access, as patients often travel onward to Uist or Stornoway for appointments. In addition, some healthcare professionals travel to Barra to provide at-home care, primarily on weekdays. While this creates a degree of weekday sensitivity, the planned nature of services and the scheduling of a maintenance window in agreement with the community helps minimise any disruption. • The impact on education is limited, with both primary and secondary schooling available locally across the islands. As such, there is no regular reliance on the route for daily school commuting,



3. Questions	Answer	Rationale/ Explanation / Decision
		<p>reducing the potential for adverse effects in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply chains, including the transport of dangerous goods such as heating oil and diesel, rely on this route following onward movement from Lochmaddy. However, these deliveries are typically well planned in advance, and established relationships with suppliers provide resilience and flexibility. Similarly, regular bakery deliveries and contractor movements (including hygiene services operating across multiple islands) are scheduled and can adjust to planned changes where required. • Tourism contributes to local economic activity, with visitors often travelling through Barra and onward north through the island chain. While some visitors may arrive without bookings and require flexibility in travel, alternative sailings and the ability to re-plan journeys help mitigate impacts. • Recreational, sports, and community activities mainly take place at weekends, when disruption is expected to be minimal. • Consultation has already taken place with the local community, and a maintenance window has been agreed, ensuring that proposed changes reflect local needs and priorities. • Overall, while the route supports a range of important activities, the structured nature of travel, forward planning of key services, and agreed mitigation measures mean that impacts are expected to be limited. As such, the impact is considered low.

Outcome	Date Completed
No impact assessment needed	27/05/26