



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pressure on crew working hours, potentially leading to subsequent service disruption where vessels are required to be withdrawn to ensure compliance with rest requirements.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 Mallaig-Armadale 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?</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 Mallaig-Armadale route provides an important connection between the mainland and Skye, supporting commuter, tourism, and local travel. • A key user group includes college students travelling on weekdays between Mallaig and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. While these journeys could be affected during periods of disruption/off-service, the availability of alternative travel via the Skye Bridge allows continued access, albeit with potential increases in journey time. The predictability of the timetable also enables advance planning to minimise inconvenience. • Freight movements on this route are relatively limited, with minimal reliance compared to other routes. Skye benefits from a fixed link to the mainland, allowing goods and supplies to be transported via the bridge. In addition, infrastructure constraints such as low bridges on



3. Questions	Answer	Rationale/ Explanation / Decision
		<p>mainland routes already limit the use of larger vehicles via this corridor, further reducing dependency on the ferry service for freight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism and day trips represent a significant proportion of demand on the route. While this group may experience some inconvenience during planned service changes, visitors are generally able to adjust travel plans in advance or use the alternative road and bridge network. As such, while tourism is a key user group, impacts are expected to be manageable. • Access to healthcare services is unlikely to be significantly affected, as onward travel to hospitals and appointments in the north is typically quicker and more direct via the road network and Skye Bridge rather than via Mallaig. This reduces reliance on the ferry for essential healthcare journeys. • Consultation with the community has already taken place, and maintenance windows have been agreed, ensuring that any planned disruptions reflect user needs and allow for appropriate planning. • Overall, given the availability of alternative routes, limited reliance for freight, and the ability for users to plan travel, the proposed changes are not expected to materially affect access to key services or economic activity. As such, the impact is considered low.

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