

Improving every journey



**Delivery plan
Smart and Integrated Ticketing**

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Executive summary

This Smart and Integrated Ticketing Delivery Plan explains how Caledonian MacBrayne will incorporate both established and emerging smart ticketing technologies into our operations, delivering simpler and easier ticket purchasing and travel.

It sets out our approach to delivering contractual commitments as the operator of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS3) agreement, and how enhancements to improve the customer experience will be delivered.

Our plan details our contribution to the achievement of Scottish Ministers' aims, as set out in the Smart, Digital, Integrated Ticketing and Payments Delivery Strategy 2024, which are summarised as: "to increase the use of sustainable public transport by providing smart and integrated ticketing, payment, and journey planning data enhancements, contributing to a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland". It contributes to delivery of our Corporate Plan in making our customers' travel experiences seamless and frictionless by providing integrated information, ticketing and travel.

This delivery plan will only be achieved successfully through understanding the needs of our customers and by engaging with partners and stakeholders. In looking for customer-led solutions, we expect to be guided by Equalities and Island Communities Impact Assessments, user research and extensive collaboration. It explains how we will prepare our organisation to accept customers' smartcards using the ITSO standard as Scottish Ministers' preferred smart ticketing technology for entitlement-based travel in 2026-27 and how we will work with Transport Scotland and other key partners like ScotRail, and taking account of emerging guidance from the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (NSTAB), to determine optimal ticketing solutions for trial and deployment. The plan also describes our approach to much more extensive sharing of timetable, fare and travel data with third parties, including Traveline Scotland.

1. Introduction

Caledonian MacBrayne plays a vital role in connecting Scotland's island and coastal communities. Our Smart and Integrated Ticketing Delivery Plan explains how we will include, adopt and embed both established and emerging smart ticketing technologies in our operations, delivering simpler, easier and faster ticket purchase and travel.

This plan reflects our commitment to improving every journey, not only through our provision of reliable and resilient transport, but through open, integrated and customer-informed ticketing solutions, that align with both the Smart, Digital, Integrated Ticketing and Payments Delivery Strategy 2024 and the work and recommendations of the Scottish National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (NSTAB).

Since introducing a new, electronic reservations and ticketing platform, eBooking, in the summer of 2023 at the request of Scottish Ministers, we have been able to widen online access to tickets, including offering selected concessionary fares online for the first time, and flexible tickets for travel on our 14 Turn Up and Go routes. These factors have led to a rise in online purchase from 16.5% in 2018 to 47.0% of all ticket sales in the 12 months ending 30 November 2025.

We have further to go to make digital, smart and integrated ticketing more straightforward, accessible and inclusive for customers and will combine a programme of enhancements to existing systems with the introduction of new, modern ticketing options. In doing so we will ensure that accessibility



and inclusivity are both recognised and prioritised, and that we listen regularly to our customers and communities for whom ticketing can be a part of everyday life.

This plan sets out the timescales and the work involved in delivering a series of commitments, specified by Transport Scotland, our aspirations for the further improvement of smart ticketing and the expansion of ticketing and travel information to Traveline Scotland and other Scottish transport operators. Our Partnership Agreement with ScotRail is a welcome step in moving this agenda forward and we welcome the opportunity to work directly with NSTAB and participating operators of bus, subway and active travel services and Regional Transport Partnerships, to align ourselves with Transport Scotland's strategic aims, and to contribute to the establishment of nationwide, integrated ticketing options for public transport in Scotland.

This plan recognises and aligns with our Accessibility Strategy, the Scottish Government's National Transport Strategy, Transport Scotland's Smart, Digital, Integrated Ticketing and Payments Delivery Strategy 2024, the Islands Connectivity Plan and the NSTAB's Work Programme 2024-28.

2. Plan objective

The objective of this plan is to set out how we at Caledonian MacBrayne will improve customer access to convenient, affordable, intuitive and integrated multi-modal ticketing using Scottish Ministers' eBooking system, ITSO ticketing, and adding other ticketing technologies including those recommended by NSTAB. Delivery will be achieved in partnership with other operators, including ScotRail, bus and active travel operators, Regional Transport Partnerships and local authorities.

We will address known customer pain points through smart solutions and will deliver the customer benefits of smart ticketing and improved travel information.

3. Planned approach

Our approach is designed to assimilate our obligations under CHFS3 and to deliver continuous improvements to the customer experience. We will:

- Create a continuous integration and continuous development/delivery approach that allows key customer and user groups to participate actively in shaping the future digital and multi-modal ticketing experience.
- Support multi-modal travel for booking multiple modes of transport across Scotland with simplified access to help both first-time users and regular travellers alike.
- Provide simplified booking flows and improved and easier access to tickets after purchase, using a mobile first approach.
- Provide proactive, supportive customer journey information from the point of booking to travel completion and in user-friendly and easy-to-understand formats.
- Create services to support seamless integration of our systems with third-party information and booking services such as Traveline Scotland, ScotRail and others.

This plan represents our commitment to these deliverables and to working with our communities and customers to provide the necessary familiarisation required to help them through any transition from paper to smart and flexible ticketing, whether smartcards for concessions, digital (including barcodes as well as other digital options) or other travel tokens in due course.



This important work will be planned, managed and delivered by our eBooking Product Management team, supported by our wider Caledonian MacBrayne organisation, and through a Customer Digital Experience programme which will ensure the required outcomes and benefits are achieved.

The work set out in this plan will be monitored through a monthly working group with Transport Scotland, ScotRail and other public transport stakeholders as relevant to the stage of work concerned. This working group will allow us at Caledonian MacBrayne to explore opportunities, in due course, for integrated ticketing, information sharing and collaboration with a wider network of operators. We will also report its progress to our own Executive team, and to our customers via the Customer Steering Group and its Ferry Communities Board.

We will measure the success of our interventions in this plan through a tiered set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reflecting their relevance and importance to our strategy and our customers.

The list below presents our current thinking, and we will define the list in detail and baseline current performance as part of this programme of work.

Measure / Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target
Tier One	
Mobile App downloads and sign ups	↑
Mobile App bookings (% of all bookings)	↑
ITSO transactions (seeking consistent take-up across the population of customers with relevant entitlements)	↑
Account Based Ticketing purchases (once available)	↑
Cross channel contact	↓
First time resolution	↑
Digital content time lapse	↓
Web views	↑
Basket abandons	↓
Tier Two	
Scanned vs counted passenger numbers	↑
Digital Customer and Overall Satisfaction CSAT / OSAT*	↑
Digital ease	↑
Health and Safety incidents re: port movement	↓
In port customer movements	↓
Tier Three	



Overall CSAT and trust and ease	↑
Channel split: mobile/digital	↑
Channel split: Customer Engagement Centre/in person	↓
Customer complaints	↓

*CSAT will be adapted to provide measures of customer satisfaction with specific aspects of our service such as the usefulness of travel information and preferred means of ticketing and the partner organisations through which our tickets are made available.

4. Our approach to delivery

Inclusive, community-focused and customer-led

In line with our ways of working with customers and communities - as set out in our Corporate Plan - we will align our design and delivery of ticketing solutions with our Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) and Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA), helping ensure we take an inclusive, community-focused and customer-led approach.

We anticipate initiating both activities before proceeding with the larger, planned changes to the customer experience and maintaining both documents at quarterly intervals and as the details about forthcoming technology and accessibility recommendations from NSTAB and from partner engagement emerge.

Our work here will involve public consultation and engagement, and we look forward to sharing and refining our plans based on customer and stakeholder feedback.

Provide smart and integrated ticketing

While we already deliver all ticket types digitally and facilitate smart payment throughout our network, we want to integrate our services more fully and more tangibly with those of other operators, particularly those providing connecting journeys for our passengers, such as ScotRail and local bus operators in the communities we serve.

Our roadmap for smart and integrated ticketing follows a series of logical enhancements and improvements to our ticketing options. Our work will deliver greater customer choice and convenience and will, in time, allow customers to purchase multi-modal tickets - one ticket covering travel across multiple modes of public transport like ferry, bus and train - from their preferred seller.

In the last year we introduced both Apple and Google Pay payment options and in early 2026, we will introduce the ability for customers to carry their Caledonian MacBrayne tickets in an Apple or Google digital wallet. We will introduce concession travel under the national Transport Scotland schemes on ITSO smartcards in 2026-27 and will simplify online ticket acquisition and purchase for customers on our turn up and go routes.

We are already in dialogue with Smart Applications Management, the UK not-for-profit that fronts the National Mobilities Procurement Hub, simplifying access to smart ticketing expertise and specialist skills for UK public sector clients and transport operators, and have established an Action Plan to



work through our commitments under our Partnership Agreement with ScotRail to bring about integrated ticket purchase and ticketing for multi-modal travel.

We will work with Regional Transport Partnerships, HITRANS and SPT, local authorities and other public transport operators, including ScotRail, bus and active travel operators, to investigate, propose and trial multi-modal smart ticketing solutions and we are already engaging with relevant solution suppliers and ScotRail, through a Partnership Agreement.

We will continue to work with ScotRail to find a workable and customer-friendly ticketing solution to facilitate flexible tourist foot passenger travel on integrated tourist tickets like the Scottish Grand Tour and Highland Rover, and will discuss opportunities to extend reach even further into relevant local bus networks and other 'last mile' public transport options such as cycle hire or car share schemes. We will investigate the optimum ticket fulfilment medium for these tickets with ScotRail and others, and while we may deploy using paper on an interim basis, we will seek to convert these products to smart tickets as rapidly as possible.

We will engage with multi-modal travel forums such as the NSTAB, the Operators' Smart Steering Group and the ScotRail/CalMac and CityLink/CalMac Partnership forums and will evaluate participation in any further trialling of multi-modal ticket products with a ferry component on a single, multi-modal barcode and we expect this may form the preferred national solution for some time.

We are not constrained to any particular form of travel token and will explore Account-Based Ticketing (ABT) opportunities informed by research about what is likely to work well in our operational contexts, what our partners need and what customers tell us they want. Any ABT opportunities explored will be aligned with recommendations from NSTAB and guided by our Accessibility Advisory Board to ensure inclusive design and service delivery.

We will also look at our options for introducing travel using contactless bank cards (cEMV) where feasible, including virtual cards on smartphones and wearables such as smart watches.

Our Equalities Impact Assessment will guide our recommendations to help ensure that we continue to cater for customers who may not have a live bank account or card, or who retain a preference to transact with us using cash.

Provide booking and travel APIs for third parties

We will work to build and deploy Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) for the eBooking services that we wish to make available to third parties. This will allow us to supply information including timetable, fare, disruption, ticket purchasing data and ultimately vessel location information, booking and booking amendment functionality to other third parties in the transport network. These can be integrated with shared information services for connecting rail and bus services, for example.

We will develop these APIs using modern, industry-standard integration protocols, and will ensure our development provides an easy upgrade path to integration with Ferry Gateway, the de facto international integration standard for the selection, purchase and management of ferry bookings.

This plan presents a roadmap for delivery of a range of sequential and complementary initiatives that will improve the quality and expand the availability and currency of information for customers travelling and/or considering travelling with us, and with our partners.

We will investigate options for supply of real-time vessel monitoring data, including use of an Automatic Identification System (AIS) data source or potentially through location-capable, onboard



network equipment. In the days and weeks prior to departure of any vessel on any of our 16 bookable routes, we will be able to publish real-time remaining capacity availability, helping customers with their travel enquiries and allowing more-informed judgement about the urgency with which they may wish to consider committing and making a booking.

Provide open data APIs to update Traveline Scotland automatically

We will publish eBooking and other data, sharing it through open partner APIs, specifically with the Scottish Digital Travel Data Service and, in turn, Traveline Scotland, ensuring real-time updates are available at all times and reflect the very latest travel information. Over time we will look to provide open data in line with Scottish Ministers' digital and data aspirations.

As part of the roadmap, we will incorporate vessel location and automatically estimated arrival and departure times for all services, this will be particularly beneficial where any of our services deviate from timetable due to weather or technical delay or disruption.

Integrate with the National Concessionary Travel Schemes

We will facilitate the use of national concessionary Ferry Voucher Scheme vouchers on ITSO smartcards. This will enable customers in the Western Isles and selected islands in North Ayrshire, Argyll and Bute, and Highland Council areas to travel on eligible routes using a concession entitlement on their National Entitlement Card.

This change will bring CHFS routes into a solution that will, over time, remove reliance on paper vouchers and will allow additional and centralised control over entitlement and utilisation monitoring.

Our solution will use Transport Scotland's well-established ITSO Host Operator Processing System (HOPS) and related infrastructure, avoiding the need for us to design and engineer our own. We will secure validator devices and link them to Transport Scotland's solution, avoiding duplication of costs and aligning with guidance from NSTAB.

All ITSO travel transacted through the system will be fully available in the Transport Scotland HOPS. We will investigate options for both reading and writing to customers' ITSO smart media and will determine, with Transport Scotland, how to configure the solution to include relevant product types, routes and journeys. We will seek to source a device on which ITSO, other smart tickets and eBooking applications can transact, but recognise that we may need to deploy an additional validation device in the shorter-term. We will seek to incorporate ITSO devices into customer transactions in port offices and at purser stations on board our small ferries, preventing our colleagues from having to carry and operate an additional device wherever possible.

We will work with Transport Scotland to ensure we assimilate learnings from Pentland Ferries and NorthLink's implementation of concession entitlements on ITSO.

We recognise the need, not only to ensure our colleagues are fully trained and familiarised with the ticketing hardware and procedures, but also to support our customers, some of whom may be using a smartcard and downloading their entitlement for the first time. User research and learnings from earlier implementations across the Scottish ferry network will be used to help design and execute a suitable support package, which will be delivered by our Centre of Excellence to ensure consistent and measurable skills improvement.



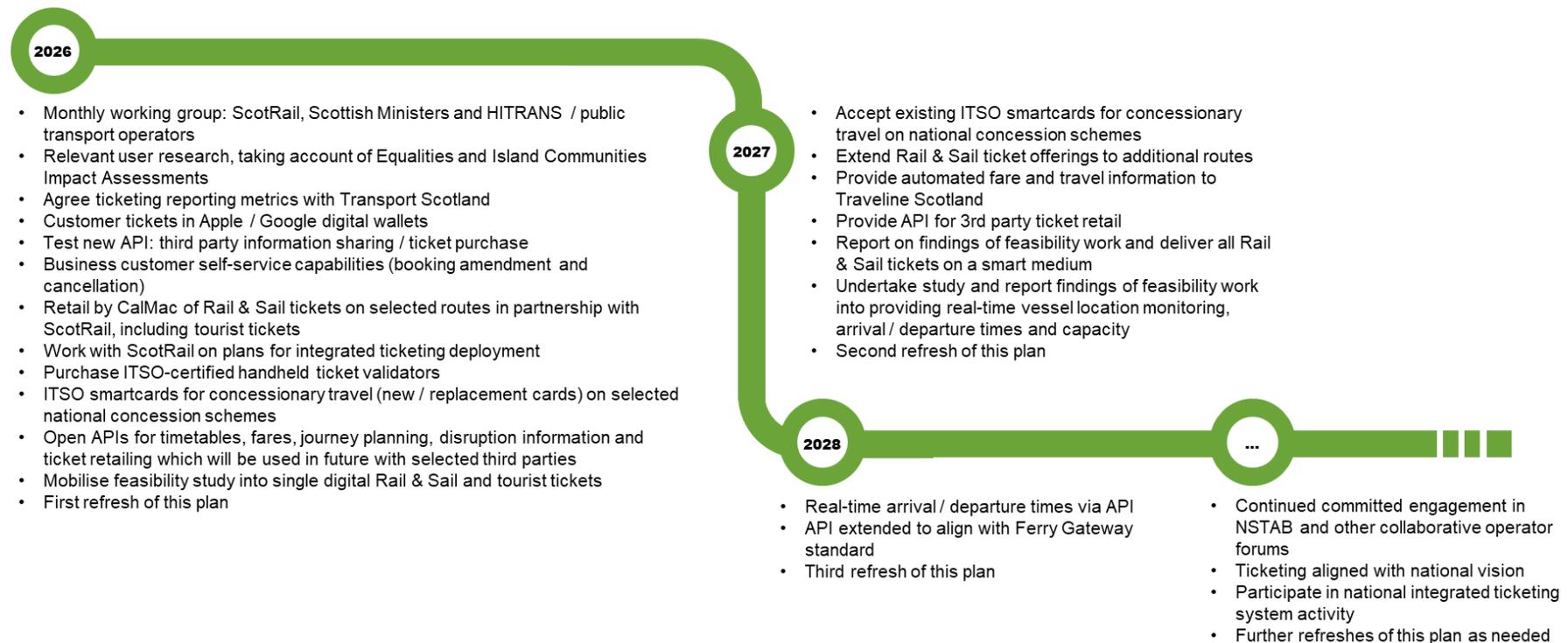
We note Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government's ambitions to explore extension of free foot passenger travel on inter-island ferries for Under-22 island residents in the Outer Hebrides and will work with Transport Scotland to make such an extension a reality when this work progresses.



5. Outline roadmap

The high level, year-by-year roadmap below reflects our current thinking for the deployment of the cornerstone smart and integrated ticketing deliverables. This plan is consistent with the milestone delivery commitments in CHFS3.

This roadmap will be adjusted and updated annually as a minimum, and as new information becomes available and decisions at national level are reached. We will also provide further detail in the March 2026 update of this plan.





6. Conclusion

Our customers expect increasingly digitally enabled travel and easy access to relevant travel information in support of their journeys - during both the planning and the undertaking of their journey.

This plan sets out a clear, customer-centric, ambitious approach to introducing smart and integrated ticketing on our routes. It places a strong emphasis on the importance of Equalities and Island Community Impact Assessments as pre-requisites to successful delivery and recognises that partnerships and collaborative working relationships with Transport Scotland, ScotRail, HITRANS, SPT, bus operators and the various forums through which they interact, including the NSTAB and the Operators' Smart Steering Group are similarly key.

It sets out the intended timeline for incremental delivery of our contractual commitments and initiatives to enhance the customer experience and commits to refreshing this plan annually while planned work is taking place. As we work through this plan, we expect further recommendations from NSTAB and continued dialogue with other operators to create opportunities for further collaboration and trial of strategically aligned smart ticketing options.

Whether we are delivering ticketing enhancements, new ticketing technologies and/or process changes, we will deliver in line with our communications strategies for internal, customer and stakeholder audiences to help ensure that our people, our customers and our various stakeholders get the information they need, in the way they have told us they prefer to receive it and that we train, guide and support anyone that has, or that needs a smart ticket for travel on a Caledonian MacBrayne ferry.

By delivering in the ways we have described, we believe we can provide seamless, low effort booking and travel experiences, enabling digital first, multi-modal travel, increasingly across the country.

In doing so, we will make Caledonian MacBrayne's own contribution, always as part of community, to a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland.