

## **Appendix 2**

### Future Northern Isles Ferry Service (NIFS) Specification

#### Baseline Principles – Orkney Islands Council

- The continuation of a Scottish Government controlled high quality, reliable and universal life-line service for freight and passenger services, with suitable passenger replacement vessels deployed during dry dock and appropriate reserve vessel availability for unforeseen circumstances.
- To provide a minimum of three return sailings per day on the Pentland Firth summer and winter timetable, to acknowledge the growing tourist season and likely increased demand following the implementation of Road Equivalent Tariff.
- To specify a bus connection between Scrabster and Thurso railway station to improve integrated transport connections for foot passengers.
- To retain the existing level of service provision in relation to the Northbound and Southbound calls between Kirkwall and Aberdeen as per the current scheduled timetable and consider options to enhance the service to and from Kirkwall from a resident, tourist and freight perspective.
- To consider additional sleeping capacity on the Lerwick, Kirkwall, Aberdeen route and consider a percentage discount or simplification of pricing options following the implementation of Road Equivalent Tariff.
- To retain the departure time from Aberdeen and Lerwick as opposed to consideration of a later departure which would result in a 01:00 arrival at Hatston as this would have a significant impact on Orkney residents and the tourism sector in particular.
- To add a mechanism within the future Northern Isles Ferry Services Contract that considers freight demand on the Kirkwall to Aberdeen passenger sailing (18 x thermostatic controlled trailer allocation from Shetland on passenger vessels within current Contract compared with no allocation for Orkney).
- To enhance the provision of freight vessels within the Contract by providing additional Northbound and Southbound between Kirkwall and Aberdeen.
- To retain the connection between the port of Stromness and the Scottish Mainland for the continued operation of the Northern Isles Ferry Services contracted Pentland Firth crossings, with consideration given to the suitability of additional ports to ensure the most efficient and accessible service specification for all year round life-line services between Orkney and the Scottish Mainland.