

Briefing Note Template

Elected Member Briefing – *Project update: Fair Isle Ferry and Infrastructure Replacement Project*

Elected Member Briefing Note Ref. No. 2025-13

About this Briefing Note

Briefing by: *Lee Coutts, Project Manager: Fair Isle Ferry and Infrastructure Replacement Project*

Date: *12/11/2025*

Subject: *Project update: Fair Isle Ferry and Infrastructure Replacement Project*

Public / ~~Exempt~~ / Confidential

if exempt or confidential explain risks and consequences.

Purpose

This briefing note provides an update on the Fair Isle Ferry and Infrastructure Replacement Project, covering:

1. A follow-up on recent communication regarding storm impacts at Grutness.
2. Progress on the vessel build and details of an upcoming press release.

Background

The Fair Isle Ferry and Infrastructure Replacement Project entered the delivery phase after the Council approved its Full Business Case in December 2024. This was followed by approval from the Department for Transport and confirmation of funding: £26.7 million from the UK Government, in addition to £18.3 million from the Council.

Key points

1 - Storm Impacts at Grutness

On 27th October I emailed elected members with the following update:

“I’m writing to inform you of recent impacts to the project works at Grutness Ferry Terminal following stormy weather over the weekend.

The Main Contractor has advised the Council that between 24th and 26th October, Storm Benjamin generated large waves that directly affected the work site. The following issues have been reported:

- Stone from the exposed existing breakwater was displaced and scattered around the site
- Stone infill was removed and redistributed across the area
- Concrete shuttering/formwork sustained damage
- Rebar may be bent in some locations
- Items of equipment was washed away

The contractor is currently assessing the full extent of the damage and will continue to monitor progress over the coming days. Initial efforts are focused on site clean-up and damage assessment.

So far, only part of the large rock required for rock armour protection has been placed around the new pier. The contractor has confirmed that additional rock is scheduled to be placed this week to continue strengthening the pier's protection."

Update since that email:

The site has been cleared, and damaged items have been repaired or replaced, allowing work on the new pier to resume quickly.

Rock armour placement has continued.

Some original rock armour near the store building was temporarily removed for machinery access and has now been reused to provide extra protection until new rock is delivered and installed.

Underwater material forming the breakwater core may have been displaced during the storm. We are awaiting confirmation from the contractor. A bathymetric survey will be arranged to assess any displacement and identify if remedial work is needed.

2 - Construction of the new ferry has commenced at Parkol Marine Engineering Ltd in Whitby.

A visit to Parkol's shipyard on Thursday 13 November will mark the formal start of the build phase—a significant milestone for the project. This visit will:

Celebrate progress and reaffirm our commitment to keeping the local community at the heart of the project.

Include the Project Manager and two community representatives, one of whom is a Council employee and current skipper of the Good Shepherd IV (and future vessel).

Provide an opportunity to view the early stages of construction, tour the shipyard, and capture a photo to mark the occasion.

Following the visit, the Council will issue a press release.

Overview

Following storm damage in late October, the main contractor has completed site clean-up and repairs, allowing work on the new pier to resume. Rock armour placement continues, and a bathymetric survey will confirm if further remedial work is required.

Construction of the new ferry has formally commenced at Parkol Marine Engineering Ltd in Whitby. A site visit on 13 November will mark this milestone and include community representatives. A press release will follow to share progress and reaffirm the Council's commitment to the project.

Last modified on: 21/11/25

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