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The Editor

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Sir,

Future Ship Build Facilities On The Clyde

Option 1. Scotstoun (single site)

Option 2 Govan and Scotstoun (two site)

Having recently attended a consultative meeting on the proposed future of shipbuilding on the Clyde I feel obliged to voice my opinion openly. Now retired, having worked in the yards for 50 years and endeavouring all that time to keep the yards open, both as a steward in the “work-in” joint shop stewards committee and beyond until my retiral, I have seen many iterations, configurations and manufacturing systems employed with varying success. I therefore forward my opinion on the two options.

Company

With the global markets in military and civilian shipping ever evolving and expanding we should be maximising the potential range and size of ships that can be built in Scotland/UK otherwise we will quickly find ourselves locked out of certain opportunities. Govan is the only yard which can accommodate larger vessels such as the replacements for the Royal Navy’s helicopter carrier H.M.S. Ocean and the amphibious capital ships H.M.S. Albion and H.M.S. Bulwark.

It should stop the ludicrous situation where four new logistic support vessels for the Royal Navy, are currently being built in South Korea, by Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering (DSME) at a cost of £452 million to the British taxpayer, money that should have created thousands of jobs in Scotland and the United Kingdom.

Also we have the situation where the Wemyss Bay to Rothesay ferry was built in Gdansk, Poland, the Aberdeen to Orkney/Shetland ferries were built in Finland and the new ferry for the Ullapool to Stornoway run is being built in Germany

These ships should have been built in Scotland.

One option which does not seem to have been explored is the possibility to cover and gate the existing wet dock at Govan to create a covered dry dock which would then have the capacity to accommodate the largest ships required for both the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy.

Community

The Govan community has been centred round the shipbuilding industry for over 150 years and shutting Govan Shipyard would deliver a death blow to it.

City

If Govan Shipyard were to close and only Scotstoun was left the city would lose the critical mass of shipbuilding skills required to sustain and maintain a successful industry.

Country

The United Kingdom is an island nation with 95% imports/exports carried on ships and to lose the last shipyard capable of building these ships is the economics of the madhouse.

Scotland's Nation Planning Framework (NPF) has consistently stated the importance of water borne transport to the economy of the country. Freight, ferry and supply ships are the key to existing major industries and to the expansion of the emerging off shore renewables sector. If Scotland, and the UK, lose the ability to build the full range of essential vessels needed to service these, they we will forever more be at the mercy of foreign markets

Having considered the implication of the options on a number of levels, it is clear that the consequences may have far reaching impacts for the company, the community, the city and the country. ***I strongly believe that the best option is that the two site option, retaining both yards with the capacity and flexibility that this affords, should be the one adopted.***

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