

## Islands Transport Forum

### Report to Meeting of 21 June 2017

#### NIFS UPDATE

1. The 2016 SNP manifesto contained a commitment to “*take action to reduce fares on ferry services to Orkney and Shetland.*”
2. The Minister visited Orkney & Shetland in August 2016 and announced that a consultation would take place to seek the views of users of Northern Isles ferry services. Consultants Peter Brett Associates (PBA) conducted a public and stakeholder consultation exercise in late 2016, including drop-in sessions, online questionnaires and face to face interviews.
3. Ministers received advice from Transport Scotland officials in early 2017 regarding the consultation findings and options for a new fares regime. PBA are now undertaking further detailed demand and capacity analysis to look at the impacts of fare options.
4. Transport Scotland officials had a productive meeting with Serco Northlink Ferries and PBA on 31 May to discuss operational impacts and challenges.
5. The Minister has given agreement in principle to Pentland Ferries being included in any fares reduction on the Pentland Firth. Officials are working to establish a mechanism to allow commercial operators to offer reduced fares.
6. PBA’s analysis is due to conclude later this summer, after which advice will be put to Ministers seeking decisions on the way forward. Further information will be made available in due course.