

## ISLANDS TRANSPORT FORUM

### FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY 12 JANUARY 2016

Note of Meeting

PRESENT	IN ATTENDANCE
Cllr Dick Walsh, Leader, Argyll and Bute Council	John Nicholls, Transport Scotland
Sally Loudon, Chief Executive, Argyll and Bute Council	Graham Laidlaw, Transport Scotland
Cllr Angus Campbell, Leader, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Pauline McMillan, Transport Scotland (Secretariat)
Mr Iain Mackinnon, Director of Technical Services, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Darren Dickson, Local Government Division. Scottish Government
Cllr Willie Gibson, Leader, North Ayrshire Council	
Elma Murray, Chief Executive, North Ayrshire Council	
Cllr Steven Heddle, Convener, Orkney Islands Council	
Laura, Cromarty, Transportation Manager, Orkney Islands Council	
Cllr Gary Robinson, Leader, Shetland Islands Council	
Cllr Michael Stout, Shetland Islands Council	
Cllr Hamish Fraser, The Highland Council (*VC)	
Richard Gerring, The Highland Council	
Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, HITRANS	
Cllr James Stockan, HITRANS	
Michael Craigie, Lead Officer, ZetTrans	
Derek Mackay, Minister for Transport and Islands	

#### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr Mackay welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Islands Transport Forum. He outlined how the initiative had come about and how it will provide a platform for engagement and from this a real opportunity for change.

Mr Mackay then asked all those present to introduce themselves.

## 2. TERMS OF REFERENCE/WORKING METHODS

Mr Mackay invited members to comment on the draft Terms of Reference.

### PURPOSE AND REMIT

#### **Cllr Steven Heddle:**

- “fair” to be added at the 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet “*the most **fair** and efficient use of air and ferry services*”;
- Airport infrastructure to be reflected in the remit.

#### **Derek Mackay:**

- Agreed that “fair” be added;
- Satisfied that “airport infrastructure” is covered in the bullet points and no need to add.

#### **Cllr Willie Gibson:**

- Integrated transport services is important and should be included.

#### **Elma Murray:**

- Suggested “Integrated” be added at start of 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet point “***Integrated** transport services that are designed and commissioned....*”

#### **Derek Mackay:**

- Agreement by members that “integrated” be added at the start of bullet point.

### MEMBERSHIP

#### **Cllr James Stockan:**

- Important the Chair of HITRANS is included in the membership of the group.

### HOW DO WE WORK

#### **Iain Mackinnon:**

- Important to identify a baseline of existing services to inform a future assessment of the benefit and impact of the Group;
  - Review the value of benefits of investment.

#### **Derek Mackay:**

- This is covered in reporting from the Councils from the Air Services Scoping Study
- SG has spent more money on ferries in recent years. / less users;
- Need get a deeper understanding of value – aviation and ferry usage and to move away from monitoring.

### 3. MONITORING FRAMEWORK (Review of transport issues from the Empowering Scotland Island Communities Prospectus)

#### **Derek Mackay went through the updates:**

- Commenting at Item 28 that the Air Discount Scheme had increased from 40%-50% from 1 January 2016.

#### **Cllr Dick Walsh:**

- Tendering air services – low number of tenderers.

#### **Cllr James Stockan:**

- Need to look at RET – Internal ferry services to Orkney and Shetland and Pentland Firth.

#### **Derek Mackay:**

- The STAG Appraisal is looking at external and internal services. There, however, won't be an answer before the election.

#### **Michael Craigie:**

- Wanting equality for all - the principles of RET applied across Scotland. Work needs to keep progressing.

#### **Cllr James Stockan:**

- OIC and SIC keen to progress RET.

#### **Derek Mackay:**

- In present format acknowledges it doesn't work for Orkney and Shetland however will be considering how it could work.

#### **Cllr Willie Gibson:**

- Advised that the Isle of Arran Ferry Committee had been missed in the "*Current Forums for Engagement with Island Communities*" paper.

### 4. ITF WORK PROGRAMME

#### **Iain Mackinnon:**

- Commitment made at the meeting in June to carry out an Air Services Scoping Study. HITRANS have been working on this. There are concerns around cost of fares/affordability, resilience and reliability. The study will provide passenger numbers;
- This forum should be considering this study;
- Mix    Scottish Government - PSO  
          Scottish Government - ADS  
          Scottish Government - HIAL  
          Local Authority - PSO  
      Is this the right mix?

**Cllr Gary Robinson/ Cllr Steven Heddle:**

- Both agreed the need to look at “air services”

**Derek Mackay:**

- Agreed that the forum was the best place for this to be looked at. Fact based evidence though is needed to inform;
- Suggest that the scoping study being undertaken by the island authorities is considered at the next meeting of the ITF;
- Advised had visited Loganair’s new engineering facility on 11 January and was reassured that they are improving matters both in terms of engineering and staffing;
- Aircraft are safe but acknowledges that there is no obvious replacement aircraft type as the fleet gets older ;
- Noted that Loganair operate the majority of their routes as commercial services, and that there are only a small number of other operators in the region
- Considerable amount of public money goes into “air services via HIAL and the Air Discount Scheme

**ACTION: AIR SERVICES SCOPING STUDY TO BE DISCUSSED AT NEXT ITF**

**Cllr Angus Campbell:**

- Real concerns over reliability of air services not safety;
- CNES have invited Loganair to explain;
- Confidence in air services need to be restored.

**Cllr Gary Robinson:**

- Risk about demonising aircraft;
- Lack of suitable aircraft;
- Aircraft aren’t that old compared with others ;
- Need to separate what are aircraft issues and what are Loganair issues;
- What do we want services to the islands to look like in the future?
- Need airfields that can take larger aircraft.

**Cllr Steven Heddle:**

- Will Scottish Government view these as “lifeline air services”

**Derek Mackay:**

- Cannot introduce PSO services where there is no market failure ;
- Not realistic for Scottish Government to run an airline;
- Will check if performance figures from Loganair can be shared with members;
- This information will be brought together for discussion at next meeting.

**ACTION: CHECK IF PERFORMANCE FIGURES FROM LOGANAIR CAN BE SHARED WITH MEMBERS**

**Cllr Michael Stout:**

- Considerable amount of public sector money in airline services – local authority, NHS.

**Iain Mackinnon:**

- Loganair's focus has moved away from solely the Highlands and Islands.

**Derek Mackay:**

- When the campaign started it was about fares and has now moved away from this and is now also about reliability.

**Cllr Steven Heddle:**

- Any Programme for Government will be governed by the manifesto. Difficult to predict the future work programme - National Transport Strategy?

**Cllr Michael Stout:**

- Quality of work over the last few months has been excellent – Local Authority/TS.

**Cllr Gary Robinson:**

- Need to look to post 2020 – Trans European Network - Comprehensive Network– need to be ready when the funding starts to come through.

**Cllr Dick Walsh:**

- Need an oversight of the Ferries Plan;
- Harbour infrastructure – including state aids.

**Derek Mackay:**

- Agree a need for an in depth look at Aviation, Ferries Plan, the European perspective and a ferries infrastructure update.

**Iain Mackinnon:**

- CHFS consultation – Review of TS/CFL/CMAL roles, involvement of TS and clarity of roles and responsibilities.

**Cllr Angus Campbell and Iain Mackinnon:**

- The need for a more structured approach by Transport Scotland and the Operator was required for engagement and consultation associated with changes to timetables and the allocation of vessels on routes. The example of the current and ongoing disruption on the Uig Lochmaddy Tarbert routes was sighted.

**Michael Craigie:**

- Communities are engaged with operators, however key decision makers are TS, RTP/LA.

**Iain Mackinnon:**

- Most ferry users are unaware that SG supports ferry services financially.

**Cllr Angus Campbell:**

- Needs closer involvement – very important that the right people are involved.

**Cllr Michael Stout:**

- Transport needs to feature more prominently in Single Outcome Agreements.

**5. AOB**

**Derek Mackay:**

- Agreement that a press release would be drafted and shared with members prior to release – it would detail - that the Group met, what was discussed and what is proposed to work on.

**6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Not arranged due to the upcoming election.

**Derek Mackay concluded the meeting at 11.15.**