

ISLANDS TRANSPORT FORUM

Fourth meeting – 28 March 2018

Note of meeting

Attendees

Humza Yousaf, Minister for Transport and the Islands
Aileen Morton, Argyll and Bute – by audio link
Jim Smith, Argyll & Bute Council – by audio link
Cllr Uisdean Robertson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
David MacLeod (CNES)
Iain Mackinnon, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – by audio link
Cllr Joe Cullinane, North Ayrshire Council – by audio link
Karen Yeomans, North Ayrshire Council – by audio link
Cllr James Stockan, Orkney Islands Council – by audio link
Cllr Graham Sinclair, Orkney Islands Council
Brian Archibald, Orkney Islands Council
Michael Craigie, ZetTrans – by audio link
Cllr Allan Henderson, The Highland Council – by audio link
Ranald Robertson, HITRANS
Kate Higgins, Special Adviser
Graham Laidlaw – Transport Scotland
Michael Bratcher - TS
Heather Cowan - TS
James Goodall – TS (note taker)

Apologies

Stuart Black
Ian Thompson

Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

1. Mr Yousaf welcomed everyone to the fourth meeting of the Islands Transport Forum. Due to difficulties with the audio link some participants joined later.

Item 2 – Notes of third meeting – matters arising

Car park charges at HIAL airports

2. HIAL's recent announcement about the introduction of car parking charges at Sumburgh, Kirkwall and Stornoway Airports was raised. Engagement to date from HIAL was unsatisfactory in Island Councillors' view. The Minister said he was disappointed at lack of consultation by HIAL and contrasted this with the good work HIAL have been doing on the Remote Towers project since he spoke to them after the last ITF. The Minister said he agreed that the charges needed to be introduced.
3. While HIAL has been proactive in meeting with Local Authorities in the past, the decision to impose car parking charges was taken unilaterally. The Minister

acknowledged the unpopularity of car parking charges however he also reiterated that HIAL is non-profit making and that revenue from charges will be spent on HIAL facilities and services. The Minister was disappointed with the lack of consultation with the public.

4. Graham Sinclair - lack of consideration shown to particular islands for internal air services who have no alternative ferry was also raised. Orkney Council and residents are split on the issue of car parking charges at the airport. The Minister acknowledged the mix of views in Orkney.
5. Ranald Robertson – HITrans are looking at revising bus timetables to co-ordinate with air services and installing rapid chargers in Stornoway and Kirkwall airports and setting up an EV (Electric Vehicle) car club as well as looking into integrated ticketing between land and air transport services.
6. There was concern about the impact on residents of the outer Orkney Islands who leave their main car at Kirkwall Airport.
7. Michael Craigie – queried the impact of introducing car parking charges in Shetland as travel to the airport by car is more likely in the Islands. The Minister pointed out that public transport use increases where car parking charges are introduced. The Minister said he was keen to promote public transport and suggested HIAL could look at encouraging public transport.
8. Michael Craigie – expressed concern about the impact on public bodies. There would be less money for other services if they had to pay parking charges.

Action point - Minister to emphasise to HIAL the need to consult with stakeholders

Block Booking

9. There was general agreement that block booking was now less of an issue than it was. Argyll & Bute Council and North Ayrshire Council thought there may still be issues. SG investment in new vessels was acknowledged by the forum. CNES raised resilience issues with the CalMac fleet and the impact of breakdowns in Uist. CNES had concerns that the Hebrides boat was going off and being replaced by a smaller boat. Anecdotal evidence suggests that no-shows are decreasing although these improvements are not felt in all Council areas
10. General Northlink ferry service provision by Serco was felt to be adequate however, lack of resilience was evident during ferry refitting with inadequate mitigation.
11. Argyll & Bute Council didn't think that the note of CalMac actions from the third ITF meeting was circulated to all members.
12. Additional tonnage resilience issues are foreseeable. The Minister said there had been discussions with Serco about replacement tonnage for when the Hamnavoe is out of action.
13. Islay – The Minister shared the frustration (Aileen). SG is trying to make up for a lack of investment in vessels previously. Islay ferry services are next for investment in the fleet. CalMac and CMAL to provide Minister with a list of vessels which could be reengineered to extend life of vessels whilst new vessels are built.

14. Graham – Update from CalMac, 2nd vessel to be back on the route by Saturday. Islay will be back to a 2 vessel service by 12 PM this Friday. Resilience over the Easter weekend will be improved. Aileen welcomed this news of the vessel being operation on Friday.
15. Orkney suggested that future contract would include replacement vessel for refit coverage.
16. Minister accepted the Councillor's suggestion of including ferry provision during refits within future Serco Northlink contract.
17. Western isles Council would like certainty on CalMac services being increased. Graham agreed to respond direct to the Council member

Action Points - Scottish Government to investigate block-booking in North Ayrshire and Argyll and Bute Council areas, CalMac to provide figures.

Graham Laidlaw agreed to respond direct to the Council member on use of the Hebridean Isles

Item 3 – National Transport Strategy (NTS) Review

18. TS undertaking Islands Impact Assessment of NTS prior to this becoming a legislative requirement.
19. Further engagement through COHI or the Senior Officer Group proposed for later stages of review to test emerging policy from NTS thematic groups and proposals from NTS Roles and Responsibilities Group.
20. Shetland – there is a gap in how long term thinking on different transport networks are considered.
21. Raised that there was a gap in the (Northern Isles Ferry Services) NIFS network and proposed that this should be considered within the context of NTS.
22. Highlighted the importance of internal services within islands which are life line services and recognition of the second journey required to access the Scottish mainland.
23. Minister noted that internal services had received not only money during the recent Budget process but a commitment on the formation a Working Group
24. Welcomed NTS engagement plans included coverage of Islands with specific request to look at additional engagement activity on at least one Argyll and Bute Island. Noted recent Ayrshire Transport Summit and Transport Scotland attendance
25. Highland Council – focussed on awareness raising for the NTS which will lead to engagement on policy options as they develop. Happy to attend events in the future.
26. Shetland – plan to engage with locals themselves and feed into the NTS process.
27. Orkney – there needs to be proper togetherness with the Ferries Plan which runs to 2022.
28. Graham Laidlaw – Transport Scotland Teams are working to ensure that the different plans link up. Expect this to result in them being more closely aligned than in the past.
29. There will be alignment of the update to the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR), which is informed by NTS, and the next Ferries Plan.
30. Minister emphasised that, even though the Islands Bill was still making its way through Parliament, the Scottish Government was already looking to Island proof policies.

Action points - Scottish Government to consider visits to Orkney and Shetland in NTS Engagement Plan

Mapping exercise of timetables to ensure coordinated policies will take place

Item 4 – Brexit

31. Update paper provided to the ITF. No additional Brexit related items raised for discussion. Minister offered for Mike Russell to attend a future meeting

Action point - Mike Russell to attend future Islands Transport Forum to discuss Brexit.

Item 5 – AOB

HITRANS: - Papers attached on – Mobility as a Service – Island Project Opportunities

32. Regional active travel fund – building e-bike hubs on Barra, Benbecula and Skye.
33. Orkney Island proposal being funded from Innovate UK
34. Locally produced power from renewables.

Low Carbon Transport and Travel ERDF – Island project proposals update

35. Hydrogen power seen as having strong potential – The Minister stated SG policy on ULEVs is technology neutral in regards to battery electric or hydrogen fuel cell.
36. End of phase 1 call to inform how we progress in phase 2.
37. The question was asked whether there would be further calls for bids. This was the final call under phase 1 ERDF but looking at ERDF phase 2. It is not yet known if there will be any further calls as there is a need to review phase 1. Noted that small communities need early warning, signalling in order to put strong bids forward.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar - Audit Scotland – Transport Scotland’s Ferry Services

38. Engagement with Audit Scotland prior to the report was positive but very concerned at the focus in the report on the cost of services. Concerned that this would impact on the priorities of Government. Concerns with chronic underinvestment in ferry services and infrastructure.
39. Minister agreed that the report coverage was unhelpful, the Minister made clear that TS is not looking at reducing spend other than via efficiency savings but is satisfied with the outcomes in island communities.

HIAL Air Traffic Management 2030 Strategy

40. Concerned with the lack of socio-economic coverage in the Helios report. Concerned about Redactions on the occupational risk assessments. Reassurance sought by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar on safety – This item to be discussed substantially at the next meeting of the strategic group, with HIAL and ZetTrans. Minister said that there will be no immediate change and that concerns about job losses are not being dismissed. Sustainable air services are linked to Air Traffic Control sustainability. Recruitment challenges are evident with competition from major international hub airports looking for air controllers. Recognise there are questions around digital connectivity but what is being proposed is aimed to improve safety.
41. Issue to be included as a substantive item in the next meeting of the Islands Strategic Group.
42. Proposed future agenda items were fixed links and the impact of RET on tourism. It was agreed that there should be an agenda setting meeting between officials in advance of the next ITF.

Action Point - Conference call between HITrans and TS officials in advance of next Island Transport Forum to set and agree the agenda for ITF.

Summary of actions

Minister to emphasise to HIAL the need to consult with stakeholders

Scottish Government to investigate block-booking in North Ayrshire and Argyll and Bute Council areas, CalMac to provide figures.

Graham Laidlaw agreed to respond direct to the Council member on use of the Hebridean Isles

Scottish Government to consider visits to Orkney and Shetland in NTS Engagement Plan

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Action point - Mike Russell to attend future Islands Transport Forum to discuss Brexit.

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