

## **Report to Partnership Meeting 28 November 2014**

### **RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

#### **Barra – Glasgow Air Service Enhancement**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update Members on the results of the Barra – Glasgow Service Enhancements and proposals for how HITRANS may work with other partners to maintain the additional services in future years.

#### **Background**

One of the main recommendations in the Regional Air Service Development Study (undertaken by Northpoint Aviation on behalf of HITRANS last year) was for key stakeholders to share the study findings (including results of an online survey to capture potential new demand on various existing and new routes) with Loganair to allow them to consider whether the evidence supported additional flights between Barra and Glasgow.

Loganair currently commercially operate additional double rotations on this route five days per week over the peak season in addition to the single rotation they are obliged to provide for the Public Service Obligation (PSO). Following discussions with Loganair - HITRANS, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and HIE agreed to support the provision of additional rotations on Tuesday and Wednesdays from the end of May until the beginning of September for a period of 15 weeks giving an additional 30 rotations at a cost of £24,000.

To help demonstrate the merits of the trial and the nature of any additional demand a short questionnaire was developed and issued to every passenger travelling on the additional services. This evidence will be used to support making the case to Transport Scotland for including these extra services in the any future PSO contract.

Following a very successful trial that saw an average load factor of 68%, the partners agreed to extend their support up to the end of the October school holidays with 15 further rotations at a cost of £12,000.

A complete report summarising the results of the passenger survey will be produced but some emerging trends can be found from the passenger figures using the service and initial questionnaires returns. These include;

- Average load factor on the additional rotations in May, June and August was between 61 and 68%.
- Average load factor peaked in July at 82% but passenger figures tailed off considerably in September and in particular in October.
- 38% of respondents would not have made the journey if the service had not been available.
- 39% would have travelled by ferry and car/rail/bus services to reach their destination

- 14% would have travelled by ferry to use an alternative air service on Benbecula or Stornoway.
- 9.5% would have used an alternative air service from Barra

### Proposal for 2015

Representatives of HITRANS, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar met with Transport Scotland officials earlier this month to review the benefits of the 2014 trial and discuss how the enhancements may be supported in future years.

Transport Scotland indicated that they are currently undertaking consultation on the new PSO contract with the local community and businesses in Barra, Tiree and Campbeltown. However, they anticipate that the current contract will still be in place in summer 2015 and it is therefore for the partners who took part in the 2014 trial to consider how any additional rotations may be maintained next year.

### Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note this report and approve HITRANS engaging with HIE and CnES and Loganair to agree a reduced level of de-minimis funding support for an extension of the double rotations on Tuesday and Wednesday between May and September 2015.
2. Members are asked to support efforts by key stakeholders to encourage the inclusion of these additional flights in the new Transport Scotland PSO.

Risk	impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	This work supports RTS Strategic priority to enhance intra-regional connectivity between island and peripheral communities and regional centres and national gateways.
Policy	√	This work supports development of the Aviation policies set out in the RTS
Financial	-	Funding was included in the 2014/15 Business Plan and any future funding implications will be considered with the 15/16 Business Plan.
Equality	-	

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**Designation:** Partnership Manager  
**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> November 2014