

Report to Partnership Meeting 5 February 2016

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Air Services Scoping Paper

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with an update on the preparation of an Air Services Scoping Paper which is being developed on behalf HITRANS, ZetTrans, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council, Argyll and Bute Council and Shetland Islands Council. The study is being funded by HITRANS and ZetTrans and this report also seeks member support for a nominal increase in the budget.

Background

At a meeting of the Island Areas Ministerial Working Group held on 2nd June 2015 in Kirkwall a number of issues relating to air services between the island local authorities and the Scottish mainland were raised.

Following the meeting it was agreed that the first phase of review of any review of air service provision should involve the development of a scoping paper to establish evidence and data around a number of the key issues which had been identified including the affordability and reliability of the services.

It was also agreed at this meeting that a forum be set up to consider all strategic transport issues affecting Scotland's islands. The Islands Transport Forum, established by Islands Minister Derek Mackay, will meet biannually and will include representatives from local authorities with island communities. The first meeting of the Forum was held on January 12th 2016.

It is intended that the forum would deal with internal and external ferry, air, and other transport services upon which each of the island communities so heavily depend on for social cohesion and sustainable economic activity and growth.

The Islands Transport Forum will consider opportunities and difficulties, including:

- Improving collaboration between Transport Scotland, Regional Transport Partnerships and the Islands Councils.
- Establishing a process that fully accounts for island-specific views.
- Ensuring efficient and effective lines of communication between all key stakeholders.

Development of Air Services Scoping Paper

Following a meeting of the Regional Transport Partnerships and Island Local Authority partners (except at that stage Argyll and Bute Council) in October, it was agreed that HITRANS take a lead in developing the Air Services Scoping Paper.

The scoping paper would seek to set out relevant information and evidence in a number of areas including;

- Consider all air services between Islands and the Scottish mainland.
- Current and potential aircraft deployed on island to mainland routes
- Evidence on the reliability of the different air services
- Affordability for passengers
- Affordability for Scottish Government / Local Authorities
- Roles and responsibilities

It was also agreed to undertake an online survey to help gather views on the existing services and information on what issues were most important to passengers. SCDI were subsequently commissioned to support the development, distribution and analysis of the survey which has received over 1400 responses. The survey closed on 4th January and the results are currently being reviewed.

The intention is to complete the draft Scoping paper at the earliest opportunity with a view to then engaging with Transport Scotland on the issues and opportunities it identifies.

A copy of the final Air Services Scoping Paper will be presented to the next HITRANS Partnership Meeting in April 2016 with the item then being discussed at the next Islands Transport Forum.

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note this report and approve the increase of the HITRANS contribution towards the development of the Air Services Scoping Paper.

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	-	At the Partnership meeting on 25 th November a budget of £1000 was agreed to help fund a survey to support the Scoping Paper. Due to the scale of responses it was agreed to increase this to £1700 with ZetTrans contributing £800.
Equality	-	

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