TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN THE OUTER HEBRIDES

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Director of Technical Services
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
INTRODUCTION – Geographical Context
INTRODUCTION – Local Government History – Pre 1975

Lewis
(Ross & Cromarty)

Harris, Uists and Barra
(Inverness-shire)

Dingwall

Inverness
INTRODUCTION – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Transportation Services – The Role of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Roles

• Elected and locally accountable representative body for the communities of the Western Isles
• Provider of transportation infrastructure – roads, fixed links, ferry terminals
• Provider of transportation services – inter-island air services and public and school bus services
• Constituent authority within the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP) and Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Partnership (HITRANS)
• Key consultee for Scottish Government and public and private sector service providers and operators
Transportation Services since 1970s - Summary

**Ferry Services**
- Stornoway to Ullapool
- Tarbert, Lochmaddy and Uig
- Lochboisdale, Castlebay and Oban
- Sound of Harris
- Sound of Barra

**Air Services**
- Stornoway to Inverness, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh
- Benbecula to Glasgow
- Barra to Glasgow
- Inter-island Air Services: Stornoway to Benbecula to Barra
Ferry Services – Western Isles to Mainland

**Stornoway - Ullapool**
- MV Isle of Lewis
- MV Clipper Ranger

**Tarbert - Lochmaddy - Uig**
- MV Hebrides

**Lochboisdale - Castlebay - Oban**
- MV Clansman
- MV Lord of the Isles
Western Isles Spinal Route and Inter-Island Ferry Services

Berneray Causeway

Total Crossing 13km
Infrastructure Cost £7.0m

MV Lochportain

Berneray Causeway
Western Isles Spinal Route and Inter-Island Ferry Services

Total Crossing 9.5km
Infrastructure Cost £9.4m

Eriskay Causeway

Ceann a’ Gharraidh Ferry Terminal

MV Loch Alainn
Western Isles Spinal Route and Inter-Island Ferry Services

Western Isles Spinal Route

- Major strategic priority at local and regional levels
- Improved connectivity within the Islands
- Sustainable communities in remote and rural communities within the Western Isles
- Provision of access to services; reduced journey times; improved road safety
- Connectivity for Berneray and Eriskay; remove reliance on ferry services
- Significant funding assistance through ERDF for road improvement and integrated transport projects
Ferry Services – The Future Challenges?

- Recognition of importance of reliable and affordable ferry services for remote and rural island communities and contributions these make to national economy
- Scottish Government Draft Ferries Plan; published December 2011; consultation Deadline 30 March 2012
- Primary concerns from Western Isles – loss of Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) fare support scheme for commercial vehicles, replacement of MV Isle of Lewis, additional ferry service for Lochboisdale – Mallaig
- Reducing population and changing demographics within Western Isles and its individual communities – impact on financial performance and affordability of ferry services
Air Services – Mainland and Inter-Island

PUBLIC SERVICE OBLIGATION (PSO) ROUTES

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (FlyBe/Loganair)
- SYY - BEN; (BEN – BRR; to March 2013 only)

Scottish Government (FlyBe/Loganair)
- BRR - GLA

COMMERCIAL ROUTES

FlyBe/Loganair
- SYY - INV; SYY - EDI; SYY - GLA
- BEN - GLA

Eastern Airways
- SYY - ABZ
Inter-Island Air Services – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

- Established in mid 1970s – Stornoway to Benbecula to Barra
- Additional and alternative modes for inter-island travel provided through development of ferry services and Spinal Route since 1980s
- Annual Cost (2012/13) £621k
- Budget Strategy 2013-2015 - significant financial pressures and competing priorities for Comhairle; c. £6m in 2013/14 and 2014/15
- Options - continuation, reduction and discontinuation of subsidisation of PSO air services
- Review carried out Summer 2012
Air Services – PSO Air Services

Review of CnES Inter-Island Air Services:

STORNOWAY TO BENBECULA (to March 2013)

- Five days per week; Mon – Fri; two rotations per day
- Minimum no of seats – 17nr
- Maximum single air fare £71
- Flybe/Loganair – Saab 340; 34 seats
- Load Factor 30%
- Annual subsidy (2012/13) £473k
- Ferry use – 5 times
- Connectivity with SYY INV service
Air Services – PSO Air Services

Review of CnES Inter-Island Air Services:

BENBECULA TO BARRA (to March 2013)

- Five days per week; Mon – Fri; two rotations per day
- Minimum no of seats – 17nr
- Maximum single air fare £35
- Flybe/Loganair – Twin Otter; 18 seats
- Load Factor 25%
- Annual subsidy (2012/13) £148k
- Ferry use – 20 times
- Connectivity with BRR GLA service
Air Services – PSO Air Services

CnES Inter-Island Air Services (from April 2013)

STORNOWAY TO BENBECULA

- Three days per week; Mon – Fri; two rotations per day
- Minimum no of seats – 17nr
- Maximum single air fare £70
- Flybe/Loganair – Saab 340; 34 seats
- Annual subsidy (2013/14) £256k

BENBECULA TO BARRA

- Service discontinued
CONTINUING REVIEW AND RESEARCH

• Glasgow Barra PSO Air Service being continued by Scottish Government
• Government commitment to replacement of Twin Otters
• Regular monitoring of air and ferry service passenger numbers and trends on inter-island routes; economic and social impacts being reviewed through stakeholder consultation and involvement
• Feasibility of additional and enhanced air services on other and existing routes across West Highlands and Islands being assessed
• Enhanced connectivity between Glasgow and Barra being explored
Air Services – Commercial Routes

Outer Hebrides / Scottish Mainland

COMMERCIAL ROUTES

FlyBe/Loganair
- SYY – INV
- SYY – EDI
- SYY – GLA
- BEN – GLA

Eastern Airways
- SYY – ABZ
Air Services – Commercial Routes

AIR DISCOUNT SCHEME – Strategic Context

• Primary Objective:
  “to facilitate greater social inclusion in the most peripheral areas of the Highlands and Islands through affordable access to air services to the main economic and administrative centres of Scotland”

• Main intended impacts:
  ✓ Make air travel more accessible, improving connectivity and reducing journey times
  ✓ Increase travel amongst eligible residents as a consequence of lower cost
  ✓ Improvements in service capacity and frequency
AIR DISCOUNT SCHEME – Operational Context

• Established by Scottish Government in May 2006; prolonged in 2008 and 2011; currently in place until 31 March 2015

• Established through Aid of a Social Character mechanism

• Geographical eligibility – Scottish islands (Western Isles, Orkney Isles, Shetland Islas, Islay, Jura and Colonsay) and remote areas of Scottish Highlands Caithness and North West Sutherland

• 40% discount on core air fare
Air Services – Commercial Routes

AIR DISCOUNT SCHEME – Operational Context

• Significant positive impacts have been realised – more affordable fares, increased passenger numbers; increased connectivity and frequency of services

• Discontinued for business and voluntary sector users in April 2011; reinstatement for voluntary sector and charities in July 2012
## Air Services – PSOs and ADS

### PSOs - Advantages and Disadvantages

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certainty and continuity of service standards, specification and fare cost</td>
<td>Discretionary service for Comhairle – subject to competing priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service specification in complete control of local authority and accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not subject to commercial pressures</td>
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<td>Effective allocation of risk, eg fuel prices</td>
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## ADS - Advantages and Disadvantages

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<th>Advantages</th>
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<tr>
<td>High visibility for Scottish Government and air service operators</td>
<td>Currently not available to business users</td>
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<td>Affordability and subject to competing priorities at national government level</td>
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Air Services – The Future Challenges?

Air Services

- Affordability of public sector funded Public Service Obligation (PSO) services in difficult financial climate and against competing priorities (discretionary powers vs statutory duties)
- Affordability of air fares and continuation of Air Discount Scheme (ADS) for island residents
- Discontinuation of ADS for business use
- Viability of air services to mainland airports – commercial pressures on operators and impact on air fares and continuation of services
Thank You