

**Special Infrastructure Committee
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick
Thursday 18 August 2005 at 10.30 a.m.**

Present:

J C Irvine	L Angus
B J Cheyne	A J Cluness
F B Grains	L G Groat
I J Hawkins	J H Henry
J A Inkster	W H Manson
Capt G G Mitchell	J P Nicolson
J G Simpson	T W Stove
W N Stove	W Tait

Apologies:

R G Feather B P Gregson

In Attendance (Officers):

G Spall, Executive Director, Infrastructure Services
S Cooper, Acting Head of Transport
J Smith, Head of Organisational Development
C Albutt, Senior Assistant Accountant/Asset Registrar
D Haswell, Committee Officer

Chairperson:

Mr J C Irvine, Chairperson of the Committee, presided.

Circular:

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

41/05

Proposed Islands Transport Partnership

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Infrastructure Services (Appendix 1).

The Executive Director advised that Western Isles Council had rejected the proposals for an Islands of Scotland transport partnership whilst Orkney Islands Council were in support of such a transport partnership, subject to some clarification.

The Chairperson reminded Members that, at its meeting on 12 January 2005, the Committee agreed to establishing a transport partnership with Orkney or of the Council having its own transport partnership and, if this was not accepted by the Scottish Executive, it would be referred back to the Committee. Following this decision, the Chairperson had been in correspondence with his counterpart in Orkney, Mr Bob Slater, and, after Orkney Islands Council's decision not to establish a joint transport partnership with Shetland Islands Council, the Council had submitted a proposal to the Scottish Executive for its own transport partnership.

Referring to the decisions taken by Western Isles Council and Orkney Islands Council with regard to the proposals, Mr A J Cluness said that whilst he had some sympathy, Shetland did not have the same kind of connections as the Western Islands and Orkney. Dumfries and Galloway Council, although landlocked with other areas in Scotland, had been allowed to have their own transport partnership. At that time, the then Transport Minister, Nicol Stephen, MSP and the new Transport Minister, Tavish Scott, MSP had suggested that Shetland Islands Council could submit a case for its own transport partnership, having been rejected by Orkney Islands Council for a joint transport partnership.

Mr Cluness continued to say that the Council had already agreed to continue to campaign for a Shetland Transport Partnership and, accordingly, moved the Committee approve recommendation 6.1(a) in the report. Mr L Angus seconded.

A majority of Members agreed with the proposal for a Shetland Transport Partnership and it was stated by a Member that the Council had taken this decision and made its stance clear a few months ago.

Capt G G Mitchell said the vital thing to remember was that, at the moment, HITRANS operated well. However, this would not be the case with the new HITRANS next year and it would be a disaster for the Council to be included in this.

Some Members were of the view that it was discourteous of the Scottish Executive not to have replied to the Council in relation to its submission for a Shetland Transport Partnership. The Chairperson reminded Members that the Council's case was still live with the Scottish Executive and, in this regard, of the 3 Islands, Shetland was in the best position.

Mr L Angus referred to the Council's attempt to have input into the North Isles ferry contract but were advised that the final decision would be made by the Scottish Executive. In support of the motion by Mr Cluness, Mr Angus said that the Shetland community would not thank Members if they did not try to protect Shetland's lifeline services.

Mr W H Manson reiterated the point that the Council had not yet had a response from the Scottish Executive with regard to the proposal for a transport partnership although it could be said that the draft Regional Transport Partnerships (Establishment and Constitution) (Scotland) Order 2005 could be considered to be the response. Mr Manson said that Shetland would stand a better chance of success by joining with Orkney to have a joint transport partnership. Mr Manson said he was indifferent as to whether the Western Isles were included in such a joint partnership.

Accordingly, Mr W H Manson moved as an amendment that the Committee should reiterate the decision taken in January, namely that Shetland Islands Council wished to be part of an Islands Transport Partnership with Western Isles Council and Orkney Islands Council or just with Orkney Islands Council. Should this fail, then Shetland Islands Council would continue to campaign for a Shetland Transport Partnership. Mr L G Groat seconded.

After summing-up, voting followed by a show of hands, and the result was as follows:

Amendment (Mr W H Manson)	4
Motion (Mr A J Cluness)	12

The Chairperson advised that because this was a slight change in policy to the decision taken in January, this would require ratification by the Council.

CHAIRPERSON