

# Shetland Inter-Island Transport Study



Skerries Public Engagement Meeting  
Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2016 – 1030–1500  
Skerries Hall



# Shetland Inter-Island Transport Study

Welcome to the **Skerries Public Engagement Meeting** for the Shetland Inter-Island Transport Study (SIITS).

The Shetland inter-island transport network, which consists of a combination of ferry and air services, connects nine islands with Shetland mainland. These lifeline connections support the economies of Shetland's island communities as well as providing personal accessibility to employment opportunities and access to key services such as education, health and leisure opportunities.

The inter-island transport network has been supported in both capital and revenue terms by the Council over many years. Whilst this remains the case, ageing assets, escalating costs and a reduction in the funding available to local authorities has led to a need to consider the future of the inter-island transport network at the strategic level. To this end, the Council, in partnership with ZetTrans, Transport Scotland and Highlands & Islands Enterprise, commissioned the Shetland Inter-Island Transport Study (SIITS), with a view to developing and appraising options for the future of the inter-island transport services.

The purpose of this exercise is to determine the **appropriate level of service for each island / island group** and the **funding implications** of this. This will provide the Council and ZetTrans with an evidence base to inform discussions with Scottish Government. To this end, the study team, led by Peter Brett Associates LLP, has developed, appraised & costed a set of capital (e.g. vessels, harbours, fixed links, airfields and aircraft (where appropriate)) and revenue (i.e. additional sailings and / or flights) options. These options are based on identified transport problems within each island, which we have had initial confirmation of from each local Community Council.

Following the submission of the final report in October 2016, a subset of these options will be taken forward for further development and appraisal. **This is your chance to have your say on the options** – please speak to the team, provide your feedback and fill up the brief exit questionnaire which we have provided.



# How have we determined what level of service is needed by the community?

There are two elements used to inform this process:

- Transport Scotland's Routes & Services Methodology (RSM)
  - Provides an initial 'model' ferry service depending on a range of inputs
  - The RSM is one of a number of inputs used to inform the appraisal
- An appraisal based on the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and Business Case Guidance
  - provides a much more detailed analysis based on the local context and circumstances
- The study is joint-funded by Shetland Islands Council, Transport Scotland, and Highlands & Islands Enterprise
  - All stakeholders have had an input into the development of the study, ensuring consistency with other Scottish ferry-related studies



# Routes and Service Methodology

As part of the Scottish Ferries Review, Transport Scotland developed a 'Routes & Services Methodology' (RSM), which is designed to produce a consistent approach to ferry service transport provision across Scotland.

The RSM is a six-step, evidence-based process which:

- Identifies the current level of service to an island
- Establishes a 'model' level of service for an island in terms of the:
  - number of sailing days
  - number of connections per day
  - the length of the operating day
- Develops and appraises options to address any gaps between the 'current' and 'model' service provision

**The RSM does not imply an immediate or indeed any commitment to scale-up to the 'model' level of service**, but is a tool which is taken into account in the analysis, and potentially an outcome worked towards over time.



# Skerries – RSM Findings

- The RSM findings for Skerries are as follows:

	<b>Sailing / Flight Days</b>	<b>Sailings / Flights* Per Day</b>	<b>Operating Day</b>
Current Service	6 Days	1-3 connections per day, no service on a Tuesday	Mon, Wed & Sat <11 hours, Fri & Sat 11-14 hours, Thurs 5-7 hours
Model Service	7 Days	3-5 connections per day	11-14 hours
<i>RSM Outcome</i>	<i>Marginal under-provision</i>	<i>Acceptable on Fri, marginal under-provision other days</i>	<i>Acceptable Fri &amp; Sat, marginal under-provision on other ferry days</i>

- Skerries currently has a 5 day ferry service, although this would be increased to 6 days if the air service was reinstated.
- There is no connection to Shetland mainland on a Tuesday.
- The current service does not deliver either the RSM-defined frequency or length of operating on all days, although these would seem somewhat excessive for Skerries.

*\* Note – the Skerries air service is currently suspended due to a lack of Rescue & Fire Fighting services at the airfield.*



# Current Ferry Service



**Vessel Issues:** Vessel has redundant freshwater tanks & refrigerated holds; MV *Filla* cannot use the South Mouth in Skerries or berth there overnight.

**Access for Disabled:** No issues

**Accommodation Issues:** No issues

Current Vessel:  
*MV Filla*

Vessel Age:  
*13 years*

Scheduled Replacement Date:  
*Long-term – 2029-2034*

Carrying Capacity:  
9 cars  
106 tonnes

Ship-Shore interface:  
*Linkspan. MV Filla has onboard crane so can undertake Lo-Lo operations.*

*The vessel overnights at Symbister*



# Air Service (Currently Suspended)



**Aircraft Issues:** Low carrying capacity; limited to operation during hours of daylight.

**Access for Disabled:** It can be challenging for people with mobility difficulties to access the aircraft.

## Current Aircraft

2 \* Britten-Norman Islanders

## Aircraft Age

10 & 25 years old

## Carrying Capacity

8-9 passengers and limited freight

Passenger numbers on G-SICB limited to 6

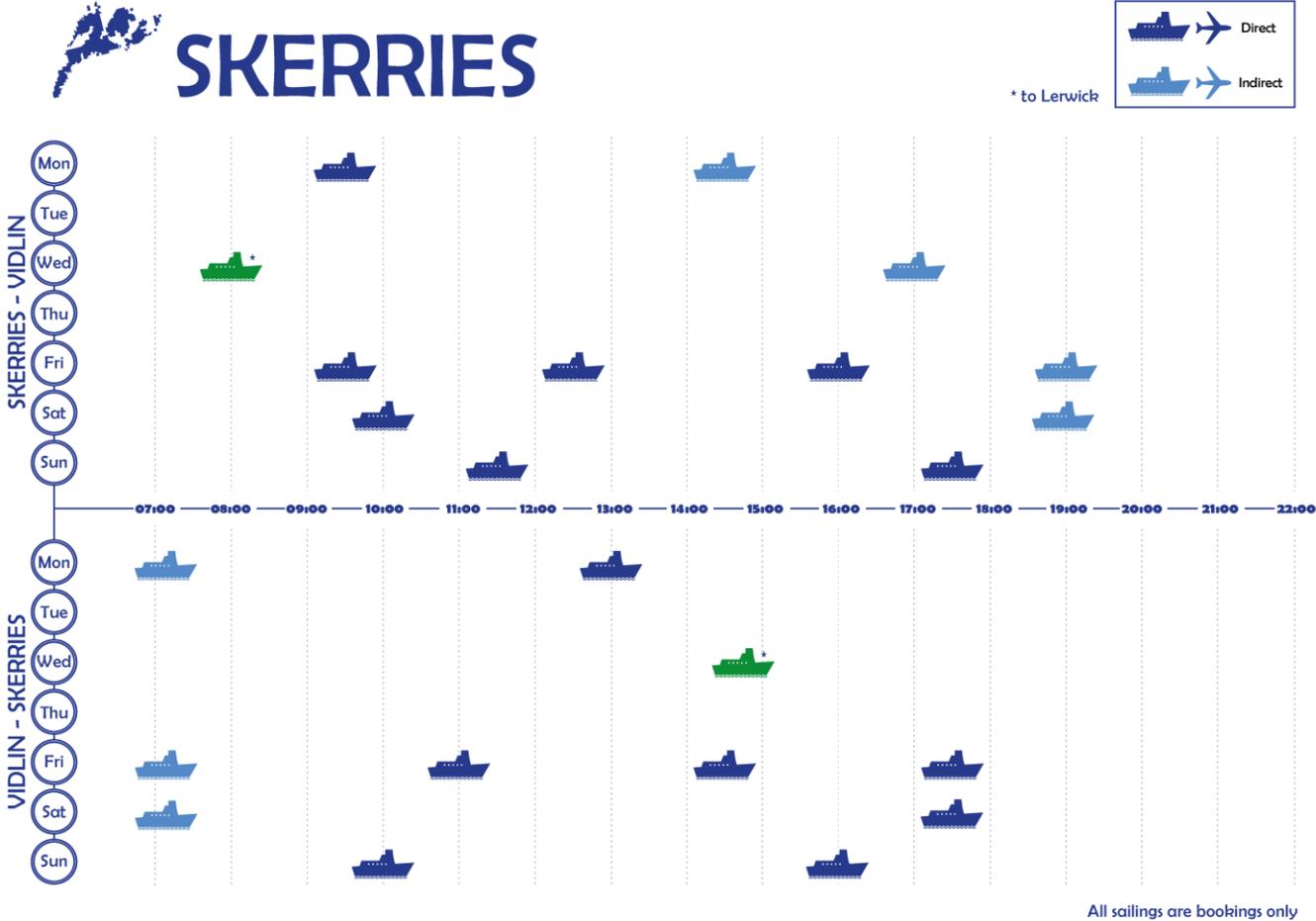
## Airfield Features

Unlicensed & very short runway.

Air services currently suspended due to a lack of Rescue & Fire Fighting Services.



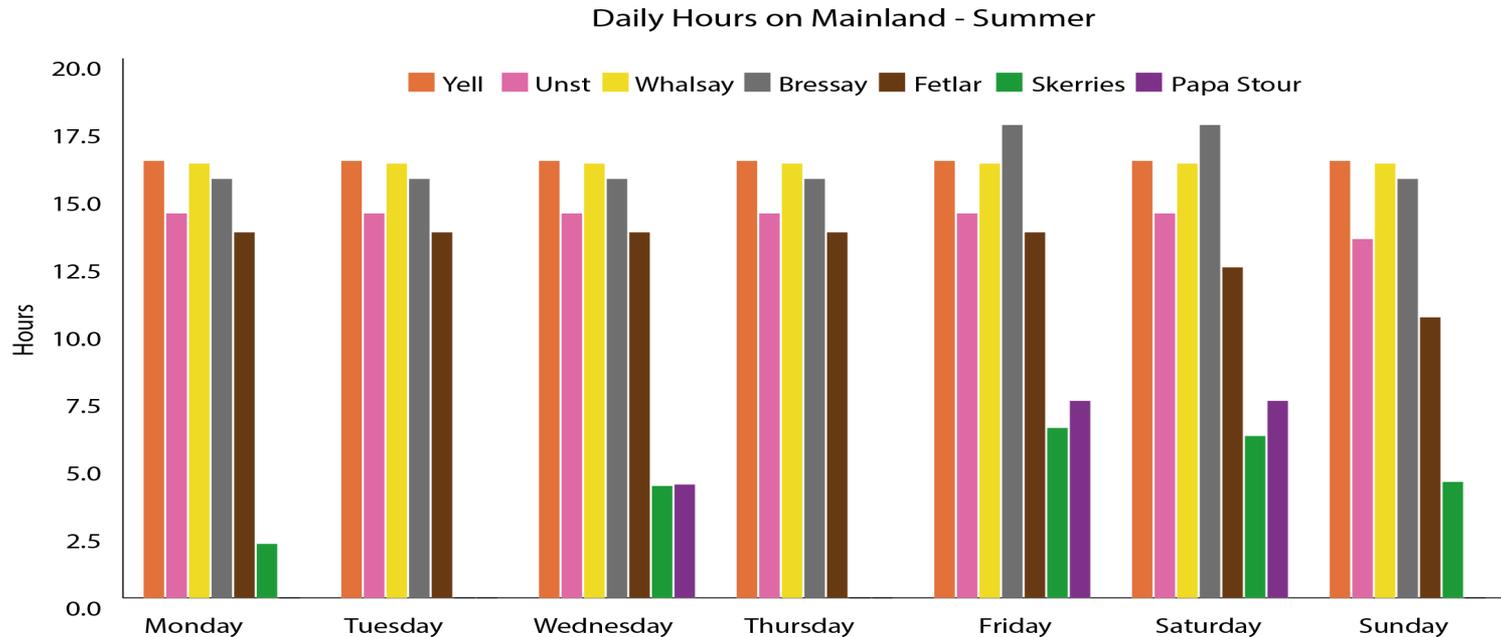
# Skerries - Current Service – departures by day of week



Note – air service not shown as it is currently suspended



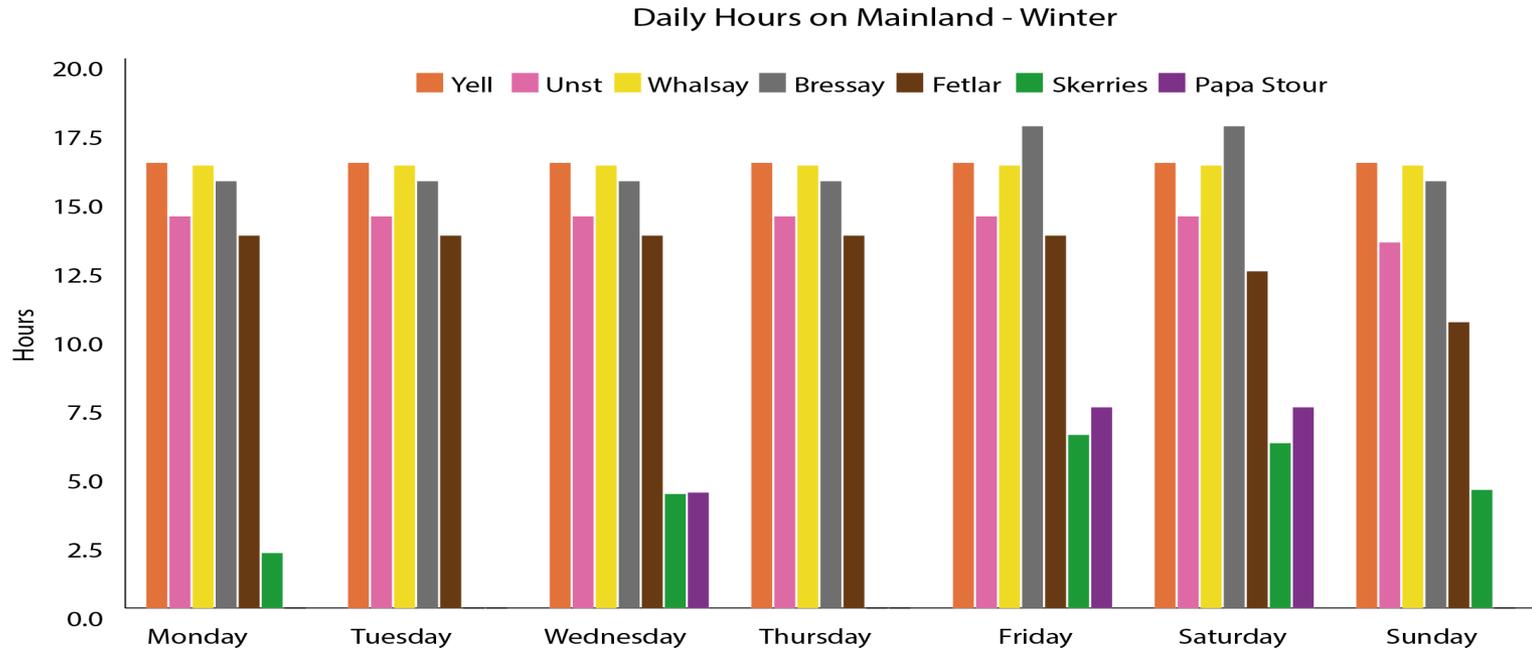
# Daily Time in Shetland Mainland – Ferry - Summer



- Skerries residents have very little time on mainland by ferry – ranges from 2 hours on a Monday to 6 or so hours on a Wednesday, Friday and Saturday
- Time in Lerwick is 6 hours on a Wednesday but reduced on other days because the ferry goes to Vidlin (which means there is very little meaningful time available on Shetland mainland on a Monday)
- A day-return trip to the Shetland mainland is not available on a Tuesday or Thursday currently



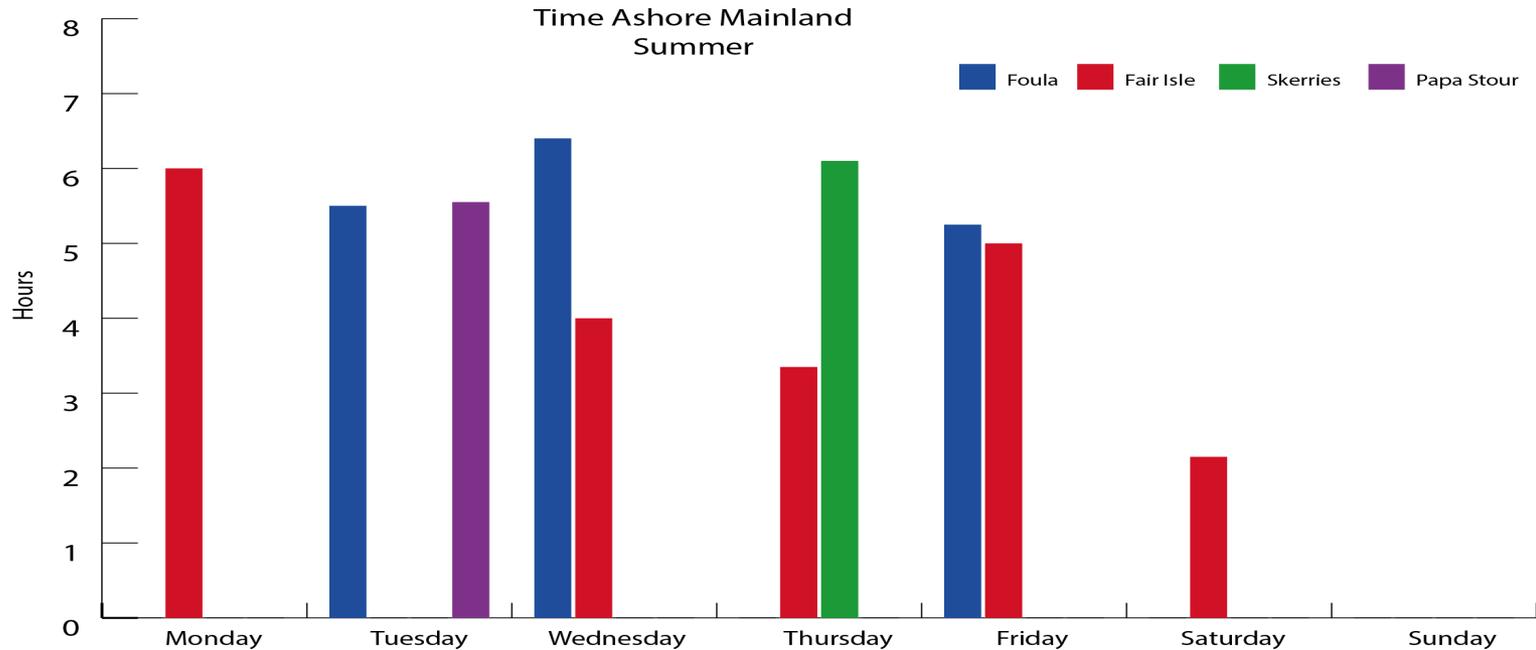
# Daily Time in Shetland Mainland – Ferry - Winter



- The hours available on Shetland mainland from Skerries are the same in winter as in summer.



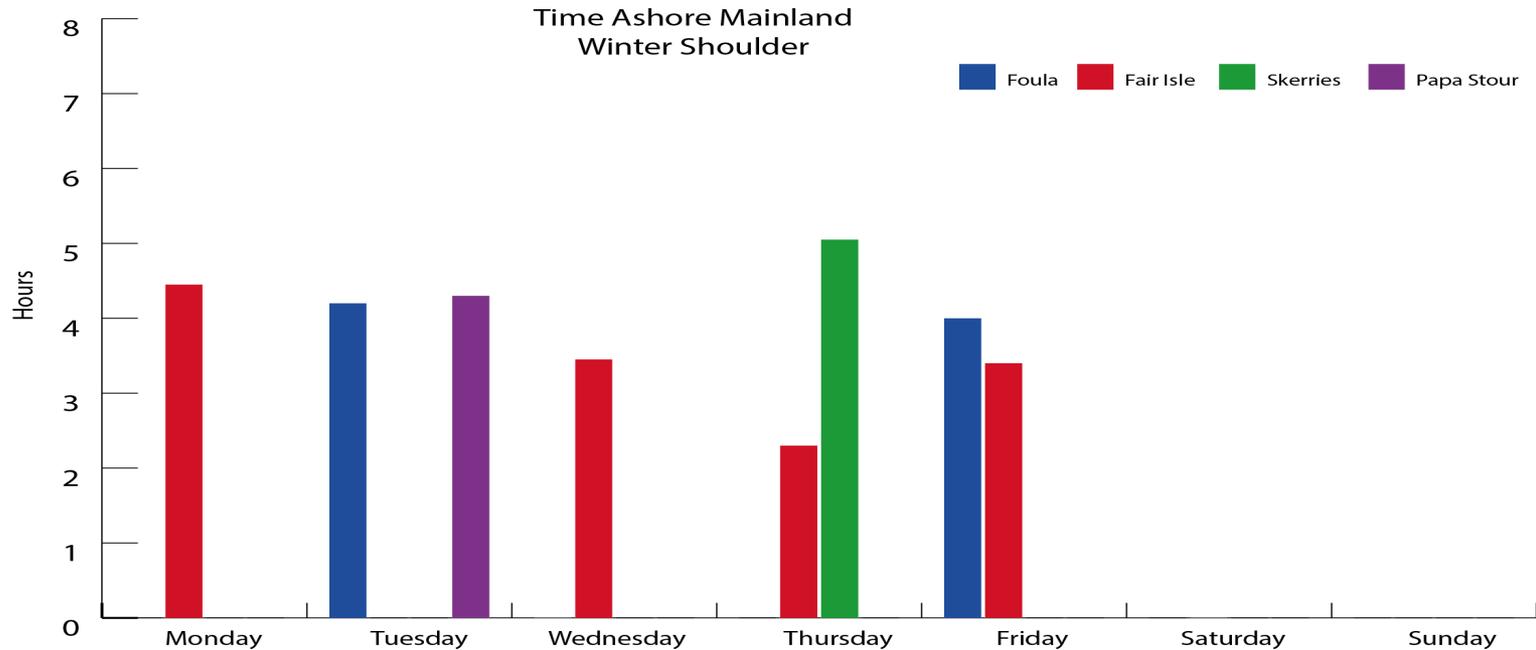
# Daily Time in Shetland Mainland – Air - Summer



- Even when the full air service was operating (with connections on a Monday, Wednesday & Thursday), Skerries residents could only make a meaningful day return by air on a Thursday – this provided around 6 hours on Shetland mainland.
- The air service supplemented ferry services on Mondays and Wednesdays.



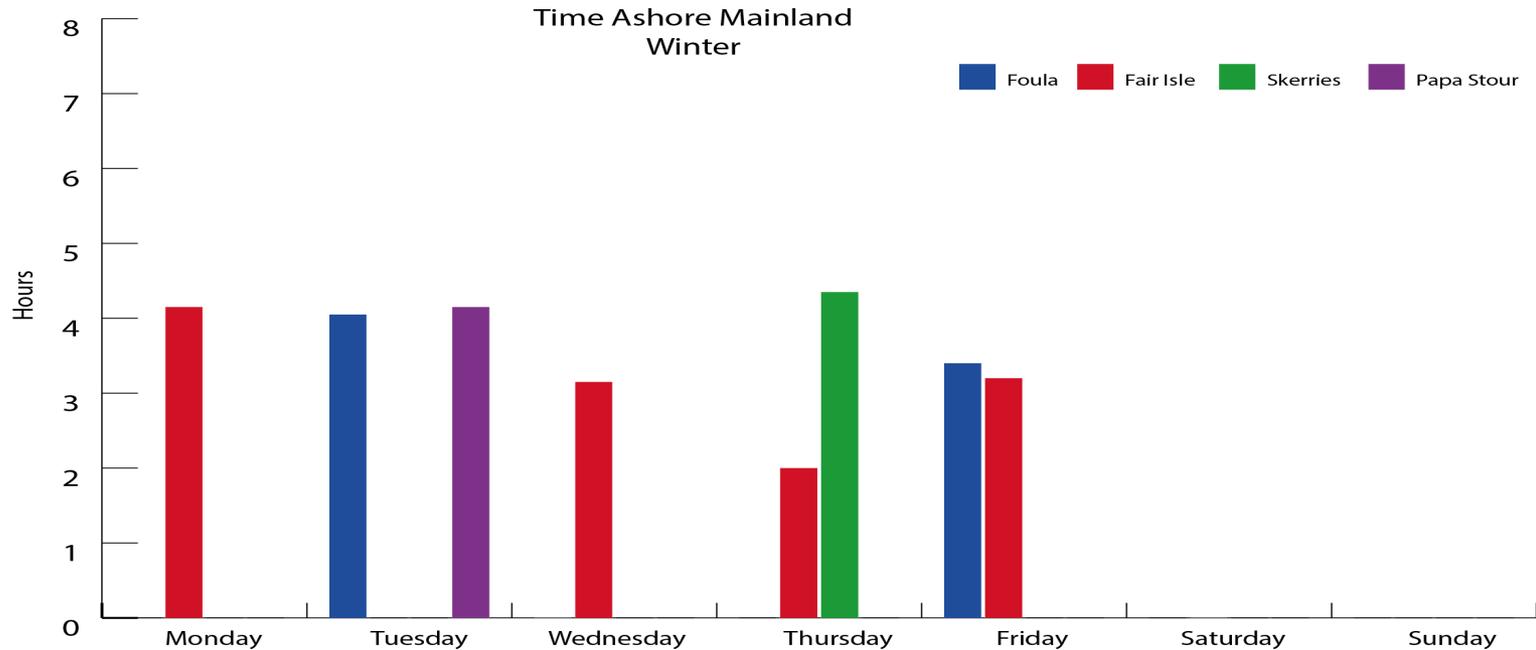
# Daily Time in Shetland Mainland – Air – Shoulder Winter



- The shoulder winter timetable reduced time on mainland from around 6 hours to 5 hours when the air service was operating



# Daily Time in Shetland Mainland – Air - Winter



- The winter timetable offered around 4.5 hours on mainland on a Thursday for Skerries residents.



# Problems, Objectives & Options



**Skerries Transport Problems**

	<b>Service Characteristics</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Why is this a problem or not?</b>
1	Overall journey time to Lerwick	xx	The suspension of air services as of 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2015 means that Skerries residents face a relatively long and, on occasions, indirect journey to Lerwick. The ferry from Skerries to Vidlin takes 90 minutes, with the direct weekly sailing time to Lerwick being 150 minutes. On sailings to Vidlin, there is a 30-40 minute connection to Lerwick by car, whilst public transport takes 40-50 minutes (although the frequency of the bus service means the public transport option is unattractive in any case – see below). The last sailing of the day from Skerries goes to Symbister (where the vessel overnights) except on a Sunday, which means island residents who are travelling to the mainland need to interchange onto the Symbister – Laxo ferry. The long-journey time and infrequent connections creates a problem for Skerries residents in that access to mainland based employment and personal services is limited, an issue which exacerbated by the lack of on-island services. <i>The community consultation response noted that this was a major rather than a moderate problem.</i>
2	First sailing / flight	xx	There are only sailings to and from Skerries five days a week, whilst the first departure tends to be slightly later in the morning because the vessel overnights in Symbister. This, to some extent, limits time on the mainland and the ability to undertake personal business, particularly when return travel from Vidlin is required. The combination of the comparatively long crossing time, suspension of the air service, the overnights of the ferry in Symbister and the mainland port being Vidlin means that productive on-mainland and on-island time is limited. <i>The community consultation response noted that this was a major rather than a moderate problem.</i>
3	Last sailing / flight	xx	The latest departure time of a sailing to Skerries is 1730. This sailing is from Vidlin, which means islanders would need to leave Lerwick no later than 1630-1645. The relatively early last sailing time (and the departure point of Vidlin) is a cause of the limited mainland and on-island time (see below). <i>The community consultation response noted that this was a major rather than a moderate problem.</i>
4	Time on mainland	xxx	Skerries residents get around 23 hours per week on the mainland but much reduced time in Lerwick (around 18 hours) given the need to connect to and from Vidlin on most days. Visitors get around 31 hours on the island. This limits access to employment and business / personal services, an issue exacerbated by the absence of on-island services. At present Skerries residents only have usable time on the mainland on four days of the week, short of the 7-days noted in the RSM.
5	Time in Lerwick	xxx	See point 4.
6	Time on island	xx	See point 4. <i>The community consultation response noted that this was a major rather than a moderate problem.</i>
7	Frequency / Sailings per Day / Timetable gaps	xx	The Skerries timetable offers relatively infrequent sailings, all of which are request only. This is very much a result of the limited demand for the service and limits the ability to travel at short notice. However, the low frequency and under-utilisation of the vessel could be considered a problem as Skerries is less well connected than e.g. Fetlar and the other Outer Isles which still have air services. <i>The community consultation response noted that this was a major rather than a moderate problem.</i>
8	Capacity	✓	Vehicle capacity on the ferry is not believed to be a major problem.
9	Reliability (weather / mechanical)	xx	This route is quite exposed to the weather, particularly the Skerries – Lerwick crossing. This can lead to cancellations and service disruption, a key problem with such a low frequency. <i>The community consultation response noted that this was a major rather than a moderate problem.</i>
10	Comfort	✓	The facilities on the vessel are appropriate for the length of the crossing.
11	Physical access	✓	The passenger accommodation and disabled toilet are on the same level as the vehicle deck so access is not a problem. There are sills below the doors but one of these is hinged to allow it to open for wheelchair access. Because of the nature of the crossing, passengers cannot remain in their vehicles on passage on this route.
12	Integration with PT (local bus)	xxx	Public transport integration at Vidlin is relatively limited, with only three buses to Lerwick per day, which are not particularly well timed with the ferry. This is a factor in limiting time in Lerwick, which is key for accessing personal services.
13	Integration with PT (strategic)	xx	Given the limited connections from Skerries, onward travel will always have to be well planned. However, there are a number of problems over and above this. Firstly, a high degree of reliability is required on both the connecting and onward service as any delay or cancellation can lead to the need for a costly overnight stay or a long layover on Shetland mainland. <i>The community consultation response noted that this was a major rather than a moderate problem.</i>
14	Crossing / flight times	xx	The crossing time is relatively long, 90 minutes to Vidlin and 150 minutes to Lerwick. This was previously offset by the provision of the air service but this is no longer the case. The long-crossing time means that any visit to the mainland is effectively a full day affair meaning that little can be done on-island on that day. <i>The community consultation response noted that this was a major rather than a moderate problem.</i>
15	Onboard facilities	✓	The facilities on the vessel are appropriate for the length of crossing.
16	Weekday / weekend service variation	x	There are only five sailing days per week, although weekend connectivity is more frequent than weekdays on which there is a sailing. <i>The community consultation response noted that this was a major rather than a minor problem.</i>
17	Landside infrastructure issues	x	Vidlin is accessed via a single track road. The marshalling area is very limited, especially when the Whalsay service is also operating from there. All vehicles have to reverse on or off the ferry, which adds to turnaround times and presents marshalling challenges at the constrained Vidlin site. This can give rise to operational and safety problems but the current situation is workable.
18	Landside human resources	xxx	The lack of fire cover at Skerries airfield has led to the suspension of the air service.

# Study Objectives

In the light of the problems identified across the Shetland Islands, the following objectives have been defined as the basis for the options appraisal:

- **Transport Planning Objective 1:** The capacity of the services should not act as a constraint to regular and essential personal, vehicular and freight travel between the island(s) and Shetland mainland.
- **Transport Planning Objective 2a:** Where an island has a 'commutable' combined ferry or air & drive / public transport / walk time to a main employment centre (e.g. 80 minutes), the connections provided should reliably facilitate commuting.
- **Transport Planning Objective 2b:** Where an island does not have a 'commutable' combined ferry or air & drive / public transport / walk time to a main employment centre (e.g. 80 minutes), the connections provided should reliably permit a half day (e.g. 4 hours) in Lerwick, 7 days a week, all year round.
- **Transport Planning Objective 3:** The scheduled time between connections should be minimised to increase flexibility for passengers and freight by maximising the number of island connections across the operating day.
- **Transport Planning Objective 4:** The level of connectivity provided should minimise the variation within and between weekdays, evenings, Saturdays and Sundays.
- **Transport Planning Objective 5:** Where practicable and realistic, islanders should be provided with links to strategic onward connections without the need for an overnight stay on Shetland mainland.



# Skerries – Capital Options

In the light of the analysis of transport problems and objectives, the following **capital options** have been identified for Skerries:

- Option CO1 (Do Minimum): Replace the MV *Filla* on a like-for-like basis at life expiry
  - Vessel would carry approximately 9 cars
- Option CO2: Replace the MV *Filla* immediately with a smaller vessel which could overnight Skerries. The MV *Filla* would be redeployed or sold
  - Vessel would carry approximately 6 cars
- Option CO3: Develop a new overnight berth at Vidlin, allowing the MV *Filla* to lie there



# Skerries – Revenue Options

The current timetable is determined by the level of crewing resource and working hours legislation.

The funds generated through ticket sales do not cover the costs of running air and ferry services, and this deficit is funded through the Council's annual *revenue* budget.

The following **revenue options** have been identified for Skerries:

- Option RO1 (Do Minimum): Assumed to be the current service plus the air service pre-Rescue & Fire Fighting Service reductions
- Option RO2: Offer one return sailing to either Lerwick or Vidlin on days where there is not currently a service (Tuesday and Thursday)
- Option RO3: Introduce two return sailings to / from Vidlin a day or one return sailing from Skerries to / from Lerwick a day with either Vidlin or Lerwick sailings operating seven days week
- Option RO4: Permanently discontinue the air service from Skerries
  - Note this option is only being considered in parallel with options to improve the ferry service, ensuring no worsening of the Do Minimum

*Note that in our exit questionnaire, we will ask you what your priorities for the service would be, were more operating hours to be available.*



# Rationale for Selection / Rejection

Option	Take Forward (✓) or Reject (✗)	Rationale for Selection / Rejection
Option CO1 (Do Minimum): Replace the MV <i>Filla</i> on a like-for-like basis at life expiry	✓	The current vessel meets the needs of the route and should be taken forward as the Do Minimum
Option CO2: Replace the MV <i>Filla</i> immediately with a smaller vessel which could overnight Skerries. The MV <i>Filla</i> would be redeployed or sold	✓	This option would allow the vessel to be island based and use the South Mouth. Potential reliability would need to be considered further
Option CO3: Develop a new overnight berth at Vidlin, allowing the MV <i>Filla</i> to lie there	✗	Would not deliver sufficient benefits in its own right for Skerries but could be considered with Whalsay solution
Option RO1 (Do Minimum): Assumed to be the current ferry service plus the air service pre-RFFS reductions	✓	All means should be considered to restore the service before a decision is made on its future
Option RO2: Offer one return sailing to either Lerwick or Vidlin on days where there is not currently a service (Tuesday and Thursday)	✓	Any additional services would be of benefit to Skerries, especially with the air service suspension
Option RO3: Introduce two return sailings to / from Vidlin a day <u>or</u> one return sailing from Skerries to / from Lerwick a day with <u>either</u> Vidlin or Lerwick sailings operating seven days week	✓	This option should explored further – 7 day service which fits with RSM
Option RO4: Permanently discontinue the air service from Skerries	✓	Negative impact on the island and should only be considered if RO1 cannot be delivered

# Shetland Air Network – Capital Options

- The BN2 Islander remains the most appropriate aircraft in the medium-term.
- **Option CO1 – Maintain and continue with the current aircraft until life expiry (Do Minimum):**
  - This option would involve continuing with the current Britten-Norman Islanders over the length of the strategy period.
  - If it becomes clear during that period that one or both of the aircraft is nearing the end of its operational life, replacements should be considered at that stage.
- **Option CO2: Supplement the current aircraft with an additional Britten-Norman Islander:**
  - An additional Islander would be leased or purchased and added to the fleet. The timetable would be expanded to take account of this additional capacity.
  - It is likely that at least one more pilot would be required.
- **Option CO3: Install runway lighting at all four island airstrips**
  - This option would involve the installation of runway lighting at Fair Isle, Foula, Papa Stour and Skerries (and Unst / Fetlar if re-opened).
  - Further investigation into the type of lighting to be used is required – it is assumed for the purpose of this option that Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) lights would be installed.
- **Option CO4: Install Global Navigation Satellite System on the current aircraft**
  - This option would involve the installation of GNSS and supporting equipment on the current Council Islander fleet.



# Rationale for Selection / Rejection – Air Capital Options

Option	Take Forward (✓) or Reject (✗)	Rationale for Selection / Rejection
Option CO1 (Do Minimum): Maintain and continue with the current aircraft over the strategy period / until life expiry	✓	This option is retained as the Do Minimum.
Option CO2: Supplement the current aircraft with an additional Britten-Norman Islander	✗	This option will not be considered further. There is at present insufficient demand for a third aircraft, whilst the current aircraft could be worked more intensively.
Option CO3: Install runway lighting at Tingwall and all four island airstrips	✗	This option will not be considered further, except potentially in tandem with GNSS. The experience of runway lighting in Orkney coupled with the safety risks and limited probability of obtaining CAA night flight permissions mean that this option is excluded from further consideration.
Option CO4: Install Global Navigation Satellite System on the current aircraft	✓	This option will not be considered further. It should be noted that the operator concerns about safety and implementability in the Shetland environment would need to be addressed in advance of progressing this option.
Review the case for relocating the inter-island air service to Sumburgh from Tingwall	✓	The study has set out the comparative costs, benefits and risks associated with operating the air service from both Tingwall and Sumburgh. The evidence presented will be considered in more detail by the Council following completion of the study.



# What to do Next?

- Thank you for taking the time to read through the above material – we would be grateful if you could now complete a short questionnaire in relation to the options presented
- Please follow this link to access the questionnaire:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/FI-Foula-PapaStour-Skerries-Aug2016>

