

## Part 1 Appraisal Summary Tables

Proposal Details			
Name and address of authority or organisation promoting the proposal:  (Also provide name of any subsidiary organisations also involved in promoting the proposal)		Mr Michael Craigie, 01595 744 160, <a href="mailto:michael.craigie@shetland.gov.uk">michael.craigie@shetland.gov.uk</a>  Shetland Islands Council, Development Service, Transport Planning Service, 6 North Ness, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0LZ	
Proposal Name:	Option CO5a – Commence an air service from Unst to Tingwall	Name of Planner:	Stephen Canning, Peter Brett Associates
Proposal Description:	This option would involve the provision of capital funding to restore the air strip at Baltasound to a serviceable standard and ongoing revenue funding to support the operation of an air service with appropriate ground support.  The reopened airfield would be fully licensed.	Estimated Total Public Sector Funding Requirement:	<i>Capital costs/grant</i> £100k.
			<i>Current revenue support</i> £0
			<i>Annual revenue support</i> Dependent on the number of rotations over the week.
Funding Sought From: (if applicable)	Transport Scotland	Amount of Application:	<i>Present Value of Cost to Govt.</i> Costs in this study are all reported in 2016 prices only. The costs would reflect those set out above.
Background Information			
Geographic Context:	<p>The islands of Fetlar and Unst are the most northerly inhabited islands within the archipelago. The island of Unst is separated from Yell by the Bluemull Sound, and Fetlar lies to the south of Unst and east of Yell.</p> <p>Unst is by far the larger of the two islands in terms of population, but both islands have close connections with neighbouring Yell and Shetland mainland.</p> <p>Transport connectivity is wholly delivered by a two-vessel triangular ferry service, which links Fetlar and Unst to each other and to neighbouring Yell. The ferry from Unst – Yell takes 10 minutes; from Fetlar – Yell takes 25 minutes; and from Unst – Fetlar 25 minutes.</p> <p>The ferry terminal on Unst is located at Belmont in the south-west of the island, some way south of the main settlement of</p>		

	<p>Baltasound. Fetlar ferry terminal, Hamars Ness, which has recently benefitted significant investment in a breakwater, is in the north-west of the island. The Yell landfall is at Gutcher, which is in the north-east of the island and around 25 minutes' drive to Ulsta, where the ferry can be caught to Shetland mainland.</p> <p>The MV <i>Bigga</i> currently lies overnight at Gutcher, with her first service of the day being to Belmont. The MV <i>Geira</i> lies overnight at Hamars Ness, with her first service of the day being to Gutcher.</p>
Social Context:	<p>Population in <b>Unst</b> declined following the closure of RAF Saxa Vord in 2006 but is now relatively stable at the 600-650 mark. The availability of housing on Unst is reasonably good (although there are some local issues) but there are concerns that housing is of the 'wrong type' for retaining and attracting families. Healthcare in Unst is seen to be of a high standard, although there is a community concern about the lack of some resident specialist services. The school roll in Unst declined sharply with the closure of RAF Saxa Vord, but has recovered slightly since 2006.</p> <p><b>Fetlar</b> has experienced a significant recent decline in population (81 residents in 2013, down to 59 in August 2015) and the community is now very fragile. Limited on-island economic opportunities, a lack of appropriate housing and the closure of the island shop are amongst a number of factors cited as an issue. The lack of appropriate housing is deemed to be a problem on Fetlar. The island continues to have an on-island primary school and nursery, which is critical, but the roll in each is very low.</p>
Economic Context:	<p>The economic activity rate in <b>Unst</b> also declined with the closure of RAF Saxa Vord and the out-migration of a number of young and economically active families from the island. Whilst the standard of living remains good, the community highlighted the significant economic challenges faced by the island in the longer term.</p> <p>Unst has had its economic challenges in recent years but has now stabilised to some extent, albeit with a much smaller population. It was noted by HIE that there are some promising signs of growth in the local economy, with tourism and food &amp; drink being key growth industries, although the community note that this is small scale in nature.</p> <p><b>Fetlar</b> currently has a shortage of viable economic development opportunities, an issue the Fetlar Development Plan is seeking to address. The island has limited economic opportunities, with the bulk of employment concentrated in agriculture, small scale tourism and the public sector – travel to neighbouring islands and mainland is therefore essential. Overall, the Fetlar community explained that the reinstatement of fares on the Bluemull Sound coupled with the reduction in service provision as part of the 2013 budget cuts is seriously undermining the sustainability of the island.</p>
<b>Planning Objectives</b>	
Objective:	Performance against planning objective:
<p><i>TPO1: 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</i></p>	<p><b>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Minor Positive</b></p> <p>The provision of an air service from Baltasound to Tingwall would offer an extremely minor increase in capacity. The Britten-Norman Islander, the current and preferred aircraft, is restricted to a maximum of eight passengers,</p>

Mainland	so even with a relatively frequent service (which is unlikely), the capacity increase would be limited.
TPO2a: Where an island has a 'commutable' combined ferry or drive / public transport / walk time to a main employment centre (e.g. 80 minutes), the connections provided should reliably facilitate commuting	<b>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Minor Positive</b> The provision of a morning air service to Tingwall and an evening return would make Unst commutable, albeit only for a very small number of people given the capacity constraints associated with the aircraft.
TPO2b: 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 at least a half day (e.g. 4 hours) in Lerwick 7 days a week, all year round.	<b>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Minor Positive</b> Whilst the current ferry service already delivers this objective, the commencement of an air service would reduce the journey time.
TPO3: 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.	<b>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Minor Positive</b> The provision of an air service between Baltasound and Tingwall would add one or more daily return connections into the timetable. However, any impact is likely to be very minor.
TPO4: The level of connectivity provided should minimise the variation within and between weekdays, evenings, Saturdays and Sundays.	<b>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Minor Positive</b> The provision of an air service between Baltasound and Tingwall would add one or more daily return connections into the timetable. This could assist in reducing variations in the timetable but any impact would be very minor.
TPO5: Where practicable, islanders should be provided with links to strategic onward transport connections without the need for an overnight stay on Shetland mainland.	<b>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Neutral</b> This option would have no impact on strategic connectivity.
Rationale for Selection or Rejection of Proposal:	The potential for this option to transform journey times and exploit opportunities presented by available flying hours and a high quality airfield merit further investigation.  Community feedback is required on whether this option would attract public support.
<b>Implementability Appraisal</b>	
Technical:	There are no technical feasibility issues associated with this option.

Operational:	Operational issues include the availability of flying hours / aircraft and the provision of Flight Information and Rescue & Fire Fighting Services at Baltasound.  Baltasound Airfield would also need to be fully licensed, potentially at significant cost.	
Financial:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimated capital cost of restoring Baltasound to an operational standard would be around £100k.</li> <li>• Airfield licensing and operational costs would be in addition to this</li> </ul>	
Public:	Some support was expressed for this proposal through the public engagement.	
<b>STAG Criteria</b>		
<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Assessment Summary</b>	<b>Supporting Information</b>
Environment:	x	The provision of an air service from Baltasound would lead to a very marginal increase in emissions, as it would involve the development and operation of an entirely new service.
Safety:	x	There would be a very minor safety disbenefit associated with this option due to the increase in total flying hours.
Economy:	✓✓	The introduction of an air service from Baltasound would provide significant TEE benefits for those using it. An air service would dramatically reduce the journey times to Lerwick and potentially Sumburgh, but it is important to stress that this benefit would only accrue to a very small number of people given the limited capacity of the aircraft.
Integration:	✓✓	The provision of an air service would provide an additional transport connection for the island and would therefore represent an enhancement in integration. A fast connection to Unst could also support tourism and business travel, whilst a restored Baltasound Airport could be an effective base for small businesses. This would support the Unst Development Plan.
Accessibility and Social Inclusion:	✓✓	The introduction of an air service from Baltasound would significantly improve accessibility to / from the island, but this benefit would only accrue to a very small number of people given the limited capacity of the aircraft.