

Part 1 Appraisal Summary Tables

| Proposal Details | | | |
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| 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, michael.craigie@shetland.gov.uk Shetland Islands Council, Development Service, Transport Planning Service, 6 North Ness, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0LZ | |
| Proposal Name: | Option RO1 – Offer an on-request early departure from both Fetlar & Unst, which would allow connection with the first flights Sumburgh. | Name of Planner: | Stephen Canning, Peter Brett Associates |
| Proposal Description: | This service would operate Monday - Friday and would be operated by one vessel. The service would depart Fetlar at 0345 and Unst at 0415. The service would have to be operated by the Gutcher-based vessel MV <i>Bigga</i> as it would otherwise block the linkspan. The ship would be manned from 0245 for half an hour turn to, sail from Gutcher at 0315, arrive back at Gutcher at 0430 and secure by 0500. | Estimated Total Public Sector Funding Requirement: | <i>Capital costs/grant</i> £0 |
| | | | <i>Current revenue support</i> £2.19 million (rounded) per annum. |
| | | | <i>Annual revenue support</i> £2.57 million (rounded) per annum. |
| 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> | | |

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| | <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 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 Unst 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>Fetlar 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 Unst 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 & drink being key growth industries, although the community note that this is small scale in nature.</p> <p>Fetlar 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> |
| <p>Planning Objectives</p> | |

| Objective: | Performance against planning objective: |
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| <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 Mainland</i></p> | <p>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Neutral</p> <p>This option would offer additional capacity in the sense that it would provide a sailing a time when there is currently not a connection. However, it would not address a specific capacity problem and thus the impact in terms of this objective is neutral.</p> |
| <p><i>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</i></p> | <p>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Neutral</p> <p>This option is not considered relevant for Fetlar and Unst.</p> |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Neutral</p> <p>This option would have not impact in terms of this objective.</p> |
| <p><i>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.</i></p> | <p>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Minor Positive</p> <p>An early morning on-request service would extend the length of the operating day by adding an additional morning connection into the timetable. However, the contribution to this objective would be very minor overall.</p> |
| <p><i>TPO4: The level of connectivity provided should minimise the variation within and between weekdays, evenings, Saturdays and Sundays.</i></p> | <p>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Neutral</p> <p>This option would have no positive impact on timetable variation.</p> |
| <p><i>TPO5: Where practicable, islanders should be provided with links to strategic onward transport connections without the need for an overnight stay on Shetland mainland.</i></p> | <p>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Major Positive</p> <p>This option of an early morning request sailing from Fetlar and Unst would contribute significantly to this objective. An early departure from Belmont and Hamars Ness would allow Fetlar / Unst residents to catch the first morning flights to Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Inverness. This in turn would allow residents to make a day return trip to the Scottish mainland, removing the need for an off-island overnight stay. The impact would be</p> |

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| | bigger for Unst than Fetlar given the relative size of the population of each island. | |
| Rationale for Selection or Rejection of Proposal: | This option is rejected from further consideration. Whilst this option would improve strategic connectivity, the service would leave Fetlar and Unst in the middle of the night and is therefore likely to be very lightly used. Departures at 0345 (Fetlar) and 0415 (Unst) are unlikely to facilitate a particularly practical day trip to the Scottish mainland. | |
| Implementability Appraisal | | |
| Technical: | There are no technical feasibility issues associated with this option. | |
| Operational: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No operational issues but crew overtime & fuel required • Yell Sound sailing would also have to come forward. | |
| Financial: | £380k increment to annual operating costs of £2.19m based on Option CO1. | |
| Public: | There was no specific feedback on this option through the initial public consultation, but it is likely that this option would be publicly acceptable. | |
| STAG Criteria | | |
| Criterion | Assessment Summary | Supporting Information |
| Environment: | ✘ | There is likely to be a very minor negative impact associated with the increased emissions from operating extra sailings. |
| Safety: | ✘ | There would be a small negative safety impact associated with this option. Whilst this option would not necessarily generate additional road kilometres, it may displace trips to the early hours of the morning, which could be an issue in winter if people are travelling in the dark and / or before the roads are treated. |
| Economy: | ✔ | <p>The principal economic benefit of this option is that it would allow Fetlar and Unst residents to make a day return trip the Scottish mainland. This would potentially give rise to small TEE and EALI benefits for the islands (particularly Unst), although there would be a small loss for Shetland mainland hoteliers.</p> <p>There would be a direct financial benefit for the NHS. Island patients would be able to make a day return to Aberdeen for hospital appointments, thus eliminating the overnight accommodation costs which the NHS currently has to fund (although the departure time makes it questionable whether such an approach would be considered appropriate).</p> |
| Integration: | ✔✔ | This option would significantly enhance transport integration (see TPO5). |

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| Accessibility and Social Inclusion: | ✓ | There would be a minor positive in terms of community accessibility, with Fetlar and Unst residents able to both access the Scottish mainland relatively early in the morning and make a day return trip. |
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