

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, michael.craigie@shetland.gov.uk Shetland Islands Council, Development Service, Transport Planning Service, 6 North Ness, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0LZ	
Proposal Name:	Option RO4: Permanently discontinue the air service from Skerries.	Name of Planner:	Stephen Canning, Peter Brett Associates
Proposal Description:	The Skerries air service is currently suspended due to lack of Rescue & Fire Fighting Services (RFFS). This option would involve the permanent discontinuation of the service.	Estimated Total Public Sector Funding Requirement:	<i>Capital costs/grant</i> £0.00
			<i>Capital costs/grant</i> £0.00.
			<i>Current revenue support</i> Air service revenue support is not disaggregated by route
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 Skerries are an outlying archipelago in the north-east of the Shetland Islands. The island group is the easternmost of the Shetland archipelago.</p> <p>In terms of transport, Skerries is connected to the Shetland mainland by a Ro-Ro ferry service. There are connections to Vidlin on a Monday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday and one return connection per week to Lerwick on a Wednesday. All services are on-request.</p> <p>The Skerries air service was suspended on 23rd November 2015 due to a lack of sufficient Rescue & Fire Fighting Services (RFFS).</p>		

<p>Social Context:</p>	<p>The Skerries population has been in steady decline since 1981 and is now believed to number less than 60.</p> <p>There are limited data available on housing in Skerries, although house prices are believed to be low and the property market slow.</p> <p>Medical cover for Skerries is provided by the Whalsay Health Centre.</p> <p>There has been a gradual decline in numbers at both primary and secondary school level, with just 2 children enrolled at the Primary School in 2014. The declining school rolls, closure of the high school and general population decline present a serious threat to the future sustainability of the island chain.</p>
<p>Economic Context:</p>	<p>Skerries has a relatively low economic activity rate (although perhaps underestimated by the official figures). Skerries has typically had a dependence on fishing and aquaculture for its livelihood. There was a community salmon farm in the islands employing six people, which was bought over and subsequently closed in early 2015, at a cost of six jobs. The loss of this farm led in turn to the closure of the small processing factory on the islands. There remain a couple of whitefish and shellfish boats resident to the islands, but the loss of the salmon industry was a significant blow to the community.</p> <p>There is very little formal economy outwith fishing. The land is not particularly fertile, although there is some small scale agriculture. Commuting has now become important to the island chain, with many residents leaving on a Monday and returning on a Friday, putting further pressure on local services.</p> <p>There has been a substantial increase in the number of people working from home in Skerries, which suggests that daily commuting options and on-island work is limited.</p>
<p>Planning Objectives</p>	
<p>Objective:</p>	<p>Performance against planning objective:</p>
<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: Minor Negative</p> <p>This option would result in a small reduction of capacity for Skerries. The ferry would, however, continue to comfortably meet the capacity needs of the island.</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</i></p>	<p>Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Neutral</p> <p>This objective is not relevant for Skerries.</p>

facilitate commuting	
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.	Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Moderate Negative The pre-RFFS air service provided the only connection from Skerries on a Thursday as well as additional connections on a Monday and Wednesday. The permanent discontinuation of this service would result in a reduction of time on mainland.
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.	Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Minor Negative The permanent discontinuation of the air service would reduce the frequency of connections from Skerries and would create a timetable gap on Thursdays.
TPO4: The level of connectivity provided should minimise the variation within and between weekdays, evenings, Saturdays and Sundays.	Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Minor Negative The permanent discontinuation of the air service would reduce the number of connections from Skerries on a Monday and Wednesday, increasing timetable variation. There would also be no connections to / from the island on a Thursday.
TPO5: Where practicable, islanders should be provided with links to strategic onward transport connections without the need for an overnight stay on Shetland mainland.	Performance against Transport Planning Objective: Minor Negative The permanent discontinuation of the air service would mean that it would not be possible to travel from Skerries to the Scottish mainland on a Thursday.
Rationale for Selection or Rejection of Proposal:	This option is retained for further consideration, although could be combined with Skerries options RO2 or RO3 to provide 7-day connectivity. Although clearly negative to the island, this has to be an option in the event that the air service cannot be operated on a sustainable basis in the medium term.
Implementability Appraisal	
Technical:	There would be no technical issues associated with this option.
Operational:	There would be no operational issues associated with this option. The flying hours reserved for serving Skerries could be utilised elsewhere.
Financial:	Air service costs are not disaggregated by route. However, given the limited number of rotations to Skerries, it is

		likely that only a small fuel saving and a reduction in airfield costs would be achieved.
Public:		<p>Skerries Community Council noted that no decision should be made on the future of the air service until stakeholders have had the opportunity to review in detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need for, and the requirements of, an air service to Skerries. • if the service is to continue, how it can be best reinstated. • if the service is no longer required, how the capability to reinstate it in the future can be retained.
STAG Criteria		
Criterion	Assessment Summary	Supporting Information
Environment:	✓	The permanent discontinuation of the air service would lead to a very small reduction in emissions compared to the pre RFFS service suspension.
Safety:	✓	This option would have a minor positive impact in terms of safety as it would remove the risks associated with flying into a very short and unlicensed airfield.
Economy:	xx	<p>The permanent discontinuation of the air service would have a negative impact on Skerries through reducing overall connectivity, particularly for those seeking to make short duration trips to / from the island.</p> <p>There would be TEE disbenefits associated with the reduction in connections, with a particular disbenefit on a Thursday where there would be no connections to/from Skerries.</p>
Integration:	xx	As well as worsening strategic integration (see TPO5), this option would not support a wide range of policies aimed at sustaining and developing Shetland's island communities. In addition, it would weaken the current services in relation to the RSM requirements.
Accessibility and Social Inclusion:	xx	This option would generate a moderate negative effect in terms of accessibility & social inclusion through reducing connections across the week. This would particularly be the case on a Thursday where there are not currently ferry connections to/from Skerries.