



Climate Change Impact Assessment – Full Assessment

Background

A Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) must be completed at the beginning of a new project, policy or programme. This allows climate positive action to be considered from the start, may be used as a tool for decision making processes and ensures we are taking the appropriate steps to mitigate climate change and align with the council's target to reach net zero by 2045. The CCIA Screening Questions and/or full CCIA may be included in the environmental section of committee reports. Outcomes must be monitored and reported to ensure projects are in line with climate change targets.

In January 2020 the SIC acknowledged the Climate Emergency and the Climate Change Programme was set up to meet Scottish Government targets. The Climate Change Strategy Team was developed and in December 2023 the council approved the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

SIC Climate Change Strategy: [sic-climate-change-strategy-2023-2027 \(shetland.gov.uk\)](https://shetland.gov.uk/sic-climate-change-strategy-2023-2027)

SIC Climate Change Action Plan: [sic-climate-change-action-plan \(shetland.gov.uk\)](https://shetland.gov.uk/sic-climate-change-action-plan)



Completion of CCIAs

A CCIA helps the council to determine if a project, policy, programme, change plan, business plan, service plan or redesign will have a positive, neutral or negative impact on the climate.

If you require help, guidance or advice when completing the CCIA, please contact the Climate Change Strategy Team at climatechange@shetland.gov.uk

Please submit all CCIAs to climatechange@shetland.gov.uk

Disclaimer: A Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) does not replace the statutory requirement for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) or Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) for larger proposals, and for which systematic processes are already in place.

Environmental Impact Assessment:
[Environmental Impact Assessment - GOV.UK](https://gov.uk/environmental-impact-assessment)

Strategic Environmental Assessment:
[Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\) - Shetland Islands Council Interact](https://shetland.gov.uk/strategic-environmental-assessment-sea)

(UK Government) An EIA should be completed when a local planning authority is deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project, which is likely to have significant effects on the environment. Please contact planning before applying for planning permission.

(Scottish Government) The SEA is a detailed assessment of the likely effects that a public plan will have on the environment if implemented. Complete the SEA pre-screening process to determine if a full assessment is needed. The Scottish Government will respond with info on next steps.



Section 1 – Impact Assessment Information

Has an EIA or SEA already been completed or planned to be completed for the project, policy or programme? Please mark 'X' in the appropriate 'yes' or 'no' box.			
Assessment	Yes	No	Additional Information:
EIA Environmental Impact Assessment		X	Not appropriate at this stage in the Programme, but would be necessary for project-level Outline and Full Business Cases, which follow at a later stage in the process
SEA Strategic Environmental Assessment	X		Stages 1 (Screening) and 2 (Scoping) have been completed in parallel with the Inter-island Transport Connectivity Network Strategy Outline Business Cases. Stage 3 (Environmental Assessment) is now underway and Stage 4 will be completed before the end of 2026

Section 2 – Project, Policy or Programme Details

This section requires key information about the proposal, who the main contact is, a brief summary of the proposal and the key objectives to allow a better understanding and explanation of what the project involves. Please complete the table below.

Author:	Louise Shearer	Date:	15 September 2026
Email Address:	louise.shearer2@shetland.gov.uk		
Service:	Development Services	Department:	Directorate
Title of Project, Policy or Programme:	Inter-island Transport Connectivity (IITC) Programme		
Brief Summary of the Project, Policy or Programme:			
The purpose of the IITC Programme is to develop a high-level timed and costed sequence of island connectivity investments which, taken together, will form an agreed network strategy to meet the needs of Shetland's island communities.			
Key Objectives of the Project, Policy or Programme:			
Shetland's island communities rely on a transport network that is increasingly under strain and requires substantial capital investment. The current model was developed in the 1970s and 80s and, while it has supported a high degree of socio-economic integration across Shetland, it no longer meets modern requirements and demands. The fleet has an average age of 32.5 years and faces growing challenges in terms of reliability, capacity and accessibility. Operation of the existing fleet is also carbon intensive. Reliable inter-island transport is essential for community resilience and also to support economic growth. The IITC Programme has therefore been established to consider how long-term transport resilience can be achieved. The Programme-level Strategic Outline Case (SOC) was approved by Shetland Islands Council in June 2025. At that stage, elected Members			



agreed which options should be taken forward for more detailed appraisal within the Programme-level Network Strategy Outline Business Case (OBC). The draft Programme OBC was approved by Shetland Islands Council in June 2026. At that meeting, it was decided that the following options be taken forward to the Implementation Route Map:

- DECIDE Bluemull Sound: Fixed link between Unst and Yell, with a dedicated vessel for Fetlar operating over an extended day. Investment in the Bluemull Sound ferry service will be required in the immediate term;
- DECIDE Bressay: Continued investment in the ferry service with a longer term commitment to a fixed link;
- DECIDE Whalsay: Continued investment in the ferry service with a longer term commitment to a fixed link;
- DECIDE Yell: Fixed link;
- DECIDE Foula: Business-as-Usual;
- DECIDE Papa Stour: Ferry Do Something;
- DECIDE Skerries: Ferry Do Something

These decisions have now been aggregated into a draft Implementation Route Map setting out a phased 30-year investment plan, for approval by Council on 23 September 2026. Thereafter, project specific Outline and Full Business Cases will be developed for each intervention in the agreed sequence.

Transport Planning Objectives have been developed as part of the business case to define the outcomes the Network Strategy seeks to achieve. These objectives articulate the desired changes within the scope of the study and directly respond to the problems identified by island communities and the Council in relation to the current ferry service.

These are:

- TPO1 – Reduce or remove variances from the regular published timetable
- TPO2 – Reduce or remove the capacity barrier associated with ferry travel
- TPO3 – Improve the flexibility of travel within the operating day
- TPO4 – Reduce or remove the cost barrier associated with ferry travel
- TPO5 – Make inter-island travel fully accessible to all
- TPO6 – Improve travel options beyond the current operating day
- TPO7 – Improve provision for those not travelling or who would prefer not to travel by car

In accordance with Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG), the TPOs focus on the changes sought and do not pre-empt or imply particular solutions. As such, they are intentionally solution agnostic and are solely concerned with addressing the identified transport problems that underpin the Case for Change.

At this stage of the Programme, a wide range of fundamentally different options still remain under consideration.

Meaningful assessment (Section 3) of climate change impacts requires, at a minimum, a defined intervention. This includes clarity on asset type (ferry or tunnel), vessel size and propulsion, service patterns and timetables, as well as clear definition of routes, land, portals, terminals and associated infrastructure.

The Programme-level Network Strategy OBC does, however, include the following environmental appraisal elements for each island:



- An environmental constraints map for each island / route, setting out – as the name suggests – any obvious environmental constraints which options must be cognisant of
- A largely qualitative appraisal of the options against the STAG Environment criterion and sub-criteria therein
 - Biodiversity and habitats
 - Geology and soils
 - Land-use
 - Water, drainage and flooding
 - Air quality
 - Historic environment
 - Landscape
 - Noise and vibration
- An appraisal of the options against the STAG climate change criterion
 - For the candidate fixed link islands, this will include a high-level whole life carbon comparison between ferries and tunnels. At this stage this will likely be commentary-based given the sensitivity to early-stage assumptions.
- The monetised change in emissions in accordance with UK Transport Appraisal Guidance (TAG)

The approach being adopted at this stage is therefore to prepare a proportionate, Programme-level and strategic Impact Assessment that is aligned with STAG, TAG and Green Book appraisal requirements.

As highlighted above, a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the IITC Programme is also underway. A Screening Report was issued to the Consultation Authorities (Historic Scotland, NatureScot and Scottish Environment Protection Agency) and it has been determined that the programme is likely to have significant environmental effects. An Environmental Report is being prepared and will be consulted on later in September 2026 for a period of six weeks. This report will establish and report the likely environmental effects of the programme and their significance, and will demonstrate how any adverse effects can be reduced or mitigated, and how beneficial effects can be enhanced. The IITC Programme will come back to Shetland Islands Council on 9 December 2026 for formal adoption once the SEA process has been completed.

The Network Strategy OBC (and the draft Implementation Route Map as a temporal expression of how the programme may be implemented) sets out the principles and assumptions that will need to be explored in later project-specific business cases, which is where all the detail requested within Section 3 will reside.

Different options will have materially different implications for energy use and efficiency, carbon emissions, how procurement will be taken forward, options for re-use and recycling, extent of waste, impact on just transition, the environment and biodiversity depending on the options to be taken forward beyond this Programme-level stage. The nature and extent of adaption and resilience measures will also vary significantly depending on the option taken forward.

The approach taken with the SEA makes it clear that much of the detailed work remains to be done. It also accepts that there are limitations given the wide-ranging nature of ferry, harbour and fixed link options.

Also underway is a piece of analysis on future propulsion methods, in recognition of the fact that the move away from fossil fuels is currently an area of rapid technological advancement. It is noted that earlier vessel replacements may not be able to benefit from



the same technological advancements as later vessels and that this analysis is necessary to consider the implications of potential decarbonisation of ferry and associated infrastructure options.

The work will include:

- Evolving technologies and their maturity – when are the various options likely to be mature and reliable relative to fleet replacement plans
- Safety and regulation of technologies and fuel sources
- Which fuel sources are likely to result in the lowest overall carbon footprints (having considered how they are produced, transported, stored and then used)
- Practical aspects such as:
 - Availability and delivery of the fuel source, e.g., LNG would have to be delivered from the south and then distributed locally and is likely to not be practical or sustainable
 - Grid capacity, including consideration of overnight berthing locations to enable potential charging of electric vessels and the implication this would have for grid upgrades across Shetland
- Which fuel sources can be produced locally and, if applicable, stored locally, e.g., green hydrogen, electricity (renewable), ammonia
- Is a phased approach required or desirable, e.g., design initial vessels for decarbonisation during mid-life refit?

This work is designed to specifically help in subsequent stages when individual project business cases are being undertaken.

Section 3 – Assessment Questions

This section includes a range of questions covering different themes and topics. Please consider both positive and negative impacts when answering the questions. The purpose is to gather as much information as possible, if you are unsure please contact a member of our team who can provide guidance. **Please mark 'X' in the appropriate 'yes' or 'no' box and provide further details if required.**

Energy Use and Efficiency

The purpose of this section is to gather more information on energy use and efficiency. This section is particularly relevant if the proposal involves building changes of use or purpose, new building projects, construction work, refurbishment or retrofitting.

1. Does the proposal increase energy use?

Yes
X

No
X

If yes, please provide further details:

The programme includes different options for changes in transport and island connectivity – it is likely that there will be positive or negative impacts on energy use. This is dependent on the chosen option moving forward. Future vessel upgrades or replacements are likely to deliver improvements in energy efficiency and emissions performance compared with the existing fleet. However, the net effect on energy use and emissions will depend on the option taken forward, service frequencies, and the technologies ultimately adopted. In some scenarios, efficiency gains per vessel could be offset by increased levels of service.

Building any fixed links will be initially carbon intensive under construction but once completed no longer relies on marine diesel use, reducing the requirement for a ferry on that route.



At the programme level, the current baseline is a highly energy-intensive ferry network reliant on marine diesel. While future options may increase or decrease energy use, continuation of the existing fleet represents a known high-energy scenario.

The programme will have an impact but it is unknown to what extent and if that is an increase or decrease at this stage.

2. Does the project, policy or programme rely on fossil fuels for energy?	Yes X	No
If yes, please provide further details: Our current ferry fleet relies on marine diesel (which is the highest area of transport emissions for the Council). If an option is chosen which relies on the current ferry fleet or increased runs on the current fleet this will increase carbon emissions. If a ferry is due to be replaced this will likely be replaced with a newer/more energy efficient version. If an option is chosen to buy a new ferry or build a new tunnel, this reduces our operational reliance on fossil fuels. Options involving fixed links would significantly reduce or remove long-term operational reliance on fossil fuels by eliminating the need for marine diesel-powered ferry services on those routes. However, it is important to recognise that tunnel construction is energy and carbon intensive, with substantial embodied emissions arising during the construction phase. These impacts would be front-loaded, whereas the operational phase would have lower ongoing energy requirements. The balance between short-term construction impacts and long-term reductions in fossil fuel use would therefore need to be considered when assessing overall energy and emissions implications.		
3. Does the project, policy or programme involve construction work? i.e. refurbishment or new build	Yes X – if an option of a new fixed link is chosen or if ferry infrastructure requires upgrading the harbours.	No
4. Does the proposal help improve the energy efficiency of a building or its equipment, appliances? i.e. insulation works, new windows or energy saving lights	Yes X – it is expected that newer vessels procured would be more energy efficient than previous models. If infrastructure requires upgrading.	No
5. Does the proposal promote and/or maximise opportunities from renewable energy? i.e. installation of solar panels or heat pumps	Yes X – by enhancing inter-island connectivity the programme has the potential to support renewable energy opportunities indirectly. Improvements could support the movement of workforce, equipment and materials associated with the development, operation and maintenance of onshore and	No



	offshore renewable energy projects. Future options linked to fleet replacement with enhanced design specs for new vessels and potential for renewable energy to support associated infrastructure.	
6. Does the activity support the development of a local skilled workforce in energy efficiency? i.e. upskilling or job opportunities	Yes X – if a new option is chosen that requires different infrastructure or options to what is currently available this may require new job opportunities/ upskilling.	No

Transport

The purpose of this section is to gather and collect more info on travel and transport to assess whether a project may increase, reduce or have no impact on carbon emissions. Increased use of fossil fuel reliant transport increases carbon emissions, resulting in a negative impact on the environment.

7. Does the proposal have an impact on the frequency and use of transport? i.e. will journey times, mileage or distance change	Yes X – transport and island connectivity programme of works – the options include different transport links and options. Options involving fixed links have the potential to significantly alter connectivity patterns. While these options could reduce long-term emissions associated with ferry operations, they may also lead to changes in travel behaviour. However, the potential increase in car use can be considered in the context of ongoing transport decarbonisation, which may reduce emissions associated with additional road travel. Improved connectivity could also support more efficient journey patterns and greater flexibility to integrate low-emission transport solutions. Overall, transport and carbon impacts will need to be considered holistically, taking account of shifts in	No
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	connectivity, travel behaviour and vehicle technologies to ensure the preferred network strategy delivers long-term emissions reductions alongside wider connectivity benefits.	
If yes, please provide further details: Dependent on which option is progressed – it is likely that journeys, timetables and mileage will change. We are currently missing our Council transport emissions targets with marine diesel being our highest transport emitter: continuation of the same ferry fleet service or increased fossil fuel use will mean continued missed targets. Maintaining the existing ferry service model is likely to perpetuate current emissions challenges, while alternative options may offer opportunities to reduce emissions depending on the final configuration.		
8. Does the activity impact on the type of fuel used for transport? i.e. petrol, diesel, electric	Yes X – marine diesel use, there are options for this to increase/decrease dependent on chosen option.	No
9. Will there be a relocation to a different working base or regular travel to a specific site? i.e. regular commuting out with usual working base	Yes	No X – not currently.
If yes, please provide further details: Dependent on if fixed links are progressed – new job opportunities and relocation may be required for the construction of the project. The IITC Programme also assumes that enhancements to inter-island connectivity could improve access to employment opportunities/work locations across Shetland.		
10. Is there opportunity for staff to work hybrid or remotely to reduce transport use and travel?	Yes	No X
11. Will there be an impact on public transport provision? i.e. bus or ferry timetable changes	Yes X	No
If yes, please provide further details: The programme involves different options and plans for transport service provision. The programme is likely to impact public transport provision, with changes to ferry and bus timetables, service frequency and route configuration dependent on the option progressed. The success of the programme partly relies on effective integration and coordination of public transport services. Changes to connectivity may enable more reliable, flexible and better-aligned services, supporting access to key services, employment and education. However, service reconfiguration may also be required, and maintaining attractive and accessible public transport will be		



important in maximising the benefits of improved connectivity and managing potential shifts towards increased private car use.

12. As part of the proposal, has electric vehicles, car sharing or active travel been considered where possible?

Yes
X

No

Please provide further details:

The aim of the programme is to make the isles and travel to/from them more accessible, active travel and other modes of transport will be considered. However, fixed links would not accommodate pedestrians or cyclists and therefore would not directly support active travel on the link itself. Further development at project level would be required to identify and deliver measures that support active travel objectives, including local network improvements, safe connections to key destinations and integration with wider transport and land-use planning.

Procurement

The purpose of this section is to identify if equipment, goods, plant, services, products etc. can be procured locally or sourced more sustainably.

13. Does the activity require the procurement of new goods, plant, services, products or equipment?

Yes

No
N/A

If yes, during the proposal have you considered the following key questions?

- a. Is the item easy to fix?
- b. Does the item have recyclable parts?
- c. How is the product sourced?

Please provide more details:

This is programme level determining the most appropriate options, unknown at this stage. Procurement will be completed at project level.

More information on the SIC's Contract Standing Orders below:

[Contract Standing Orders - Shetland Islands Council Interact](#)

14. Does the project use locally sourced products or local suppliers?

Yes

No
N/A

15. Does the procurement increase emissions?

Yes

No
N/A

If yes, please provide more details:

Circular Economy

The purpose of this section is to determine whether any products or goods purchased for the new project policy or programme can be reused or recycled after initial use.

16. Does the proposal require the use of single-use products or equipment?

Yes

No
X



17. Is there opportunity in the project to prolong the use of products, equipment or assets?	Yes X – The fleet has an average age of 32.5 years and faces growing challenges in terms of reliability, capacity and accessibility. Operation of the existing fleet is also carbon intensive. The ageing assets have been kept, repaired and maintained to maximise operational lifetime. The programme is looking at the best way to provide island accessibility and economic growth.	No
18. Can products or equipment be repaired, reused or recycled?	Yes X – current ferry fleet is maintained and repaired.	No
19. Can equipment be shared or redistributed after use?	Yes X – ferries would be decommissioned or sold for parts.	No

Waste

The purpose of this section is to identify if more waste will be produced as a result of the project. This section will be particularly relevant to any projects or proposals which include demolition, construction, increased water use, food waste or waste.

20. Will the proposal increase the volume of waste?	Yes X – changes to ferry marine fuel waste, rock spoil disposal for any fixed link construction (tunnels). Waste associated with construction work. Dealt with at project level.	No
If yes, please provide further details: Dependent on the option chosen. If reliance on fossil fuels remains the same or increases this will result in more water, air and noise pollution. Construction work would impact on increasing waste.		
21. Does the activity promote sustainable waste and recycling practices?	Yes	No X
If no, please provide further details: Practices to support sustainable waste and recycling practices will be determined at an individual project level depending on the chose option being brought forward.		



22. Does the project, policy or programme increase food waste?	Yes	No X
If yes, please provide further details:		
23. Does the activity increase the quality and quantity of compostable materials?	Yes	No X
If yes, please provide further details:		
24. Are there financial opportunities from the generation of waste?	Yes	No X
If yes, please provide further details: Dealt with at project level, unknown at programme level.		
25. Does the activity reduce the amount of litter generated?	Yes	No X

Just Transition

The purpose of this section is to identify if the project may positively or negatively impact on a just transition. A just transition is both the outcome – a fairer, environmentally sustainable future for all – and the process that must be undertaken in partnership with those impacted by the transition to net zero. The benefits of a transition should be shared widely, without unfairly burdening those who are least able to pay or benefitting those most well-off.

26. Does the proposal support the improvement of health and wellbeing through sustainable practices? i.e. active travel and access to nature	Yes X – improved accessibility to/from the isles would provide more access to active travel and nature.	No
27. Does the proposal reduce the pressure of the cost-of-living crisis? i.e. food or fuel poverty	Yes X	No

If yes, please provide further details:

This will improve island connectivity to the mainland, which may have an impact on cost-of-living. There have been early conversations with the Shetland Partnership. Equality is a key part of the project and connecting communities. The programme's impacts on cost-of-living and socio-economic determinants is also considered in an integrated Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and Fair Scotland Duty (FSD) Assessment prepared as part of the current Outline Business Case and finalised to support the draft Implementation Route Map.

Impacts on cost of living are expected to vary by island and by the timing and sequencing of investment, which will need to be considered as part of a just transition approach at project level.

Has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) been completed or planned? **YES**



More information on the SIC's EQIA at: [Equality Impact Assessment \(EQIA\) - Shetland Islands Council Interact](#)

28. Has the proposal included community consultation? i.e. has this been discussed with community members	Yes X – Public engagement has taken place during the development of the SOC and OBC. There is also a Community Stakeholder/User group which has been part of the programme. There will be a period of further consultation as part of the SEA process.	No
29. Does the project, policy or programme support opportunities for employees to complete training or upskilling?	Yes X – if an option to build a fixed link or operate a different type of vessel such as electric or renewable-powered is progressed.	No
30. Does the proposal improve community access to council services? i.e. increased access to transport or social care	Yes X – increased access to transport and services.	No
31. Does the activity support places affected by the transition to net zero? i.e. empowering local communities and economies	Yes X - makes islands more accessible and supports economic growth.	No
If yes, please provide further details:		

Environment

The purpose of this section is to consider the natural environment and how a project or plan may have a positive, negative or neutral impact on this. This helps us to gather more info on land and nature.

32. Will the proposal result in any pollution of the local environment? i.e. air, water, land, noise or visual	Yes X	No
If yes, please provide more details:		



At this stage, it is appropriate to recognise that potential environmental impacts would be managed through high-level mitigation measures developed further at the project level. These could include option design and route selection to avoid sensitive habitats, timing of construction activities to reduce disturbance to wildlife, and the use of environmental management plans to control noise, emissions, sediment and pollution risks during construction etc. Longer-term operational impacts may be reduced through options that lessen reliance on fossil fuel-powered ferry services. Further detailed assessment and mitigation would be progressed as individual projects are developed.

Considerations would include:

- Potential impacts on the marine and coastal environment, including disturbance to seabed habitats, water quality, and marine species during both construction and operation.
- Noise and vibration effects, including underwater noise, with implications for wildlife and nearby communities
- Landscape and visual impacts, particularly for fixed link infrastructure and associated landfall and ancillary works in sensitive coastal and seascape settings.
- Cumulative effects - recognising interactions with other planned or emerging developments, including energy, port and infrastructure projects.
- Waste generation, materials use and construction practices, with opportunities to minimise waste and adopt more sustainable approaches.
- Climate resilience and adaptation, ensuring infrastructure is designed to respond to future climate conditions such as sea level rise and extreme weather.
- Opportunities for habitat restoration, biodiversity enhancement or wider environmental improvements identified and delivered at project level.

33. Does the proposal make the natural environment more sustainable? Does it include adjustments (adaptation) and preparation (resilience) measures for climate change? i.e. planting trees, peatland restoration

Please see video below for more info:

[Climate Yarns: Shetland's Climate Hazards and Risks](#)

Yes

X – the programme makes the transport network more resilient to current adverse weather ferry disruption. The programme supports improved resilience of the transport network to current and future climate hazards, particularly weather-related disruption affecting ferry services.

By exploring alternative connectivity options, it has the potential to improve reliability and continuity of access during adverse weather conditions, which are expected to increase with climate change. While it does not directly deliver nature-based adaptation measures at this stage, further consideration of climate resilience, including responses to extreme weather and long-term climate risks, would be progressed as options are developed at project level. These

No



	matters will also be considered at programme level in the SEA.	
If yes, please provide more details:		
34. Does the proposal have any changes in land use or outdoor spaces? i.e. does it change, restore or damage land, such as new building/construction works, re-wilding	Yes X – fixed links/electric ferries would require construction work (upgrades).	No
If yes, please provide more details: If the option to construct a fixed link or complete a ferry upgrade is progressed. If in future there was a move to electric ferries that would require grid updates – power installation and upgraded infrastructure.		
35. Does the proposal increase the public's access to nature? i.e. through developing infrastructure to support active travel, trails, nature or outdoor activities.	Yes X – if an option is progressed that increases accessibility and connectivity.	No
36. Does the activity increase long term natural carbon storage? i.e. carbon storage in woodland, peatland, wetland or marine vegetation	Yes X – if the number of ferries required reduces this may present opportunities to restore the sea/seabed natural environment. If fixed links are progressed – the environment would be disturbed and an action plan to restore the natural environment would need to be created.	No
37. Does the proposal consider nature or green spaces in the design and layout of public spaces, infrastructure or buildings?	Yes	No X

Biodiversity

The purpose of this section is to consider if a project will impact on biodiversity and species in their natural habitat.

38. Does the proposal disturb ecosystems or wildlife?	Yes X – The identification and management of impacts on protected species will be addressed through later EIA and SEA stages	No
If yes, please provide further details:		



39. Does the activity impact on nature conservation efforts in Shetland? i.e. will the activity impact on any tree planting sites	Yes	No X – unknown until project-level business cases are progressed.
40. Does the proposal impact on a protected species? i.e. Edmondston's chickweed, red-necked phalarope or puffins	Yes	No X – unknown until project-level business cases are progressed.
41. Does the activity increase the quality/quantity of habitats across Shetland?	Yes	No X – dependent on the progressed option, construction work or further marine diesel use would disturb ecosystems and habitats.
42. Does the activity improve biodiversity data collection?	Yes	No X

Adaptation

This section considers the process of adjusting to the effects of climate change.

43. Does the activity have an impact on the risk of flooding due to changes in land use? i.e. SUDs drainage, removal of ditches, cutting a silage park.	Yes	No X – consideration of land use around the portal sites; point of entry/departure from tunnel to ensure no negative impact on those areas.
If yes, please provide further details:		
44. Does the activity impact on the resilience of our supply chains? i.e. changes to suppliers, procurement processes, transport networks	Yes X – transport networks.	No
Please provide further details:		
45. Does the proposal make Shetland more susceptible to the impacts of climate change? i.e. impact on critical services such as energy supply, roads, transport or water supply	Yes	No X – provides greater accessibility and transport network to the isles. The programme plays a role in helping Shetland become more resilient to the impact of climate change on the transport network, and



		supply of critical services and goods by extension. Any ferry option which reduces risks or removes it through a fixed link would be advantageous in terms of adapting to the effects of climate change.
If yes, please provide further details:		

Resilience

This section considers the preparation measures for climate change action.

46. Will the activity impact on the resilience of council assets, infrastructure, operations, service plans, delivery, policies or practices to the impacts of climate change?	Yes X	No
If yes, please provide further details: Better island and transport connectivity, increased access to services and transport networks. The Programme has the potential to improve the resilience of Council assets, operations and service delivery by reducing reliance on ferry services that are vulnerable to weather-related disruption. Ferry cancellations and timetable unreliability during periods of weather-related disruption are a recurrent issue for inter-island travel, affecting access to healthcare, education, employment and supply chains, and placing pressure on Council service delivery. Options that improve inter-island connectivity, including fixed links or more resilient network configurations, could provide greater continuity of access during adverse weather events, reducing disruption to Council operations and improving emergency response capability. This increased reliability is a key aspect of strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change, particularly as severe weather events are expected to become more frequent.		
47. Does the activity support our health and influence the resilience of communities to the impacts of climate change? i.e. exercise, reduced air pollution, alleviation of anxiety, more comfortable environment	Yes X – Improved reliability and continuity of transport connections support access to healthcare, social support and essential services, helping communities maintain wellbeing and resilience during periods of weather-related disruption.	No



48. Does the activity support emergency responders to respond effectively to the increased pressures of a changing climate? i.e. flooding, major storms, wildfires, new pests and diseases etc. Climate Yarns: Shetland's Climate Hazards and Risks	Yes X – improved accessibility to island communities increases emergency response opportunities.	No
49. Does the project, policy or programme increase community access to public services?	Yes X – improved transport connections.	No
50. Does the proposal increase the awareness of the impacts of climate change to enable people to adapt to future extreme weather events?	Yes X – the programme aims to connect to island communities more easily and readily. By explicitly addressing weather-related transport disruption, the programme reinforces awareness of climate risks and supports adaptation through more resilient and reliable connectivity arrangements.	No

Section 4 – Assessment Submission Approval

Thank you for completing the Climate Change Impact Assessment, if we can help or assist any further please contact us at climatechange@shetland.gov.uk

Please ensure the completed CCIA is authorised and approved below by your team leader or executive manager before submitting to the Climate Change Strategy Team at climatechange@shetland.gov.uk

To be completed, authorised and approved by Team Leader or Executive Manager:			
Name:	Neil Grant	Job Title:	Director
Service:	Development and Infrastructure Services	Department:	N/A
Email address:	nrj.grant@shetland.gov.uk	Date:	18 September 2026

Section 5 – Outcome of the CCIA

This section will be completed by the Climate Change Strategy Team.

The outcome of the full Climate Change Impact Assessment is as follows:

Outcome:	'X' marked in selected box:	Justification and feedback:
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The project, policy or programme has a positive impact on the climate		
The project, policy or programme has a neutral impact on the climate	X	A positive or negative impact on the climate can only be established once the options for the islands are progressed through project-level business cases. It is recommended that this document is reviewed again once the draft Implementation Route Map is agreed and updated for each project. The neutral classification at this stage reflects uncertainty rather than the absence of impact. The Council has an ageing ferry fleet with an average age of 32.5 years, it faces growing challenges in terms of reliability, capacity and accessibility. Operation of the existing fleet is carbon intensive and is currently reliant on fossil fuels. Marine diesel is the Council's highest area of transport carbon emissions. The continuation of running the same fleet or more timetabled runs on the current fleet would continue to impact and potentially increase carbon emissions. However, dependent on the options progressed in the programme; a fixed link or new vessel this would have the potential to reduce operational carbon emissions through: • Ferry and marine diesel no longer used due to fixed link on route. • Transport network linking well with the fixed link: EVs, active travel, buses etc. • If a new vessel is procured, it is more likely this will be more energy efficient than older vessel models. • A newer vessel may have the capacity to store and use biofuels or renewables. Choosing an option with less reliance on fossil fuel run ferries would contribute to reducing carbon emissions and have a positive impact on the climate. The Council is currently already missing transport emissions targets. For the Council to align with the Scottish Governments Climate Change Plan 2026-40 and five-yearly carbon budgets targets – as part of the pathway to net zero by 2045 it is important to consider which options in the programme may practically contribute to lower emissions.



		A more energy efficient vessel or fixed link would require initial harbour upgrades or construction work (this would temporarily increase carbon emissions) however it is expectant that the operational carbon emissions would significantly reduce once live. Dependent on the options progressed this has the potential to increase or reduce carbon emissions. The assessment will be reviewed and updated once the draft Implementation Route Map is approved, the SEA process is completed, the IITC Programme is formally adopted and project-level detail is available.
The project, policy or programme has a negative impact on the climate		

Reviewed and signed by:	Anne Maver and Claire Ferguson
Date:	15.09.26