

FRIENDS OF ISLES OF SCILLY TRANSPORT

Questions to the Council of the Isles of Scilly: 5th December 2012

Measuring Transport Performance & Community Satisfaction

Does the Council believe it has a responsibility to measure the performance of transport links serving the islands?

Who in the Council is collecting transport statistics, what information are they collecting and when is it reviewed?

In the first months without the helicopter service (say Oct 2012):

- How many flights were scheduled between St Mary's and the mainland?
- What percentage took place without significant delay?
- What percentage took place including those delayed or diverted to an alternative airport?
- What percentage did not take place?
- Excluding Sundays, on how many days were there no scheduled flights on or off the islands?

Any weakness in transport provision and performance is likely to be reflected in the islands' heavily visitor based economy. Is the Council collecting any data or using and indicators which will alert it to adverse economic trends due to transport issues (or any other issues for that matter)?

Has the Council consulted the community about the adequacy of the new winter transport arrangements (as planned)? If there has been no consultation is consultation planned? If consultation is planned when will it take place?

Is the Council collecting evidence about the impact upon the community and individuals of disruption of winter transport services? If no evidence is being collected, is it intended to collect evidence?

Vulnerable groups (including chronically sick, those with impaired mobility and the infirm) in the community are likely to be disproportionately affected by the new transport arrangements and disruption. What measures are in place to ensure they are being adequately served?

Has the loss of the BIH helicopter service during October 2012 had any impact on the use of emergency helicopter services compared to previous years?

Council Transport Policy

The Council's transport report 'A Comparative Study of the Isles of Scilly and the Scottish Isles' was approved by full Council (17.4.12). This report proposed to achieve, by different means (operating subsidy), the all year round ferry service sought by the Route Partnership. Does this report reflect the Council current policy or has the Council decide to set a lesser objective? The Chairman's statement to Norman Baker, Transport Minister, on the 1 Nov 2012 proposed only a freight-subsidy.

If the Council is proposing to set aside its previous policy seeking an all year round ferry service, will there be a public consultation on the issue?

Is the affordability of travel between Scilly and the mainland a criterion in the Council's transport policy? This issue is raised because of the negative impact of high travel costs on visitor number and especially given the trend in the UK to take shorter holiday breaks rather than long ones.

The IOSSCo is investing in the Scillonian III to extend its life until 2018. Will the vessel be brought up to the standard where it meets Council Directive 98/18/EC EU Safety Rules and Standards for Passenger Ships allowing it to operate without exemptions and operational restrictions (potentially allowing a winter service if a subsidy was provided)?

If the Council is resolved to set a lesser long term transport goal of a summer ferry service and winter passenger transport by air only, is the Council confident that the IOSSCo can replace the Scillonian with a second hand vessel in or around 2018? Do suitable vessels exist in the second hand market? Is there a viable business case for doing so?

What emergency planning has taken place or is planned to cover the risk of an extended period when fixed wing aircraft cannot fly in the winter months (think of a new volcanic ash cloud)?

Is the Council working with Cornwall Council and the Steamship Company on regularising the diversion of post and newspaper via Newquay when Lands End Airport is closed? It is understood a temporary arrangement to do so has been set up.

Does the Council support the principle of the air and/or sea route being designated a PSO (Public Service Obligation)?

Coordination of Transport Issues

To whom in the Council should individuals or organizations report serious failings in transport provision? (For issues where reporting to the transport operator alone is insufficient).

Is the Council satisfied with the current performance of transport services to and from the mainland?

Is the Council satisfied with the progress made resolving issues that have arisen with the loss of the BIH helicopter service and the transfer of responsibilities to Skybus?

Would regular meetings of a Council Transport Team (say 2 councillors plus relevant officers) on a weekly basis go some way to allay fears in the community that nobody is addressing transport issues. The suggested Council Transport Team would become a day-to-day focal point for transport issues on the islands.

Inability to transport blood samples (categorized as hazardous cargo) at will from the islands is undermining health service provision on the islands and incurred substantial costs. What steps has the Council taken to coordinate resolution of the issue and is there a target date by which it expects Skybus to have submitted an application to the CAA for a licence?

Is there a demand for earlier or later flights to/from St Mary's. If there is demand would it be commercially viable for Skybus to provide it? Are ATC opening hours an issue?

Are planned scheduled flights sufficient to meet expected demand over the Christmas/New Year? Do Skybus have any way of measuring unmet demand beyond observing that flights are full?

Is the Council satisfied with the arrangements that exist for the transport of people with special transport needs? Are the arrangements made for wheelchair bound travellers working satisfactorily?

Does a rigorous process for complaint handling exist such that the Council is informed if the complaint cannot be satisfied by the operator's internal complaint handling procedure? Should the Council become effectively the local transport ombudsman?

Given the recent temporary closure of Lands End Airport should the IOS Council and Cornwall Council liaise with the Lands End Airport operator on a project to install a hard runway?

What visitor traffic is expected to use the Exeter transport hub and how will this affect demand for flights from Newquay and Lands End? (this is needed to estimate the impact on the West Cornwall economy)

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