

**AGENDA ITEM 7
REPORT NO. SR/4/19**

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Skye and Raasay

Date: 4 March 2019

Report Title: Skye Aerodrome Update

Report By: Director of Development and Infrastructure

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This is a situation update report for Skye Aerodrome. It provides information to Committee about the unique features of the airfield and the users. The report identifies a series of measures to improve the operations at the airstrip with new Rules for Users and Fees.
- 1.2 This report also provides an update on the opportunity for the re-introduction of air services for Skye. The short-life Working Group has concluded investigations for a potential trial of air services between Skye and Glasgow.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. note the update about operational matters at the Aerodrome;
 - ii. agree to recommend to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure (EDI) Committee that they approve the Rules for Users and the Fees;
 - iii. note the update information for the re-introduction of air services provided by the Short-life Working Group; and
 - iv. agree to recommend to the EDI Committee that they:
 - a. approve £170k of additional funds to undertake further engagement with statutory bodies and preparation work; and
 - b. request the Chair of Environment, Development and Infrastructure writes to the Transport Secretary on behalf of the Highland Council, HITRANS and HIE, seeking financial and technical support to progress the potential of trial air services between Skye and Glasgow.

3. Background

- 3.1 A previous update report was submitted to the Skye and Raasay Committee on 11 September 2017 ([SR/16/17](#)).
- 3.2 Skye Aerodrome is one of three aerodromes that the Highland Council owns or manages; the other two are Plockton (Wester Ross) and Dornoch (Sutherland). The remit for airfields sits with the Director of Development and Infrastructure, however it should be noted that local staff in Community Services and Business Support continue to lend their support with operational aspects of the airfields. The runway is surfaced with approaches on bearings 07/25 and runway dimensions are 771m x 23m.
- 3.3 The Aerodrome operates as an Unlicensed Aerodrome and is unmanned. There are no Air Traffic Control/Flight Information Service facilities and no Rescue/Fire Fighting Services available.

4. Authorised Aerodrome Users

- 4.1 Skye Flying Club is a resident user of the Aerodrome. Other users include Marine Coastguard Agency (MCA) helicopters and visiting general aircraft.
- 4.2 There is a Prior Permission Required (PPR) protocol in place for aircraft landings at Skye Aerodrome. On Friday 17 August 2018 seven aircraft visiting from Germany landed on Skye. The aircraft landed as part of an organised trip. The Quest Kodiak was the heaviest aircraft at just over 3 tonnes ([Press Release August 2018](#)).
- 4.3 Skye Aerodrome is well signposted at the junction of the private access from the A87 Trunk Road. In the interests of safety there are signs indicating that the Aerodrome is for authorised users only.
- 4.4 [Part 2 of the Outdoor Access Code](#) confirms that access rights do not apply at airfields.
- 4.5 Following a recent incident of unauthorised access additional warning signs, to reinforce the need for authority to access the Aerodrome have been ordered. These additional signs will be erected in prominent locations.

5. General Aviation Report (Border Force)

- 5.1 Under the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, an operator or pilot of a general aviation aircraft in some circumstances are required to report their expected journey to UK authorities. Even if pilots and operators are not required to provide notification of a flight it is helpful if they do provide this notification. A copy of the General Aviation Report (GAR) poster is shown at **Appendix 1**.
- 5.2 Discussion with Police Scotland staff based at Inverness Airport confirms that the implications of the UK exiting the European Union are yet to be clarified in respect of GAR.
- 5.3 The GAR guidance documents state that if anyone sees anything suspicious they

can:

- contact local police or
- phone 101 and quote 'Project Pegasus' or
- contact Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111

In an emergency the public should always call 999.

6. Handling of Prior Permission Required (PPR), Rules for Users, and Fees

6.1 PPR

6.1.1 PPR is in place to ensure pilots of visiting aircraft are fully briefed on the ongoing situation at the Aerodrome and where necessary use is withheld on the grounds of safety.

6.1.2 PPR requests can be submitted by email or by telephone.

Email	Info.Aerodromes@highland.gov.uk
Telephone	01349 886606

6.1.3 The intention is to provide further guidance/instruction to staff who currently handle the PPR process. The guidance will allow for unusual/extraordinary requests to be escalated for advice/approval. Examples of requests include filming activities and wind turbine blade storage.

6.2 Rules for Users

6.2.1 A set of 'Rules for Users' has been prepared. The proposed Rules for Users are shown at **Appendix 2**. They emphasise a number of essential criteria: the status of the Unlicensed Aerodrome; the need for aircraft to be insured; highlight the need to consult Notifications to Pilots (NOTAMS), Aeronautical Information Package (AIP) supplements; confirm PPR; permitted hours of operation; arrangements for logging landings; landing and parking fee payments; no camping; and safety related notifications.

6.2.2 The Committee is requested to approve the Rules for Users.

6.3 Fees

6.3.1 The sustainability of Skye Aerodrome relies on a number of different factors. In particular it is critical that income from users of the airstrip is collected. The aim is to engage with regular users with a view to introducing annual landing cards. This system already applies to Skye Flying Club, and has been introduced at Dornoch for regular users there.

6.3.2 The principles behind the proposed new fees are as follows:

- all aerodrome users will pay landing fees (individual landings or through annual landing cards);
- up-front payment for annual landing cards. Duration 12 months (typically April to March);
- landing cards will not be issued to aircraft over 2730kg;
- landing card categories: resident aircraft (flying club); Flying Club based elsewhere; and Individual aircraft. Aircraft registration must be provided for a valid landing card;
- individual landings fee based on Maximum Take Off Mass (MTOM);
- parking fee based on (exceeding 3 hours on the ground) per 24 hour period or

part thereof; and

- use of the Aerodrome for non-flying activities (based on daily/weekly rates)

6.3.3 A copy of the proposed Schedule of Fees is attached at **APPENDIX 3**. The Committee is requested to approve the Schedule of Fees.

7. Re-introduction of Air Services

7.1 There are a range of reasons behind the objective to re-introduce air services between Skye and Glasgow. These include:

- access to specialist health services;
- community resilience;
- talent retention and attraction, and meeting young people's expectations (public and private sector);
- diversifying the economy; and
- meeting the needs of business (e.g. Kishorn Port, Mowi, Young Films, Sitekit, Gaeltec).

7.2 During 2018, further work was commissioned which undertook an analysis of best value options, based on a 19-seat twin otter aircraft, on Skye in the short term. Highlands and Islands Airports (HIAL) provided significant input that has enabled the project to benefit from the extensive expertise their staff have from operating and maintaining a network of similar airports across the Highlands and Islands. The work identified that this could be achieved for an overall value in the range of £1.53m to £1.77m.

7.3 The District Valuation Service has completed a valuation of the existing airfield and has advised that for accounting purposes the value of the airfield at 30 June 2018 was £886k.

7.4 The annual operational costs for an upgraded licenced airport have been estimated at a range of £320k to £380k.

7.5 Preliminary work has been undertaken to review the most suitable mechanism for supporting scheduled air services. From an airline perspective, a Public Service Obligation (PSO) support is deemed the most suitable and state aid compliant mechanism. PSO would provide certainty in terms of viability to the airline. Analysis evaluates the level of subvention required would be in the order of £450k per annum.

7.6 Existing inter-regional air services supported through PSO include Barra, Campbeltown and Tiree (all to Glasgow). These services use aircraft owned by HIAL (aircraft registrations G-HIAL and G-SGTS) and operated on their behalf by Loganair.

7.7 There are a number of activities that need to be undertaken in order to provide more detailed information that will refine/update the above estimated figures. These tasks include: Aerodrome Survey; Engagement with Civil Aviation Authority (Airspace Changes/ Airport ground infrastructure/ Regulatory, compliance and licencing issues); Engagement with airlines; Engagement with Planning Authority; Preparation of detailed design (Ground); and Preparation of detailed 'Operational Plan'.

7.8 An existing model within the HIAL network of airports that is potentially one that might be followed for Skye, is the arrangement at Dundee Airport. The airport is owned by the Council and is leased to HIAL. At this stage the details of the potential operating

model for the trial of air services have not yet been examined with HIAL.

- 7.9 HIAL is well placed to take on the 'project management' role for the above tasks. However it has been confirmed that this will require approval from the HIAL Board and Scottish Ministers. The Skye and Raasay Committee is requested to recommend to the EDI Committee that the Chair of EDI writes to the Transport Secretary requesting financial and technical support to introduce trial air services between Skye and Glasgow.
- 7.10 It is recognised that there will be a need for funding to enable the preparations for the necessary licenses. There is already Committee approval for up to £30k which has not been used because costs of earlier work were provided through Hitrans. The Committee is invited to consider making a recommendation to the EDI Committee to seek approval for further funds of £170k, to be allocated for the development work that is required to take forward the tasks identified by the Short-life working Group. This value equates to between 8.85% and 13% of the estimated capital cost to obtain the necessary licenses for the re-introduction of air services and upgraded airport facilities.
- 7.11 The allocation of specific funds will demonstrate to partners, and others, the commitment of the Council to fund the work necessary to progress the next stage of engagement with statutory bodies and preparation work. Both HIE and Hitrans have indicated that they will investigate the opportunity for further funding.

8. Implications

8.1 Resource

- 8.1.1 The Development and Infrastructure Service now manages the three Council airfields. The proposed Schedule of Fees takes forward the historic practice of issuing annual landing cards to certain Aerodrome users. The benefit of this approach is to take in the funds at the beginning of the period and avoids excessive staff input to landing fee reconciliation.
- 8.1.2 The fee items worth highlighting include: the doubling of the appropriate landing fee where PPR has not been sought; the level of landing fee for the heavier aircraft (over 2730kg); the fee for non-flying activities.
- 8.1.3 The previous Committee approval for up to £30k towards development of the re-introduction of air services has not been spent. The Committee is asked to make a recommendation to the EDI Committee to request £170k of further funds to progress the tasks associated with preparations for the necessary licenses. These funds are available within the Development and Infrastructure service budget

8.2 Legal

Skye Aerodrome is an Unlicensed Aerodrome that is unmanned. Pilots make a landing at the airfield on the understanding that there are neither Air Traffic Control/Flight Information Service facilities, nor Rescue/Fire Fighting Services available. Pilots are required to adhere to the 'Rules for Users'. Statutory approvals will be required for a licensed airport.

8.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)

- 8.3.1 The Regional Transport Strategy has identified Skye and Lochalsh as the regional centre with the longest journey times to the central belt (majority of drive times are in excess of 5hrs and over 7hrs by public transport). This is the only major population

centre in the HITRANS area where a day trip to the central belt is not viable. Extensive work undertaken by local partners has identified strong public support, recognising that statutory procedures will involve wider engagement at the appropriate time.

8.3.2 Emergency/rescue services use the Aerodrome for helicopter operations. Skye Aerodrome provides opportunities for flights to Skye to the general aviation community. Skye Flying Club is a resident user and they are able to provide flying lessons to disabled trainee pilots. There are visitors to the area who are making overnight stays and contributing to the wider economic well-being of the area.

8.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever
There is a minor detrimental impact on the environment from flying activities at the Aerodrome. Electric powered aircraft serving the Orkney Islands is actively in development. This type of aircraft would be suitable for air services to Skye.

8.5 Gaelic
Gaelic is used in the existing signs.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 13 February 2019

Author: Richard Gerring, Transport Planning Manager

Background Papers: held by the author



Border Force

Important information for pilots

General Aviation Reporting

There is now a new method of submitting General Aviation Reports (GAR) for pilots and their representatives on their journeys to and from the UK.

Pilots can now submit GARs using an **online system** that is available at **www.aopa.co.uk**. They will be automatically distributed to Border Force and the Police through this system as appropriate.



Please remember the aircraft commander has a legal responsibility for all persons and goods carried.

For more information go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-aviation-operators-and-pilots-notification-of-flights>

Or email Border Force at:

BorderForceGA@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

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APPENDIX 2

RULES FOR SKYE AERODROME USERS

1. Pilots make a landing at the airfield on the understanding that it is an Unlicensed Aerodrome and there are neither Air Traffic Control/Flight Information Service facilities, nor Rescue/Fire Fighting Services available.
2. Aircraft must be covered by insurance in accordance with EC Regulation 785/2004. Evidence of insurance cover must be provided to the Council on request, and any failure to have in place insurance automatically invalidates permission to land.
3. All local regulations should be observed and NOTAMs and AIP Supplements should be consulted prior to every flight.
4. The Council reserves the right to close the Aerodrome to categories of aircraft, established on a risk based approach.
5. A request to confirm private flight status must be confirmed, in a reasonable period no longer than 4 weeks, upon request by the Council.
6. Pilots are advised that all operations and movements are at their own risk and discretion and they accept full responsibility for their own and others safety for the duration of their visit.
7. PPR is required for all aircraft that have not been issued a landing card. PPR can be obtained as follows:
Telephone: Monday to Friday 01349 886606.
Email: Info.Aerodromes@highland.gov.uk
8. Permitted hours of operation are between 0800 hours local time (or 30 minutes after sunrise, whichever is later) to 2200 hours (or 30 minutes before sunset, whichever is sooner).
9. Aircraft may only be taxied on approved runways and taxi ways.
10. Aircraft must be parked so as not to obstruct the taxi ways or apron, including the helicopter landing area. Light aircraft should be parked in designated areas.
11. A virtual log book will be used by emailing Info.Aerodromes@highland.gov.uk to advise arrival/departure times within 48 hours of the departure date. Aircraft operating with a landing card must provide log book details no later than one week in arrears.
12. Aircraft over 2.73 tonnes will not be issued annual landing cards, instead will pay a landing fee and a parking fee where appropriate (see schedule of fees).
13. Pilots/Owners must pay the relevant landing and parking fees within 14 days of the landing. The preferred method of payment is debit or credit card.
14. No camping is allowed at the Aerodrome.
15. In order to encourage continuous improvement of safety of our airfields pilots and others can raise matters where a negative impact on the safe operation of the airfields has been observed. These can be reported by submitting an email with the subject 'Confidential Airstrip Safety Report' to Info.Aerodromes@highland.gov.uk

SKYE AERODROME LANDING FEES

Prior Permission Required (PPR)/ Compliance with Rules for Users

Item Description	Fee (excluding VAT)	Note
Landing without PPR	Landing Fee x 2	Higher rate landing fee will be applied where no evidence of PPR Request
Per Landing Aircraft MTOW not exceeding 1000kg	£12.50	Virtual Log Book populated by email returns from pilots Info.Aerodromes@highland.gov.uk
Per Landing Aircraft MTOW exceeding 1000kg and not exceeding 2730kg	£22.50	
Per Landing Aircraft MTOW exceeding 2.73 Tonnes	£125	
Parking period for Aircraft not exceeding 2730kg (24 hour period or part thereof)	£5.00	Designated area to be used.
Parking period for Aircraft exceeding 2730kg (24 hour period or part thereof)	£12.50	
ANNUAL LANDING, PARKING & PPR CARDS		
Private Light Aircraft (Skye home airfield) Constituted Flying Club (up to 2 aircraft) Aircraft MTOW not exceeding 2730kg	£145.00	Registration details must be provided. Flight log details to be provided monthly.
Private Light Aircraft (based elsewhere) Aircraft MTOW not exceeding 2730kg	£180	Registration details must be provided. Flight log details to be provided monthly.
Private Light Aircraft (based elsewhere) Constituted Flying Club (up to 6 aircraft) Aircraft MTOW not exceeding 2730kg	£450	Registration details must be provided. Flight log details to be provided monthly.
NON FLYING EVENTS		
Exclusive use of the Aerodrome (per day)	3750	Subject to negotiation and agreement with other users. Evidence of public liability insurance to be provided. Plane spotter role and method of operation to be agreed.
Use of part of the Aerodrome (per week)	4125	

Payment of the above fees will be by Credit/Debit Card. Where the user requests an invoice a processing charge will be added.

The above Fees will be effective from the date approved by Committee.