

Item: 9

Development and Infrastructure Committee: 7 February 2023.

Inter-Island Air Services – Proposed Winter 2023/24 Timetable.

Report by Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the proposed inter-island air services timetable for winter 2023/24.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That the inter-island air services timetable for winter 2023/24 is scheduled to operate from 29 October 2023 to 18 February 2024 inclusive.

2.2.

That the draft timetable in respect of air services to be operated by Loganair Limited during winter 2023/24 was presented to the Air Services Consultative Forum for consideration on 17 January 2023, with main comments and representations from transport representatives outlined in section 4 of this report.

2.3.

The proposed timetable, attached at Appendix 1 to this report, which is mainly consistent with that operated in previous years, including the following amendments:

- Sanday/Stromsday flights on a Friday afternoon and Monday morning swapped to accommodate a teacher returning to their home isle.
- Eday Friday morning flight during the winter timetable to provide an early morning link to the mainland.

2.4.

That, in advance of the Council's budget setting process for 2023/24 being concluded, any decision on the proposed timetable in respect of inter-island air services will be subject to an adequate service revenue budget being established.

It is recommended:

2.5.

That, subject to an adequate service revenue budget for 2023/24 being established, the timetable in respect of inter-island air services, to be operated by Loganair Limited during winter 2023/24, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, be approved.

3. Background

3.1.

The inter-island air service operates to the six Outer North Isles under a Public Service Obligation which establishes the minimum frequencies and capacity and sets the maximum fare levels provided to each of the isles.

3.2.

In December 2020, the Inter-Island Air Services Public Service Obligation Contract 2021 to 2025 was awarded to Loganair Limited following a tendering exercise, with a commencement date of 1 April 2021.

3.3.

The six Outer North Isles Community Councils each appoint a Transport Representative to represent their respective communities on the Inter-Isles Air Service Consultative Forum.

4. Air Services Consultative Forum

4.1.

The draft timetable for winter 2023/24 was considered by the Air Services Consultative Forum on 17 January 2023, and the key issues discussed are outlined below.

4.2.

The proposed winter 2023/24 timetable presented to the Forum is mainly consistent with previous years.

4.3.

It was noted that from a resilience perspective as well as to provide more frequency to the Outer North Isles, a third aircraft is recommended and has been discussed with Scottish Government.

4.4.

It was noted that a request was made to swap the Sanday/Stronsay flights on a Friday afternoon and Monday morning to allow a teacher to travel back to their home isle, which had been accommodated within the summer 2023 timetable, and whether this could also be implemented in the winter 2023/24 timetable. This was welcomed

by the Stronsay Transport Representative. The change has been accommodated in the timetable, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4.5.

A Friday morning drop to Eday was incorporated in the winter 2022/23 timetable to provide the community with an early morning link to the mainland. The additional link to Eday was trialled due to low passenger carryings on the North Ronaldsay flight. The additional link to Eday can be booked on the basis that the first four seats remain priority seating for North Ronaldsay up to 24 hours before the flight. The additional drop was welcomed by the Eday Transport Representative and has been incorporated in the timetable, attached at Appendix 1.

5. Proposed Timetable

5.1.

The inter-island air services timetable for winter 2023/24 is scheduled to operate from 29 October 2023 to 18 February 2024 inclusive.

5.2.

On 17 January 2023, the proposed timetable was considered by the Air Services Consultative Forum, when feedback was provided to officers as noted above.

5.3.

The proposed timetable, attached at Appendix 1 to this report, incorporates the following amendments:

- Sanday/Stronsay flights on a Friday afternoon and Monday morning swapped to accommodate a teacher returning to their home isle.
- Eday Friday morning flight during the winter timetable to provide an early morning link to the mainland.

6. Corporate Governance

6.1.

This report relates to the Council complying with governance and procedural issues and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

6.2.

In accordance with the Scheme of Administration, the determination of timetables in respect of inter-isles air services is delegated to the Development and Infrastructure Committee.

7. Financial Implications

7.1.

The proposed timetable, attached as Appendix 1, represents a continuation of the existing level of service provision.

7.2.

The Inter-Island Air Service revenue budget for the current financial year, 2022/23, stands at £1,198,800 and gives an indication of the resources required to maintain this level of service. An overspend in the region of £152,000 is currently being forecast as the probable outturn position for financial year 2022/23. This position is being closely monitored by officers and can be attributed to significant increases in Avgas costs each month.

7.3.

In advance of a service budget being established as part of the Council's annual budget setting process for 2023/24, the level of service provision is subject to an adequate budget being made available.

8. Legal Aspects

8.1.

The Civil Aviation Act 1982 enables the Council to establish and maintain aerodromes.

8.2.

On 21 December 2020, the Inter-Island Air Service Contract 2021 to 2025 was awarded to Loganair Limited with a commencement date of 1 April 2021.

8.3.

The contract between the Council and the operator states that the operator shall carry out the services in accordance with the timetable agreed with the Council.

9. Contact Officers

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10. Appendix

Appendix 1: Inter Island Air Services Timetable – Winter 2023/24.

