

**TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP****EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE****10 JANUARY 2022****DISCUSSION DOCUMENT TO INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AVIATION STRATEGY:TACTRAN RESPONSE****REPORT BY SENIOR PARTNERSHIP MANAGER**

This report seeks approval of a proposed response to the Transport Scotland consultation on 'Discussion Document to inform the development of an Aviation Strategy'.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 That the Executive Committee considers and approves the proposed consultation response to the 'Discussion Document to inform the development of an Aviation Strategy' as detailed in Appendix A.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 On 18 October 2021 Transport Scotland published a discussion document to inform the development of an [Aviation Strategy](#), with all responses to be returned by 21 January 2022.
- 2.2 At its meeting of 14 December 2021, the Partnership delegated authority to the Executive Committee to consider and approve a response to Transport Scotland's 'Discussion Document to inform the development of an Aviation Strategy' (Report RTP/21/31 refers).

**3 DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 The Discussion Document to inform the development of an Aviation Strategy seeks views on how to realise the vision for aviation:

*"For Scotland to have national and international connectivity that allows us to enjoy all the economic and social benefits of air travel while reducing our environmental impact."*

- 3.2 Scottish Government want to hear suggestions for how they can work with others so that we can enjoy all the economic and social benefits of air travel while reducing our environmental impact. This includes how to accelerate the transition to low/ zero emission aviation and how to rebuild and grow Scotland's international connectivity.

- 3.3 Scottish Government are also keen to hear views on how we can best achieve our aim for domestic connectivity, namely to have low/zero-emission air services which meet the needs of communities and help deliver sustainable economic growth. Air freight is covered too, and they are interested in ideas for how air freight can help promote efficient and sustainable freight transport.
- 3.4 The Aviation Strategy will consider both short and long term goals and will continue to be adapted it in response to emerging trends and technological developments.
- 3.5 The Discussion Document asks questions around 4 headings:
- Transition to low and zero emission aviation (Questions 1 – 3)
  - Scotland's international connectivity (Questions 4 – 7)
  - Scotland's domestic connectivity (Questions 8 – 21)
  - Air freight (Question 22)
- 3.6 The main points in the proposed Tactran response detailed in Appendix A are as follows:
- Although the Aviation Strategy does not consider the transport infrastructure needed to travel to and from the main Scottish, this is crucial to the Tactran area given that none of the main airports lie within the Tactran region and that air travel needs to be considered as part an integrated and sustainable transport system.
  - The commitment to decarbonise flights within Scotland by 2040 should also be extended to include all UK domestic and short haul flights as soon as feasible.
  - For long haul flights a strategy of connecting to global hub airports alongside targeted direct flights could be pursued.
  - Dundee Airport is very important to the Tay Cities area providing direct access to the region providing direct connectivity and enhancing the economy for a number of important business sectors.
  - Public Service Obligations (PSO) are required in some circumstances to support regional services and, although appreciated, a system that better incentivises air operators to improve and grow passenger demand is needed.
- 3.1 The Executive Committee is asked to consider and approve the proposed Tactran response to these questions, as detailed in Appendix A to allow submission by the deadline of 21 January 2022.

## **4 CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 The relevant officers from constituent Councils have been consulted on Tactran's response to the consultation.

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

## **6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Equality Impact Assessment and no major issues have been identified.

**Niall Gardiner**  
**Senior Partnership Manager**

Report prepared by Niall Gardiner. For further information e-mail [niallgardiner@tactran.gov.uk](mailto:niallgardiner@tactran.gov.uk) / tel 07919990370

### **NOTE**

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report.

Discussion Document to inform the development of an Aviation Strategy, Transport Scotland, 18 October 2021

Report RTP/21/31, Director's Report, 14 December 2021

# Discussion Document to inform the development of an Aviation Strategy

## Tactran Response

### 1. What more, if anything, should the Scottish Government and industry do to accelerate the transition to low/zero emission aviation?

The Tactran region comprises Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and Stirling Council areas and lies at the heart of Scotland, stretching from Montrose and Pitlochry in the north to Stirling in the south. The vast majority of its businesses and its 500,000 residents rely on access to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen airports, outside the region, to provide air connectivity to the rest of the UK, Europe and the World.

Dundee Airport is the only airport providing direct access to the region, currently operating flights to London, Belfast and soon to be Sumburgh (May 2022). Work undertaken by York Aviation in preparation for the Tay Cities Deal identified that although Dundee Airport caters for a small percentage of the estimated 2.8 million air passengers per annum (pre-covid) travelling to or from the Tay Cities area, it is an important part of the regional economy. The Tay Cities Deal includes a £9.5m investment in Dundee Airport to grow the number of passengers per year to 150,000, recognising its importance to the regional economy – with key sectors such as tourism, life sciences, creative industries and academia relying on good connectivity. It is estimated that this will provide an additional £6.1million GVA and 320 jobs.

The quickest equivalent rail journey between the Tactran area and London is between 5hrs 15min and 6hrs 20min depending upon which station in the region the journey commences/ends. It is therefore essential that air connections are maintained to provide the opportunity for a day trip to London, especially for business travel. Hence, it is imperative that aviation continues to be part of the overall transport offering providing good connectivity to the Tactran region and is not seen as a stand-alone method of travel. It needs to be part of an integrated transport system that together aims to decarbonise transport. Therefore, good surface access to airports by public transport, ground operations at the airport and decarbonising the flights themselves should all be considered in decarbonising air travel.

### 2. What can the Scottish Government do to help increase the use of sustainable aviation fuels?

The Scottish Government can help to create and grow the market by supporting the use of sustainable aviation fuel through the HIAL network and through Scottish

Government led Public Sector Obligations (PSO) support. The Scottish Government should also seek to influence the UK Government to deliver a progressive taxation environment for the most sustainable fuels.

**3. What do you think the Scottish Government can do to help ensure a just transition to net-zero for the Scottish aviation sector?**

As noted at question 1 aviation needs to be considered as part of an integrated transport system and net zero for ground access and support services should be achieved as soon as possible at all Scottish airports.

The commitment to decarbonise all flights within Scotland by 2040 and development of low and zero-emission aircraft supported by HIAL by creating a sustainable aviation test environment on Orkney is welcomed and supported. The progress in technology is unpredictable however and may provide earlier opportunities than 2040 and, if possible, the 2040 target should be brought forward to coincide with decarbonisation of the Scottish rail network by 2035. In addition, the above proposals should also be extended to include all UK domestic and short haul flights as soon as feasible.

**4. Considering the future challenges and opportunities, what changes, if any, should we make to our approach to help achieve our aim for international connectivity?**

Good international connectivity is crucial for the economy of Scotland's cities, with Edinburgh and Glasgow providing direct flights to a significant range of international destinations, including hub airports such as London Heathrow and Amsterdam Schiphol. Connections to these hub airports are particularly important to smaller regional airports providing a gateway to long haul destinations.

Priority	Short haul	Long haul
1	Germany	USA
2	France	China
3	Netherlands	Canada
4	Italy	Australia
5	Norway	Japan
6	Spain	
7	Switzerland	
8	Belgium	
9	Sweden	
10	Ireland	

**5. Do you agree with the priority countries for short haul and long haul set out in the table above?**

- a. Yes

- b. No
- c. Don't know

a) Yes

The destinations in the table are agreed although in a post pandemic and Brexit world the list in the table should remain flexible.

For long haul, a strategy of connecting to global hub airports such as London Heathrow and Amsterdam Schiphol as well as further major hub airports of Paris, Madrid, Frankfurt, Copenhagen and Istanbul should be pursued, alongside targeted direct flights, rather than ever increasing direct flights, if the number of international flights is to be reduced.

6. Which other countries should we focus on in the:
- a. Short term (next 2 years)
  - b. Medium term (2-5 years)
  - c. Long term ( 5 years plus)

See answer to Question 5.

7. How do we incentivise the use of more efficient aircraft, whilst still ensuring that we secure the routes Scotland needs?

This is dependent upon international and commercial arrangements. However, utilising a favourable taxation and licensing regime for use of efficient aircraft could assist.

8. What do you think about the idea of the Scottish Government purchasing new zero emission aircraft to lease to any airline operating routes in the Highlands and Islands?

It is expected that private sector aircraft leasing companies would do this more effectively. These companies operate at a larger scale than the Scottish Government, giving airlines greater flexibility to continually up-grade aircraft as technology develops. However, in the event of market failure to invest in new zero emission aircraft it may be an appropriate option to consider, adopting a similar approach to that undertaken by Government a few years ago providing the infrastructure for EV cars, while the technology and market was in its infancy.

9. What else can the Scottish Government do to achieve its aim of decarbonising scheduled flights within Scotland by 2040?

This needs to be seen within the wider context of overall connectivity and managing demand for flights by improving digital connectivity and promoting alternative green modes where feasible. In terms of sustainable air travel there is a need to ensure that the supporting infrastructure for the new types of aircraft is provided at airports and through the wider energy system. There is also the need to develop the skills required for maintaining and using these aircraft.

Again drawing on previous experience, there are parallels with the bus industry, where Government contributed to difference in cost from a conventional vehicle to a zero emission vehicle. This could be repeated for aircraft, particularly for domestic flights.

As noted above, progress in technology is unpredictable and may provide earlier opportunities than 2040 and, if possible, the 2040 target should be brought forward to coincide with decarbonisation of the Scottish rail network by 2035. In addition, the proposals to decarbonise all flights within Scotland should also be extended to include all UK domestic and short haul flights as soon as feasible.

Less Demand for air services	Same level of demand for air services	More demand for air services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater use of video-conferencing and other technology</li> <li>• Telemedicine</li> <li>• Focus on higher spending tourists rather than volume</li> <li>• Improved facilities on islands</li> <li>• High speed rail</li> <li>• Medical supplies and post delivered by drone</li> <li>• Improvement in ferry provision and/or fixed links</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around the same number of people living and working in the Highland and Islands</li> <li>• No changes to current travel patterns</li> <li>• No changes to how goods are transported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people living and working in the Highlands and Islands (e.g. because of growth of the energy sector, more home and remote working, more small business start-ups etc.)</li> <li>• More tourists</li> <li>• Lower costs as a result of using electric/hydrogen aircraft</li> <li>• Modal shift from ferry to plane</li> <li>• More goods transported in belly hold/ dedicated air freight</li> </ul>

**10. What air services do you think are needed to meet the needs of people living in and visiting the Highland and Islands in the scenarios set out above:**

- a. less demand for air services**
- b. same level of demand for air services**
- c. more demand for air services?**

It is difficult to predict with any certainty given current travel patterns as result of Covid. However, airports provide connectivity that is crucial to the economy, social and wellbeing of the communities they serve and can provide lifeline services. The Dundee to Sumburgh service will provide a route between the Shetlands and London City Airport via Dundee.

**11. Most air services in the Highlands and Islands are delivered on a commercial basis. How can the Scottish Government best work with the private sector to deliver the air services you think are needed?**

Public Service Obligations (PSO) are required in some circumstances to support regional services and, although appreciated, a system that better incentivises air operators to improve and grow passenger demand is needed. A review of existing support mechanisms to ensure spend is used optimally to provide services that communities need would be welcomed.

**12. How effective do you think the Air Discount Scheme has been at addressing high airfares?**

Tactran has no specific comment.

**13. How can the Scottish Government improve the Air Discount Scheme?**

Tactran has no specific comment.

**14. What do you think about complementing the current operating model with an on demand service, such as air taxi?**

On-demand services could undermine the viability of scheduled services and/or make these more expensive. There would be equality issues regarding affordability of an on-demand service.

**15. What do you think about an open charter service?**

Tactran has no specific comment.



**16. In addition to on demand and open charter services are there any operational models you think could be used? If so, what?**

. Tactran has no specific comment.

Operator	HIAL	Shetland Islands Council	Orkney Islands Council	Argyll & Bute Council
<b>Airports</b>	Barra	Fair Isle	Eday	Coll
	Benbecula	Foula	North Ronaldsay	Colonsay
	Campbeltown	Out Skerries	Papa Westray	Oban
	Dundee	Papa Stour	Sanday	
	Inverness	Tingwall	Stronsay	
	Islay	Whalsay	Westray	
	Kirkwall			
	Stornoway			
	Sumburgh			
	Tiree			
	Wick John O' Groats			

**17. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the operational model set out in the table above?**

The experience brought to Dundee Airport, and other airports, by being part of the HIAL group is very welcomed and collectively assists in ensuring required skills are available by providing central expertise and sharing of resources across the HIAL network; supporting resilience in remote communities and ensuring efficient and effective use of resources. All of which support Scotland's economic, health and social wellbeing.

**18. What changes, if any, do you think should be made to these governance arrangements to improve services?**

See response to 16

**19. What changes, if any, do you think should be made to these governance arrangements to reduce running costs?**

Many of the costs of running a regional airport, such as Dundee, are fixed – it is therefore essential that resources are made available to attract commercial operators and more destinations, particularly hub airports. The Tay Cities Deal as outlined earlier in this questionnaire recognises the importance of Dundee Airport as a driver not only for economic growth and providing jobs, but also for social wellbeing and fairness.

**20. Do you think the Scottish Government should encourage airlines to offer plane-plus train tickets?**

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Don't know

a) Yes

Yes, but should also include bus/coach as this has proven to be a popular way of accessing the major airports of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen from the Tactran area, particularly noting that Glasgow Airport is not accessible by rail.

**21. If yes, how do you think the Scottish Government could best do this?**

Scottish Government could draw on existing experience with the train plus bus tickets used for onward travel.

**22. What more, if anything, do you think the Scottish Government can do to help promote efficient and sustainable airfreight transport?**

Airfreight is likely to be high value items and dictated by on time delivery. Other modes such as rail and sea should be considered if time constraints are not an issue aiming to ensure the most sustainable modes are utilised. As most airfreight is transported in the hold of passenger flights it is difficult to separate the two.

**23. What else do you think the Aviation Strategy should try to achieve?**

It is important to ensure that for regional airports such as Dundee, slots are reserved at key hub airports. Therefore, the MoU between Scottish Government and Heathrow Airport, for slots to be reserved at Heathrow for Dundee air services is a significant and important factor for the future growth of Dundee Airport.