



ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL

Local Transport Strategy

A strategy for
all of Orkney –
Summary Document

Local Transport Strategy

Orkney Islands Council

Departments of Development Services, Technical Services and Community Social Services

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION AND ISSUES.....	1
A VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR ORKNEY.....	5
A TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR ORKNEY.....	6
ACTIVE TRAVEL	7
AIR SERVICES	8
BUS SERVICES AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT.....	9
FERRY SERVICES, PORTS AND HARBOURS	10
FREIGHT TRANSPORT.....	11
LAND-USE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL.....	12
LOCAL ROADS AND MAINTENANCE	13
SMARTER CHOICES AND TRAVEL INFORMATION STRATEGY	14
TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES	15
TRAVELLING SAFELY	16
TRAFFIC AND PARKING.....	17
THE ACTION PLAN.....	18
MONITORING & EVALUATION	21

Introduction and issues

Transport is a vital part of every day life for Orkney. The Orkney Islands Council has been invited to work in partnership with the Scottish Executive and the Regional Transport Partnership, HITRANS, and others, to prepare a Local Transport Strategy.

A lot has been achieved since the publication of the 2001-2004 Local Transport Strategy, including completion of Hatston and Stromness Piers, new terminal building and installation of an Instrument Landing System at Kirkwall Airport, provision of new footways and cycleways and continued road maintenance and some junction improvements.

During our daily lives, we all need to travel, be it to work, school, to go shopping or to visit friends. The Council therefore considered it very important that the public and key stakeholders participated in the preparation of the Strategy.

It is important that the Local Transport Strategy contributes to national, regional and other local policies and objectives. Transport is not a means in its own end; transport merely supports and enables the undertaking of everyday life and the satisfaction of others' objectives.

The development of the Local Transport Strategy has been steered by the overall vision of the Orkney Islands Council, and fits with the Scottish Executive's five key transport objectives and those of other national, regional and local policies and strategies. We have used the detail of these policies, strategies and plans to firstly shape the objectives for this local strategy, bearing in mind the local context, and secondly to inform the actions that we will take to deliver our Strategy.

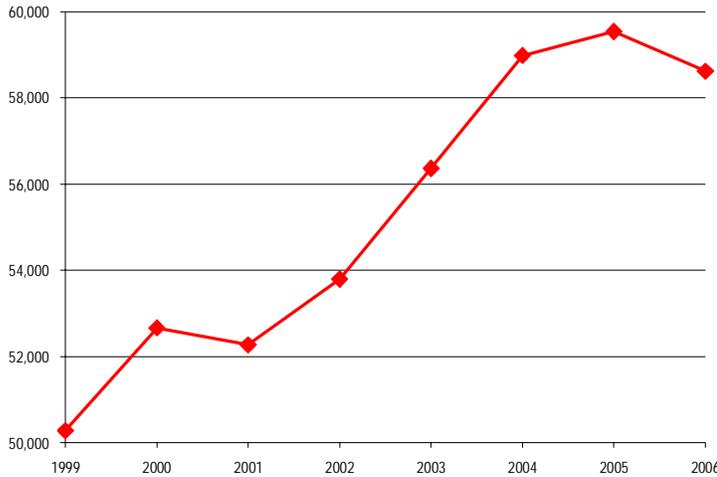
The figure below indicates the transition through a selection of national, regional and local objectives drawn from the key documents for this local transport strategy. In the next section we describe the way in which our Local Transport Strategy objectives draw from this framework.

National Transport Strategy objectives	Protect our environment and improve health by building and investing in public transport and other types of efficient and sustainable transport which minimise emissions and consumption of resources	Promote economic growth by building, enhancing, managing and maintaining transport services, infrastructure and networks to maximise efficiency	Promote social inclusion by connecting remote and disadvantaged communities and increasing the accessibility of the transport network	Improve integration by making journey planning and ticketing easier and working to ensure smooth connection between different forms of transport	Improve safety of journeys by reducing accidents and enhancing the personal safety of pedestrians, drivers, passengers and staff
HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy	Manage the impact of travel on the region's environmental assets	Enable the region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life Improve the health of the region's people	Improve the safety and security of travel	
Community Plan	An effective and efficient transportation network that supports the economic vitality, community well-being and environmental integrity of all of Orkney.				
Orkney Islands Council Corporate Plan	Promote principles of good governance and to act for the good of all Orkney, its people, communities, culture, environment and economy Pursue the development of an integrated transport infrastructure which is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable				
Orkney Islands Council Structure Plan	Encourage appropriate traffic management in a manner which is sensitive to the natural heritage and historic environment	Encourage the maintenance and enhancement of vital air, sea and other public transport services	Encourage development of non-motorised modes of travel such as walking and cycling		
	Encourage development in locations where it can be served by means other than private car		Support development of an integrated transport system		

Getting about in Orkney

For many in Orkney there is a reliance on the car for getting about. At the 2001 Census, 78% of Orkney households had access to at least one car, compared to 66% of households across Scotland as a whole. However, this means that 1,870 households did **not** have access to a car to get about. Having a car is regarded as crucial for accessing employment, with many people travelling into

Kirkwall and Stromness from outlying areas.



Orkney Ferries: cars carried on Orkney Ferries per year, 1999-2006

More and more people want to take their car to town on the internal ferries. The figure shows the increasing number of cars carried on Orkney Ferries since 1999. The figure for 2006 shows a slight decline on the previous year and the figure for the most recent full year shows this creeping upwards again, which confirms that we are reaching capacity on many of the routes.

The car is relied upon for getting to work, but also for shopping, for visiting friends and family and all

manner of other things. That said, there are perhaps ways in which people can use the car less often sometimes, and this could help tackle some of the problems associated with growth in car use – traffic delays as vehicles queue, pollution from vehicles and the decline in people’s physical activity levels to name but a few.

Problems and opportunities now and in the future

Passenger transport services, be they bus, air or ferry services, are fundamental to sustainability of Orkney. Transport as a whole is crucial to the economic and social development of Orkney, and its connectivity to mainland Scotland. Therefore, the availability and affordability of transport services are of vital importance to all those who live in Orkney and visit, or want to visit, Orkney.

Many of the problems outlined in previous Local Transport Strategy are still relevant today, although significant progress has been made in some areas. The high costs of transport for users has improved slightly with prices being reduced on the Northlink ferry services and competition with Pentland ferries and John o’ Groats ferries. The cost of external air services has been reduced for Orkney residents, through the introduction of the Air Discount Scheme, which enables a reduction on travel to/from Inverness, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as to/from other eligible areas around the Highlands and Islands. However, this provides no assistance to the tourism industry, which is a key economic driver for Orkney.

There are capacity problems on the internal air and sea services, and this is particularly a problem at peak times, and especially in the summer months. There is adequate passenger space on our ferries, yet particular pressures on the deck space available for cars and commercial vehicles. Any increase or change in service level is not an easy solution, as it invariably has an adverse cost implication and

presents operational challenges in respect to hours of work and rest for the staff involved. There are also capacity problems on external services, for example a shortage of passenger berths on overnight ferries to Aberdeen and Shetland, although this is being addressed in part through the provision of additional cabins in 2007.

Much of our transport network is not accessible for people who have mobility difficulties. This includes the walking environment, bus, ferry and air services. The Northlink service is now fully accessible and there are a number of accessible buses and taxis in the County. A number of service providers have committed to and are now implementing a programme of Disability Awareness Training.

The introduction of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme has brought benefits for some people, however this is only available on bus services and a very limited number of ferry journeys per year. For a community that relies on sea connections to access the main towns of the County and further sea connections to the Scottish mainland, this is a sizeable gap in people's accessibility compared to counterparts on the Scottish mainland.

The need to respond to climate change and to incorporate sustainability into plans, programmes and strategies presents significant challenges to all public policy makers. Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy, **Choosing our future**, sets out the principles by which sustainable development will be guided in Scotland. The strategy recognises that while travel is essential to maintaining the economic and social well-being of our communities, it also impacts upon the environment and utilises finite supplies of natural resources. For shorter journeys more sustainable travel options such as walking or cycling are recognised as promoting benefit to personal health as well as to the environment.

These and a further range of environmental issues have been considered in a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Orkney Islands Local Transport Strategy, as required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Due to the nature of the Strategy, completion of a Strategic Environmental Assessment was a statutory requirement.

The cost of the whole transport system is a real challenge for the Council. The huge capital costs of replacement vessels and harbour infrastructure, required imminently to sustain the inter-isle connections, will be an additional burden. Revenue expenditure on the inter-isle ferry and air services has been growing rapidly, and is not sustainable in the long term.

All this said, the Council together with HITRANS, the Scottish Executive, Transport Scotland and other partners, has the opportunity now to improve the connectivity of all of Orkney, internally and externally, in a way that is efficient and effective for the present and for the future.

A vision, objectives and strategy for Orkney

The vision for the Local Transport Strategy is consistent with the vision of the Community Planning Partnership. The Local Transport Strategy outlines the ways in which transport can support the overarching vision for all of Orkney, and it is recognised here that transport is merely an enabler to achieve other things, these things being:

- § **Promoting sustainability** – enhancing quality of life over time, whilst at the same time trying to prevent problems being created elsewhere as a result.
- § **Promoting survival** – maintaining fragile communities as places where people can live and work.
- § **Promoting equalities** – ensuring that the most remote communities and hard-to-reach individuals feel included.

Planning objectives and outcomes

The planning objective, or what we are looking to deliver, flows from the overarching vision and the Council's Corporate Strategy objectives. The planning objective is:

To promote, encourage and deliver an effective and efficient transportation network that supports the economic vitality, community well-being and environmental integrity of all of Orkney.

The delivery of this planning objective will require partnership working with all those who are involved in the transport network, within and to/from Orkney. Through effective partnership working we will be able to deliver on these economic, social and environmental outcomes. We aim to do this by being an innovator in implementing creative transport solutions for island communities.

Transport delivery objectives

The remainder of this document details how the Local Transport Strategy will deliver this planning objective, and ultimately the contribution of the strategy to the overarching vision for Orkney. The Local Transport Strategy sets out the framework for the development of the transportation network in Orkney, and this development is framed around six key delivery objectives which have been developed to shape and test prospective Local Transport Strategy actions. The actions that the Local Transport Strategy will take will each go some way to satisfying these delivery objectives, which in turn enables the strategy to satisfy the planning objective and the over-arching vision for Orkney.

The six key delivery objectives are to:

1. **Ensure travel opportunities meet the needs of the whole community.** This objective recognises that needs change over time, and that demand for travel usually responds to what is provided. Therefore, if an enhanced service is provided, people will take the opportunity to use that service. This objective also recognises that the desires of communities are sometimes beyond what is currently, or can be, provided in the transportation network. This objective therefore seeks to minimise disparities, taking into account the needs of all communities.

2. **Integrate various means of travel around Orkney.** This objective recognises that journeys are door to door, and that the quality and accessibility of journeys is only as good as the weakest part of the journey. This objective seeks to ensure smooth and accessible transfer from one means of travel to another.
3. **Promote accessibility for all.** This objective seeks to promote enhanced accessibility while travelling, to the benefit of all of Orkney. This objective refers to the five As of accessibility – physical Accessibility, Availability, Awareness, Acceptability and Affordability.
4. **Increase levels of active travel.** This objective seeks to increase levels of physical activity, and in turn support positive health outcomes for the Orkney community as a whole. Increasing levels of active travel also has the prospect of addressing traffic problems and concerns in our towns.
5. **Make travel safer.** This objective supports local and national targets to reduce the number of road casualties. The objective also relates to improving safety and security, and perceptions thereof, when using various means of travel.
6. **Reducing traffic in sensitive areas.** This objective particularly focuses on issues and problems in our town centres and at our heritage sites for example. This objective also relates to any particular traffic congestion hotspots.

A transport strategy for Orkney

There is a wide range of policy interventions that have been considered to address the travel constraints and problems faced by Orkney. These interventions have emerged from ongoing projects and research, from consultation with stakeholders, and from drawing upon good practice from within and outwith Orkney. The Strategy comprises a series of sub-strategies:

- § Active travel (from page 7).
- § Air services (from page 8)
- § Bus services and community and voluntary transport (from page 9).
- § Ferry services, ports and harbours (from page 10).
- § Freight transport (from page 11).
- § Land use planning and development control (from page 12).
- § Local roads and roads maintenance (from page 13).
- § Smarter choices and information (from page 14).
- § Taxis and private hire vehicles (from page 15).
- § Travelling safely (from page 16).
- § Traffic and parking (from page 17).

Active Travel

Active travel contributes to four public policy areas: health improvement; mode shift; environmental protection and growth in domestic and visitor tourism. Local weather can be off-putting to walking and cycling, but we can support and encourage more journeys on foot or two wheels by improving the quality of the walking and cycling environment. Walking and cycling are (relatively) **free, environmentally friendly**, and a **healthy** means of travel. Our aim is to continue to provide safe, secure and high quality walking and cycling facilities that will enable more walking and cycling in preference to using a car, making walking and cycling safer and more attractive for travel to work and school and for leisure purposes.

Active travel strategy interventions

ë **AT1: improve, extend and maintain the walking and cycling network and facilities**

The walking and cycling network has been significantly expanded since the first Local Transport Strategy. It must be a priority to make sure that current Council assets are well maintained. Improvements to, and expansion of, the network will continue, focussing on local access for functional journeys that can be made by foot or cycle, for example to work, to school or to the shops. Developments will be assisted by the set-up of a walking and cycling forum for Orkney that will help shape local developments and feed into the region-wide Active Travel Forum.

ë **AT2: all new developments are planned & developed to be optimally accessible on foot & by cycle**

Effective land use policies are key to reducing localised traffic volumes and promoting greater use of walking and cycling. Our Local Plan policies identify that *where the transport impacts of a proposed development are considered by the Council to be significant, that a Transport Assessment should be submitted, including where appropriate, a Green Transport Plan*. In the future it is essential that suitable and accessible routes for walking are established and maintained at new developments which have a walking catchment, with the provision of new off-site infrastructure where necessary.

ë **AT3: encourage active travel from an early age through the provision of safe access to schools and other facilities, including educational resources and facilities for the storage of bicycles for example**

The continuation of road safety training to all pre-school and school children in Orkney, such as the Children's Traffic Club, the Green Cross Code and the Scottish Cycle Training Scheme will be enhanced by additional recognised schemes and initiatives. The Council's School Travel Co-ordinator will also continue to work with schools through School Travel Plans.

ë **AT4: provide accessible information on the facilities that are available and encouragement and promotion of taking advantage of the facilities.**

The Council will continue to support awareness raising events such as 'Walk to School Day'. New footway and cycleway facilities will be promoted through the local press on opening. The Council also intends to work with NHS Orkney and schools to publicise walking as a means of improving health (all schools in Scotland have been set the target by the Scottish Executive of becoming 'Health Promoting Schools' by 2007).

ë **AT5: Support outdoor access for all through the Core Paths Network**

Core Paths Networks are about providing outdoor access for the public. Core Paths will form the basic framework of paths that allow people to enjoy and get around the countryside. This framework of routes will link to, and support wider networks of other paths. The Core Paths Network for Orkney will consist of paths that local communities and visitors think are important – the key routes for enjoying outdoor access. The term Core Paths Network comes from the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. As part of this legislation all Local Authorities have a duty to draw up a Core Paths Plan by February 2008.

Air services

Together with the ferry services, the internal and external air services sustain the day to day social and economic function of the Orkney mainland and isles. Aviation is critically important for Orkney, and more so than for most other parts of the UK. Being remote from all major domestic centres of commerce and Government, the importance of aviation to Orkney is evident. Surface journey times to Inverness, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow are by comparison between five and 12 hours by public transport and between four and eight hours by car (and ferry).

The Air Discount Scheme on external flights has reduced the cost of air travel for residents. Affordability issues still exist however, and the Air Discount Scheme does not address the cost of friends, family, tourists and business travel to Orkney (apart from residents travelling from other parts of the Air Discount Scheme area). New low one way fares have also been introduced, with these being available for travel after 25th March 2007. It is important that we support the long-term retention and enhancement of the scheme.

Provision of the inter-isle air service is a core element of the Council commitment to maintaining viable communities in the isles. Investment in the infrastructure has been complemented by improvements in the frequency of flights and the levels of fares. A substantial increase in the operating cost of the inter-isle air service ensued as a result of the termination of Loganair's contract with the Scottish Ambulance Service, and due to Shetland Islands Council's decision to offer its own separate contract.

Loganair also has the franchise to operate the external flights under the British Airways banner, which then provides Orkney residents and visitors with opportunities to connect into the British Airways global network. The BA/Loganair franchise arrangement will be reviewed in 2008, and it is important that we, with HITRANS, the Regional Transport Partnership, monitor and influence the future provision of this service to ensure that it is not allowed to deteriorate in terms of global connectivity.

Air services strategy interventions

ë **A1: encourage network development of direct links to key national gateways**

The addition of more flights to Edinburgh, Inverness and Glasgow from May 2006 was welcomed, and we will continue to encourage the development of these direct links, for example the opportunity to undertake a days' business in Glasgow or from Glasgow in Kirkwall, which is not currently possible.

ë **A2: ensure the services meet the social and economic needs of the isles in association with the service level provided by the inter-isles ferry services**

As part of the ongoing STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) study of the future of Inter-Isles Connectivity we will consider and evaluate the most appropriate and fitting development of the inter-isles connections that comprise both ferry and air services. (See also ë **FPH3**)

We will also support the development of additional services above and beyond those that are financially supported by the Council, where funds allow.

ë **A3: improve information and booking and ticketing systems for air services**

In the consultation you told us that you wanted to see better and more widespread information on inter-isle services, their availability, and how to buy tickets. Loganair have recently (11th Dec 06) introduced payment upon booking on the internal flights, which should reduce incidences of 'no-shows' and ensure the most efficient availability of the limited number of seats available on these services. Through this stream the Council will work with Loganair to improve information and booking and ticketing systems further, with an ultimate objective of simplifying and integrating all the services as far as is practicable, and making information more readily available and accessible to residents and visitors.

Bus services and community transport

The nature of scattered rural housing means that providing an efficient public bus network is difficult. The Council tendered the public and school bus routes for the period 2004-2009. Public buses must be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act by 2015 and coaches by 2017. The Council, HITRANS and Orkney Coaches have been working to meet this valuable change in service provision well in advance of the legislative deadline.

Buses and coaches also provide lifeline links to and around Orkney. Bus, coach and rail services provide, or provide the opportunity for, onward connections to the Scottish mainland to a variety of destinations upon arrival of the ferry or air services at Scrabster, John O' Groats, Aberdeen, Inverness, Edinburgh or Glasgow. Orkney Disability Forum's Dial-A-Bus scheme is a valuable service to local elderly and disabled people, and receives a grant from Orkney Islands Council. Community transport is important to Orkney. This form of transport encourages community groups to jointly assess local needs and pool valuable resources. Working with HITRANS we are keen to develop ways in which we can address particular issues such as access to healthcare, and access for young people to leisure and recreational activities.

Bus services and community transport strategy interventions

ë **BC1: review the Council's existing allocation of public transport subsidy**

We will review the allocation of public transport subsidy that is being spent on socially-desirable connections to ensure that the subsidy is achieving optimum returns in terms of working towards our objectives. The Council currently has a budget of £278,500 (2006/07) allocated to supporting bus services. Without Council support bus services would be very limited in the County. In undertaking this review we will consider all aspects of service provision, and will work with partners, such as Education and the Community/Voluntary Transport sector, to develop a plan for the future development of bus and community transport services. We will also include the provision of Disability Awareness Training for all those involved in the provision of transport network in the County.

ë **BC2: ensure the availability of concessionary travel opportunities for those who are entitled**

Transport Scotland has implemented the National Concessionary Travel Scheme for Elderly and Disabled Persons, and for Young People. The Council continue to assist Orkney residents through ensuring the effective administration of the scheme locally. In addition, the Council provides concessionary travel opportunities above and beyond the national entitlement, on Dial-A-Bus and the internal ferries and planes. The Council will also continue to work with HITRANS to push for inclusion of inter-isles services in the national entitlement, recognising that these are isles residents' equivalent of buses on the mainland.

ë **BC3: encourage and support applications to the successor of Rural Community Transport Initiative (RCTI)**

We will promote the uptake of the successor of RCTI to local groups, and will provide support to those wanting to make applications to the fund. We want to see the extension and expansion of services. We will work with the Community Transport Association and will assist in the establishment of a Community and Voluntary Transport Forum for Orkney.

ë **BC4: Kirkwall Travel Centre**

The new Kirkwall Travel Centre will open in 2007. The Travel Centre will be a new hub for services and information on all travel opportunities, to, from and around Orkney. The Council is committed to delivering a travel centre that effectively meets the needs of Orkney residents and visitors.

ë **BC5: investigate the development of a Transport to Employment scheme and a car sharing scheme**

There are areas in Orkney where public transport is not available and there is a high reliance on car ownership. Car sharing schemes offer an opportunity to reduce car ownership and reduce parking demand, while also assisting those who do not have a car available. Transport to Employment focuses specifically on reducing the barriers to employment, including access to childcare and training.

Ferry services, ports and harbours

Sea transport has a vital social and economic role in supporting island communities, businesses and tourism. The internal ferry services are provided through the Council owned and subsidised company Orkney Ferries. External RO-RO ferry services are provided by Northlink Ferries Limited. Northlink provides services between Stromness and Scrabster and between Hatston and Aberdeen (and Lerwick). RO-RO connections to the Scottish mainland are also provided by Pentland Ferries which operate between St Margaret's Hope in South Ronaldsay and Gills Bay in Caithness.

The harbour network within Orkney varies between small piers either with linkspan or hardramps supporting the inter-isles ferry service to the international oil port of Scapa Flow serving ocean going ships. The requirements on the infrastructure are as varied, but ultimately require substantial investment to maintain the present level of service and the potential to diversify as markets and trade patterns alter.

Ferry services, ports and harbours strategy interventions

ë FPH1: improve information and booking and ticketing systems for ferry services

In the consultation you told us that the internal ferry services were vitally important, but that the *“timetables were far too complex,”* and that you wanted to see better and more widespread information on the services, their availability, and how to buy tickets. Through this stream the Council will work with Orkney Ferries and Northlink (and other operators) to improve information and booking and ticketing systems, with an ultimate objective of simplifying and integrating all the services as far as is practicable, and making information more readily available and accessible to residents and visitors.

ë FPH2: rationalise tariff structures

As part of the ongoing STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) study of Inter-Isles Connectivity for the future, we will consider rationalising the tariff structure in order that it is more straightforward, and in keeping with the service that is provided. In the consultation you also suggested that we should consider incentive schemes to encourage more tourists to visit the isles and top-up cards for those who travel regularly by ferry. We will also consider the affordability of services and consider what, if any, action can be taken to address affordability issues.

ë FPH3: improve accessibility and connectivity to/from the mainland and other isles

There is a strong and widespread desire for improving the accessibility and connectivity of the isles to the mainland, and including connections to the Scottish Mainland. Again, as part of the ongoing study of Inter-Isle Connectivity we will consider and evaluate the ways in which accessibility and connectivity can be improved, including through the provision of new vessels and the ways in which they operate. This will include consideration of the opportunities for connections between the Outer North Isles for example, as well as to the Orkney mainland.

ë FPH4: secure the ongoing provision of lifeline service to the isles

Improvements to the lifeline services, to deal with capacity issues and with ageing ferries, are the subject of the ongoing STAG study of Inter-Isles Connectivity. As part of this study and subsequent work we will consider the future operation and management of Orkney Ferries and alternative arrangements for provision of the lifeline services. This investigation will focus on ensuring effective and efficient provision of the lifeline services to the isles, both sea and air services, and how these can be enhanced to meet the needs and aspirations of our isles communities, businesses and tourist travellers.

ë FPH5: sustainable port development

Sustainable port development in view of the many varied economic and environmental pressures is a highly complex area and requires local, national and international debate. The Department for Transport and the Scottish Executive both publish guidance on sustainable port development that can be utilised into an Orkney Islands Council policy statement. This will also consider the encouragement of small boats marinas in more remote areas, which you told us was important to *“increasing the attractiveness of Orkney as a sailing/boating holiday destination.”*

Freight transport

Efficient freight transport is essential to the economy and quality of life in Orkney. Economic growth generates growing demand for freight transport. In order to meet the needs of business in Orkney, goods need to be transported easily, reliably and efficiently. This is not always the case across Orkney. Parts of the County's network are inadequate, and this adversely affects freight users as much as it does other users of the network.

A diverse range of goods and items are transported to, from and around Orkney. This includes frozen goods, bulk, agriculture, fish, food and drink and manufactured produce. Specialist transport, for example for livestock, is often required, and demand patterns have heavy seasonal peaks. Because of the distances and the sea crossings that are required, this disadvantages businesses based in Orkney compared to counterparts located closer to markets.

Freight transport strategy interventions

ë F1: liaise with neighbouring authorities and regional transport partnerships to provide a consistent approach to freight transport, thereby maintaining and improving the accessibility of Orkney to / from its markets

This approach will assist in providing a regional approach to freight issues. Issues contained in the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy include the pursuance of a Freight Quality Partnership for the region, and interventions to address inefficiencies and constraints in the region's transport network. This action also fits well with the new *Freight Action Plan for Scotland*¹, which commits to maintaining and improving the **accessibility** of rural and remote areas:

- § Targeting improvements to road and rail infrastructure.
- § Integrating freight considerations into the provision of lifeline ferry and air services.
- § Addressing the transport needs of rural businesses and industry.

ë F2: consult with representatives of the freight transport industry to ensure that their views are represented when considering changes to the transport network that may impact upon freight movements

It is important that the impact of any measures that may affect the movement of freight and the freight transport industry in Orkney are discussed with the freight transport industry. This will contribute to ensuring that the freight industry is not adversely affected and that the industry's needs are fully considered in the design of any new proposals.

ë F3: improve livestock shipping

Working with the Scottish Executive and Northlink Ferries and Orkney Ferries, the Council is committed to improving the provisions for livestock movement, through the delivery of the new lairage facility at Hatston and the roll-out of the new livestock containers for use on Northlink ferries.

¹ Scottish Executive, November 2006: *Preparing for tomorrow, delivering today: freight action plan for Scotland*.

Land-use planning and development control

The interventions and policies outlined in this Local Transport Strategy are complementary to the existing Structure Plan, Local Plan, Community Plan and Corporate Plan, amongst other things. The Orkney Islands Council Local Plan (Written Statement 2004) sets out a detailed framework for the development of land in the County over the next 10 years. The Local Plan together with the Orkney Structure Plan, form the Orkney Development Plan. Key transport objectives drawn from the Development Plan are: to support development of an integrated transport system; to encourage maintenance and enhancement of vital air, sea and other public transport services; encourage appropriate traffic management in a manner which is sensitive to the natural heritage and historic environment; **to encourage development compatible with non-motorised modes of travel such as walking and cycling; to encourage development in locations where it can be served by means other than the private car.**

The latter two objectives here relate to the encouragement, by promoting and designing for, the use of non-motorised means of travel. In delivering these objectives we are contributing to national objectives to reduce dependence on the car.

Land-use planning strategy interventions

To support and complement the policies of the Local Plan, the Transportation Service will continue to work closely with Planning colleagues to:

ë **LUP1: encourage development in areas that are close to local services and amenities and/or are in areas that are served by public transport**

The Local Transport Strategy supports the encouragement of development in areas that are close to local amenities and/or are in areas that are accessible by passenger transport or active travel means. The Transportation Service will work closely with Planning colleagues in the development of the new Local Development Plan, planned to commence in 2007, to ensure that this ideal is written into the Local Plan policies.

ë **LUP2: ensure that all significant developments are accompanied by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan, and seek opportunities to obtain developer contributions to enable improvements to the travel network**

This action is the next step to LUP1, and ensures that for any given site the full public transport, active travel and accessibility considerations are taken into account and provided for. Most new developments and changes of use will have some form of transport implication. In August 2005, the Scottish Executive produced a guide to transport assessment and implementation.² This action also embraces a monitoring element. Whether or not a Travel Plan is prepared, it will be essential to monitor the performance of the development's transport effects to ensure that it is behaving in the manner predicted. This may for example involve measuring the modal share to assess if targets are being achieved and assessing parking demand and usage.

ë **LUP3: ensure that the access of pedestrians, cyclists and people with mobility difficulties are prioritised in the design of new developments and existing significant car-based developments**

This action sits in parallel with LUP1 and LUP2, and is consistent with *Scottish Planning Policy 17: Planning for Transport*, which sets out that local planning should prioritise action on walking, cycling, public transport and then motorised modes, plan for those whose mobility is impaired and deal with the needs of freight.³

The Council will also promote change by seeking to improve public transport access to existing significant car-based developments. The Council will also promote active travel by providing direct, attractive and coherent cycle / pedestrian routes to such developments.

² Scottish Executive, August 2005: *Transport assessment and implementation: a guide*

³ Scottish Executive, August 2005: *Scottish Planning Policy: SPP17 - Planning for Transport*.

Local roads and maintenance

Almost half of Orkney's roads are unclassified (452km), 161km are A class roads, 205km B and 160km C⁴. The Council has been monitoring traffic levels and assessing demand on the road network for more than 15 years. A good deal of this monitoring has related specifically to the Kirkwall area, but there is also data for Stromness and some of the busier rural roads.

The Scottish Executive has acknowledged that there is a considerable backlog of maintenance and improvement work to be done on the local network, and has allocated additional funding to councils to help address that backlog. The 32 Scottish local authorities are gathering information on the state of the road network through the rolling Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey, being undertaken by the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland. Orkney Islands Council is one of the best performing local authorities in Scotland for road maintenance and will aim to provide a continuing first class service for the benefit of all road users.

Some well used roads in the County are roads that are not adopted to the list of public roads maintainable at public expense by the Council as Roads Authority, such as Broch of Gurness, Brough of Birsay, Yesnaby Cliffs and The Gloop in Deerness. The Council will work with the landowners responsible for these routes to try and ensure safety for users.

Local roads and road maintenance strategy interventions

ë **LRM1: ensure an up to date inventory is kept of the road network**

A road asset database recording the type, condition and location of all road assets such as street lighting columns, signs, bus shelters, bridges, safety fences and the roads and footways themselves is vital to an efficient running of the roads network. This inventory will be the basis of quantifying and establishing the annual maintenance programme to be carried out within the constraints of each annual budget. Any shortfall in available budget compared to the desirable works programme will be reported to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in the first instance.

ë **LRM2: ensure that the road network is inspected**

Inspections of the road network consist not only of the road surface but also footways, cycleways, electrical installations, drainage, fences, road makings, road signs and also verges. Timely inspections can identify potential problems and allow repairs to be carried out before a danger manifests itself and before remedial work becomes prohibitively expensive.

ë **LRM3: sustain and improve connections in the locally significant network**

HITRANS has identified the locally significant network in its Regional Transport Strategy. Many of the County's roads are identified as locally significant, as they are the only means of access and connectivity between generally smaller communities and local centres, or to harbours in the case of island communities.

This intervention seeks to ensure the continued availability of such links, for example providing a long-term solution to the bridge at Milburn on Hoy that was extensively damaged in the storms of October 2006, and the A961 at Ashby, South Ronaldsay, where a significant section of sea wall retaining the road was washed away in the January 2005 storms. Also there are sections of locally significant roads in the County which are far too narrow. For example the A964 and A967, which require route strategies to bring them up to an appropriate standard.

⁴ As at 2004. Source: Scottish Transport Statistics, No. 24, August 2005, Chapter 5, Table T5.2.

Smarter choices and travel information strategy

A key theme for the Local Transport Strategy is encouraging a greater proportion of appropriate journeys to be made using more sustainable and healthy forms of travel than the private car. Even in a rural and island community there are contributions that can be made by most people to support this aim, without restricting the ability of people to access jobs, learning and services. A commitment to this aim is reflected strongly at a national level in the policies of the Scottish Executive and is highlighted in the new National Transport Strategy. Policies that encourage growth in car use will lead to worsening localised congestion and air pollution at a local level as well as contributing to global climate change.

With the guidance and support of the Orkney Islands Council School Travel Co-ordinator, all schools in Orkney are encouraged to prepare a School Travel Plan to develop, promote and support more sustainable transport options throughout the area.

Good quality and accessible information is essential to everyone undertaking a journey by any means of travel. In Orkney, the Council produces a combined public transport guide twice yearly, which contains information for bus services and internal and external ferry and air services. Real-time information services are soon to be introduced in Orkney for ferry and bus services, this will provide service updates when services are delayed for example. Some timetable information is provided at some bus stops around Orkney, and the value of this type of conventional timetable information should not be underestimated. Information is not wholly accessible at present, and we need to consider what can be done to help all those in and visiting Orkney to fully understand what services are available.

Smarter choices and travel information strategy interventions

ë SMI1: the Council commits to preparing and implementing a Travel Plan during the lifetime of this Local Transport Strategy, and will then support others in following suit

The Council has already undertaken a sample staff travel survey, and is working on a Carbon Management Plan, that is considering a variety of ways in which the Council as an organisation can reduce its carbon footprint. The Council will develop a Travel Plan to address a number of issues including parking pressures at the Council Offices. The Travel Plan will be implemented and then monitored to ensure that we learn from the process, and then can use our learnings to assist others who follow in our footsteps.

ë SMI2: review the means by which we communicate public transport information to the public and visitors to Orkney, then subsequently develop and deliver an information improvement strategy

Under Sections 33 and 34 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001, local authorities are required to develop and implement a strategy to define what local bus information should be made available to the public in their area. The strategy will also cover the way in which this information should be made available to the public.

We will review the way in which we communicate public transport information to the public. This needs to include the needs of particular groups, including disabled people, and we will refer to the Mobility Access Committee's '*Valuable for anyone, valuable for everyone – providing accessible information about travel*'⁵ for guidance. We will also be working with HITRANS who will be developing an overarching strategy, (and Nestrans), recognising that many of the journeys that we make overlap into other local authorities. The strategy will also deal with how our transport operators communicate information about service disruptions and cancellations.

ë SMI3: promote and provide multi-modal information at key sites, including the new Kirkwall Travel Centre, Kirkwall Airport and Stromness Travel Centre

Such sites will benefit from the ability to access information, including real-time information, about the operation of all services around and to and from Orkney, and from the option to be able to purchase tickets for all means of travel.

⁵ Mobility Access Committee: *Valuable for anyone, valuable for everyone – providing accessible information about travel*. Available at: www.macs-mobility.org/docs/pubs/valuable/index.htm

Taxis and private hire vehicles

All taxis and private hire car companies on the Orkney mainland and Burray and South Ronaldsay have to apply to the Council's Licensing Committee to seek an operating licence.

Taxi and private hire vehicles are an important element in the public transport network, they fill gaps in provision, including for those who do not have access to a car. Taxis provide an individual door to door transport service at times that people want to travel. There has been a significant growth in the number of taxis and private hire vehicles operating in Orkney in recent years resulting from an increase in demand.

The Scottish Executive is yet to prescribe Taxi Accessibility Regulations in line with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Taxi and private hire vehicles strategy interventions

ë **TP1: consider the development of a taxi-sharing scheme**

Local taxi licensing authorities can set up a taxi sharing scheme so that passengers, who would not normally travel together but who are going to the same or similar destinations, can travel in the same taxi and pay separately. Passengers must all board the taxi at a designated place, usually a taxi rank. We will investigate if this would present opportunities and benefits to the Orkney Community, and then consider the establishment of such a scheme.

ë **TP2: consider progress towards an accessible taxi fleet for the County**

The Council is committed to progressing to full accessibility around the County. As taxis make up an important element in the transport network, it is important that there is good availability of accessible vehicles in the fleet. We will look to ways in which we can support such advancement.

ë **TP3: promote the inclusion of Disability Awareness Training as part of the licensing process**

The value of an accessible fleet can be increased even more if it is accompanied by the appropriate support and respect for travellers who have a disability. Therefore, we will move to include Disability Awareness Training as part of the licensing process for taxis in the County.

Travelling safely

Orkney Islands Council's statutory duties and responsibilities in the promotion of road safety are drawn from the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Road Traffic Act 1988. Orkney Islands Council shares responsibility for road safety with the Chief Constable of the Northern Constabulary.

The number of killed or seriously injured casualties per year on Orkney roads has been declining over the last 10 or so years, to eight such casualties in 2005. However, we are seeing a general increase in the number of slight casualties on the roads, though the figures fluctuate. We cannot however be complacent.

Orkney's has a Road Safety Plan, and a range of road safety initiatives have been implemented during the life of the first Local Transport Strategy, aimed at improving road safety. The implementation of mandatory part-time 20mph zones at four schools for example, which will continue with the other schools within the County over the next two years. The Council aims to continue to improve road safety by reducing the number of collisions on the roads and also to ensure that people feel safe and secure when travelling by all means of transport.

Travelling safely strategy interventions

ë TS1: review and update the Winter Maintenance Policy and Plan annually

Orkney Islands Council, through its Department of Technical Services, aims to provide a winter service which allows the safe movement of traffic on roads and keeps to a minimum delays caused by adverse winter weather. Weather forecasts utilising thermal mapping and road sensors in Orkney will be obtained by the Roads Operations section and will form the objective basis on which operational decisions will be made.

ë TS2: improve the safety of travel through a continued combination of road user education, engineering solutions and enforcement

Orkney Islands Council will work with other parties to achieve a broad-based approach to improving travel safety across the County. By the use of Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Encouragement of good road safety practices, everyone in Orkney can work together to make our roads safer. More detailed information on the Council's policies and programmes for road safety are detailed in the Road Safety Plan.

ë TS3: review speed limits throughout Orkney by 2011 and introduce appropriate measures

Through this review we will be able to identify any local improvements to the transport infrastructure by varying speed limits, with an objective of creating a safer transport network, especially for vulnerable users such as pedestrians and cyclists.

Traffic and parking

There is increasing concern locally and nationally about the increasing volumes of traffic in towns and rural areas. A major issue is the speed at which drivers choose to travel at, including in sensitive areas – residential areas, areas where road space is shared with pedestrians and cyclists, and around schools for example. Excessive speeds, and the use of unsuitable routes by through traffic, increases the incidents and severity of collisions, especially for those walking or cycling. The historic streets in our towns provide limited space, which is often shared by a number of types of users.

Across the County as a whole traffic has been growing over the last ten years, although in the last couple of years there appears to be a stabilising of traffic levels. Traffic congestion is still limited (recent research notes that no trips are delayed due to traffic congestion in Orkney) but full consideration must be given to future projected traffic patterns and their impact on the stated objectives.⁶ There are also extreme seasonal variations in traffic level, with much more traffic on the roads during the course of the summer when tourists are more likely to be visiting the County.

The Council has been monitoring traffic flows and assessing demand on the network for more than 15 years. While traffic levels are increasing, the Council does not feel it appropriate to set road traffic reduction targets at this time. Traffic has been increasing associated with greater mobility, and increasing population on the Mainland, and an increase in the number of visitors to Orkney. Despite rises in traffic levels, the risk of air quality objectives being exceeded for benzene, 1,3 butadiene, carbon dioxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter (PM10) and sulphur dioxide from vehicular sources is considered negligible. The Council is however committed to managing traffic, particularly in sensitive areas, such as in town and in rural areas.⁷

Traffic and parking strategy interventions

ë **TP1: manage traffic in and around Kirkwall**

This policy seeks to improve the town centre environment in terms of congestion, ensuing pollution, and the attractiveness of the town centre as a pedestrian or cyclist, as a shopper or business, and as a resident or visitor. There is presently conflict between pedestrians and vehicles on Bridge Street, Albert Street and Victoria Street, for example, and this doesn't make for a pleasant town centre environment. Full consultation on all aspects of traffic management in Kirkwall, such as one-way systems, pedestrianisation schemes, roundabouts, traffic lights, speed reducing measures or viability of a relief road is essential. All schemes will be related to the key objectives of the Local Transport Strategy.

ë **TP2: manage traffic in rural areas, including at tourist attractions and viewpoints**

Integration of tourist traffic, local traffic and agricultural traffic can be a problem in rural areas. The ongoing provision of improved parking areas at tourist sites and view-points is aimed at reducing instances where tourist vehicles are parked in an obstructive or dangerous position on the road. Other instances of improvement include improved access to St Margaret's Hope, which is intended to alleviate traffic problems connected with the local ferry and at the same time will open a large area to the south of the village for future potential development. The continuing appraisal of rural routes will fully consider where changes can be brought about to realise the objectives identified in the Strategy.

ë **TP3: review and develop a parking strategy for Orkney**

Parking is an essential part of the journey when using a car to travel to Kirkwall or Stromness for work, shopping or leisure purposes. By reviewing where parking is available, changes can be introduced that will influence vehicle usage. The introduction of parking charges in sensitive areas can bring about a reduction in local vehicle traffic, while parking restrictions at the urban core can encourage the use of alternative forms of transport such as the bus or walking. The parking strategy will be implemented with full consideration given to how it can contribute to the Strategy objectives.

⁶ Scottish Executive, Social Research 2006, January 15 2007: *Costs of Congestion: Literature based review of methodologies and analytical approaches.*

⁷ Air Quality in Orkney, Updating ,screening and assessment, April 2003 by Ian G Watson, MPH

The action plan

Below are details on how this strategy will be implemented over the next three years. For each aspect detailed above, a number of actions have been identified. These measures potentially encompass research and development, capital projects, revenue spending and initiatives to be delivered in partnership with other bodies.

We will review and update the action plan on an annual basis during the lifetime of the strategy to demonstrate what has been achieved, and to refine existing, or identify new, interventions to reflect changing circumstances.

It is recognised that a number of the measures may take longer than the three year period of this Strategy to be realised. We have therefore included actions for the period up to 2025. It is clear that the Council working on its own will be unable to achieve all of these measures, and that partnership working will be vital in delivering the Strategy. Whilst we have identified a likely project delivery timescale, this is wholly dependent on securing the necessary funds to carry out the work.

Key for the action plan:

Project development and research / planning	
Project delivery	

Intervention	Partners we need to work with	Indicative cost (2007-2010)	Indicative timescale		
			2007-2010	2010-2015	2015-2025
ē AT1: improve, extend and maintain the walking and cycling network	HITRANS, Active Travel Forum, Local Developers	£250,000			
ē AT2: ensure that all new developments are optimally accessible on foot and by cycle	Local developers, transport operators	~			
ē AT3: encourage active travel from an early age	Schools, Police, Sustrans, Scottish Executive	£100,000			
ē AT4: provide accessible information and encourage and promote active travel	HITRANS, VisitOrkney	£10,000			
ē AT5: support outdoor access for all through the Core Paths Network	Scottish Natural Heritage, Community Councils	~			
ē A1: encourage network development of direct links to key national gateways	Scottish Executive, HITRANS, air service operator	~			
ē A2: ensure the services meet the social and economic needs of the isles	Air service operator, users of the service	£1.2M per year			
ē A3: improve information and booking and ticketing systems	Transport Scotland, HITRANS, air service operator	~			
ē BC1: review the Council's existing allocation of public transport subsidy	Bus service operator, bus users and prospective users	~			
ē BC2: ensure the availability of concessionary travel opportunities for those who are entitled	Transport Scotland, HITRANS, Dialogue Youth	~			
ē BC3: encourage and support applications to the successor of the Rural Community Transport Initiative	Community Transport Association, HITRANS, Scottish Executive	~			
ē BC4: Kirkwall Travel Centre	Transport operators	~			
ē BC5: investigate the opportunities of developing a Transport to Employment scheme and a car sharing scheme	Community Transport Association, HITRANS	~			
ē FPH1: improve information and booking and ticketing systems for ferry services	Ferry operator, Transport Scotland	~			
ē FPH2: rationalise tariff structures	Ferry operator	~			
ē FPH3: improve accessibility and connectivity to/from the mainland	Ferry operator, Scottish Executive	£100M			
ē FPH4: secure the ongoing provision of lifeline service to the isles	Ferry operator, Scottish Executive	£5M per year			
ē FPH5: sustainable port development	Department for Transport, Scottish Executive	~			
ē F1: liaise with neighboring authorities and regional transport partnerships to provide a consistent approach	HITRANS, Shetland RTP, Nestrans, Aberdeen Council, Highland Council	~			
ē F2: consult with representatives of the freight transport industry	Freight industry, transport providers	~			
ē F3: improve livestock shipping	Scottish Executive, freight industry,	£800,000			

Intervention	Partners we need to work with	Indicative cost (2007-2010)	Indicative timescale		
			2007-2010	2010-2015	2015-2025
	transport providers				
ē LUP1: encourage development in areas that are close to local services and amenities and/or are in areas that are served by public transport	Local developers, transport providers	~			
ē LUP2: ensure that all significant developments are accompanied by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan	Local developers, transport providers	~			
ē LUP3: ensure that the access of pedestrians, cyclists and people with mobility difficulties are prioritised in the design of new developments and existing significant car-based developments	Active Travel Forum, local developers, businesses	~			
ē LRM1: ensure an up to date inventory is kept of the road network		~			
ē LRM2: ensure that the road network is inspected		~			
ē LRM3: sustain and improve connections in the locally significant network	HITRANS	£1.5M			
ē SMI1: Council Travel Plan, and support for others in following suit	HITRANS, Energy Savings Trust, NHS Orkney, Scottish Executive	~			
ē SMI2: develop and implement a transport information strategy	HITRANS	£10,000 per year			
ē SMI3: promote & provide multi-modal information at key sites, including the new Kirkwall & Stromness Travel Centres & at Kirkwall Airport	HITRANS	£20,000 per site			
ē TP1: consider the development of a taxi-sharing scheme	Taxi operators, community transport providers	~			
ē TP2: consider progress towards an accessible taxi fleet for the County	Taxi operators	~			
ē TP3: inclusion of Disability Awareness Training as part of the licensing process	Taxi operators	~			
ē TS1: review and update the Winter Maintenance Policy and Plan annually		~			
ē TS2: improve the safety of travel through a continued combination of road user education, engineering solutions and enforcement	Road Safety Scotland	~			
ē TS3: review speed limits throughout Orkney by 2011 and introduce appropriate measures	Police	~			
ē TP1: manage traffic in and around Kirkwall	HITRANS	Dependent on outcome of TP3			
ē TP2: manage traffic in rural areas, including at tourist attractions and viewpoints	Tourist attractions				
ē TP3: review and develop a parking strategy for Orkney	HITRANS	£25,000 for development			

Monitoring & evaluation

It is important to set in place a method by which the outcomes from the strategy can be measured. In this way, the policies and programme can be checked to see that they are working well and, equally importantly, where it may be necessary to change the approach to make sure the objectives and outcomes are achieved. Progress is measured using a set of Performance Indicators and Targets. Performance Indicators are a description of the outcome being measured, whilst the target is a point we wish to reach, normally numerical.

The performance indicators have been grouped under three headings of 'Survival', 'Equality' and 'Sustainability', which are drawn from the Orkney Community Plan.

Survival

Indicator	Measure	2007-2010	2010-2015	2015-2025
Population	Census figures GROS annual	P	P P	P
Employment	Census figures Area statistics			P P
Gross Value Added	Area statistics			P
Commercial traffic on ferries	National statistics			P

Equality

Indicator	Measure	2007-2010	2010-2015	2015-2025
Transport accessibility	Proportion of bus, taxi, ferry fleet that is accessible Uptake of disability awareness training	P P	P	P
Travel safety	Road Accidents Scotland	P		
Health	Health statistics from the Director of Public Health Annual Report	P		

Sustainability

Indicator	Measure	2007-2010	2010-2015	2015-2025
Active travel: proportion of people walking / cycling to work / school	Travel Plan monitoring Census	P		P
Traffic counts	Changes in traffic levels at designated locations	P		
Public transport usage	Average passengers per journey	P		
Number of schools participating in active travel	Number of school travel plans implemented	P		
Local air quality	Annual Local Air Quality Management Progress Reports	P		