

Transport Committee
Wednesday 24 June 2026
2nd Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

Regional Air Travel

Background

1. Scotland's island communities rely on regular, affordable air and ferry services to and from the mainland. In recent years, however, there have been well-publicised challenges with both their affordability, reliability, and availability.
2. Earlier this month, [Loganair, which operates most air services to the islands, announced](#) a significant reduction in flights from Inverness to the Western and Northern isles.
3. The airline currently operates weekday return services between Stornoway and Inverness, including morning and afternoon or early evening flights. It also operates daily flights between Inverness and Kirkwall, and between Inverness and Sumburgh. The changes will reduce this provision from 19 July 2026.
4. Citing financial viability concerns, the company has stated that it can no longer maintain the current level of service “without impacting the wider business.”
5. From 19 July 2026, it will no longer provide weekday morning flights between Inverness and Stornoway. Flights between Inverness and Kirkwall, and Inverness and Sumburgh, will be only available on Saturdays and Sundays.
6. Media reports indicate that the airline has been in discussion with [Highlands and Islands Airports Limited](#) (HIAL), which is owned by the Scottish Government, and [Transport Scotland](#) on financial support for the routes. To date, no agreement has been reached.
7. For many residents, these flights are essential for accessing healthcare, such as appointments and specialist treatment not available locally, as well as supporting employment, education, and family life.
8. At its meeting on 17 June, the Committee agreed to examine the impact of changes to scheduled air services on local communities and to explore how current services could be maintained.

Evidence session

9. The Committee will hear evidence across two witness panels—
 - Martin Joyce, Chief Executive, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar;

TPT/S7/26/2/1

- Paul Kelsall, Chief Executive Officer, Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL);
- Gillian McCannon, Board Chair, and Gordon Jamieson, Chief Executive, NHS Western Isles; and
- Maggie Sandison, Chief Executive, Shetland Islands Council.

and then from—

- Natalie Bush, Chief Operating Officer;
- Ronnie Matheson, Chief Commercial Officer; and
- Simon McNamara, Head of Corporate & Government Affairs, Loganair Limited.

10. The findings from this session will help to inform the Committee's wider work programme.

**Clerks to the Committee
June 2026**