

Transport Committee
Wednesday 7 October 2026
8th Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

Islands and Regional Air Travel

Background

1. Communities across Scotland rely on regular and affordable air services. For many, particularly in rural and island communities, flights are essential for accessing healthcare, including specialist treatment unavailable locally, as well as supporting employment, education, and family life.
2. In recent years, however, regional air services have faced well-publicised challenges around affordability, reliability, and availability.
3. Following [Loganair's announcement](#) in June of a potential significant reduction in flights from Inverness to the Western and Northern Isles, the Committee [held an evidence](#) session to understand the challenges facing both the airline and local communities. Witnesses included representatives of Loganair, Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL), local authorities, and NHS boards.
4. Following that session, the [Scottish Government announced that it would provide £1 million of additional funding for HIAL](#) to restore affected services from 26 October 2026.
5. The Committee agreed to conduct further evidence sessions on regional air travel to explore issues affecting lifeline services, including how public service obligations operate, and the Air Discount Scheme.

Evidence session

6. The Committee will hear evidence across three witness panels. Firstly, from—

- Ronnie Matheson, Chief Commercial Officer, and
- Simon McNamara, Head of Government & Corporate Affairs, Loganair.

Then from—

- Laura Cromarty, Head of Marine Services and Transportation, Orkney Islands Council;
- Paul James, Association of Shetland Community Councils;
- Martin Joyce, Chief Executive, and Councillor Uisdean Robertson, Chair, Transport and Infrastructure Committee, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; and
- Lucy Mulvagh, Chief Executive, Disability Equality Scotland

Then from—

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- Alison Irvine, Chief Executive, and Stuart Strachan, Head of Aviation, Transport Scotland;
- Paul Kelsall, Chief Executive and Darren MacLeod, Chief Operating Officer, HIAL.

Clerks to the Committee
October 2026