



Report to Partnership Meeting 5 June 2009

RESEARCH

Orkney Smart Card Enabled Integrated Ticketing Pilot

Purpose of Report

To update members on the progress made by Orkney Islands Council, in partnership with Transport Scotland and HITRANS, in developing their Integrated Ticketing Pilot Project. This follows the approval at the Partnership meeting on 5th December 2008 that HITRANS would support this project with funding of up to £25,000.

Background

Orkney Islands Council have identified a multi modal integrated ticketing pilot project that would test the opportunity to build on the infrastructure established to support the national concessionary fares system and national entitlement card.

This pilot project aims to deliver one integrated ticket for bus and ferry journeys to allow travellers to travel seamlessly on Orkney's internal transport network, and incorporating Orkney's local concessionary travel scheme.

Scottish Government through Transport Scotland are interested in Pilot Projects being developed to test the issues involved in delivering Integrated Ticketing in advance of nationwide deployment as identified as a priority in the STPR. Integrated ticketing was a key commitment made in the bidding for Glasgow to host the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Current Status

At the present time there are a number of ticket machines, types of ticket, styles of ticket and back office systems in operation in Orkney. Visitors find themselves purchasing several tickets as part of their travels and residents eligible within the local concessionary travel scheme have large booklets of vouchers for local travel. Orkney Islands Council has some ways of tracking these journeys and how vouchers are used, but a significant amount of effort is required to do this.

Whilst the public transport timetables allow seamless travel in many cases, each element of the journey requires a transaction, and in the case of the bus ticket this requires cash. This is considerable effort and hassle whereas a single integrated ticket could incorporate all these elements and could be purchased by credit card in advance requiring no cash payment.

This would also contribute to the resolution of a long term problem on the isles, where visitors arrive having spent their cash on travel tickets and then find attractions and facilities on the isles can only take cash payments.

Orkney Ferries are developing systems to allow passengers to pay by credit card onboard the vessel, and indeed, most of the vessels are now equipped with this technology. Online booking is also under development.

Why Orkney?

Orkney is an excellent location for a pilot project for integrated ticketing, as it contains many key challenges which would be faced in other larger areas, but in a small, confined area of limited population. These are described below.

Geography:

Orkney's geography benefits from a hub and spoke layout, with the Mainland of Orkney at its centre, and the smaller islands surrounding it. For the smaller islands to access the Scottish mainland, residents must first travel to Orkney Mainland. This differentiates Orkney from many other island communities, which have a direct link to the Scottish mainland. It means that there are a high proportion of journeys within Orkney rather than to towns and service centres in neighbouring authorities to access goods and services.

Orkney covers an area of 974 square kilometres, with more than half being taken up by the Mainland of Orkney. There are 13 other inhabited islands, and the archipelago of Orkney has 70 islands in total. Orkney has very low population densities; the 2001 Census identified the population of Orkney as 19,245 residents, making it Scotland's smallest local authority area in terms of population.

Tourism:

Tourism inputs around £27m each year into Orkney's economy, and with around six times more visitors each year than there are residents there is considerable demand for visitor transport.

Multiple Modes of Transport:

Ferries and air services provide lifeline services to residents of Orkney's isles. In spite of the small population, 315,000 passenger journeys were made on Orkney Ferries' network. The following diagram shows a breakdown of these journeys between the Mainland and the outer isles.



Public bus services operate on Orkney Mainland and in some of the larger isles, and there are a number of bus operators. The internal air service is operated by Loganair, and serves six of the outer isles. External air and ferry services are also present.

Multiple Needs from Integrated Ticketing

A local concessionary travel scheme is in operation for residents of the isles who are over 60 or disabled. Uptake for the national concessionary travel scheme has been good in Orkney and there is the desire to integrate local and national schemes on to a single card for easier administration and user benefits. Tourists also would benefit from a means of travelling seamlessly throughout the isles and an integrated ticket offers such benefits.

Stakeholder Buy-in

Orkney Islands Council has achieved stakeholder buy-in from the close knit community contained within it; presently all operators work together with the Local Authority to deliver transport services. Partnership working is an integral part of island life.

This will allow integrated ticketing on internal bus and ferry services. In time the system may be extended to external links and as part of future tendering of the internal Air Service PSO there could be an opportunity to include aviation in the modes covered by the scheme.

Project Phasing

The Project Initiation Document (PID) developed by Orkney Islands Council as project managers identified the need to take forward this project in the following phases.

Phase 1 - Install ticket machine technology and devise back office systems

Phase 2 - Investigation into card types

Phase 3 - Initial staff trials

Phase 4 - Investigate bus and ferry tariff structure including incorporating vehicle element of local concessionary travel scheme.

Phase 5 - Trials for isles residents multi-journey ticket

Phase 6 - Incorporate bus ticketing

Phase 7 - Migration of multiple journey tickets on to the Local Concessionary Travel Scheme Card

Phase 8 - Issue Smartcards for Local Concessionary Travel Scheme

Phase 9 - Investigate integration with National Entitlement Card

Phase 10 - Migration of OIC concession scheme with the National Entitlement Card

Progress to Date

Presently phases 1 and 4, from the PID have been undertaken. These are:

Phase 1: Install ticket machine technology and devise back office systems

The first stage of the project will be to obtain and install the ticket machine technology, on vehicles, in the Travel Centres and in the case of vessels, on handheld devices. This is currently work in progress and requires liaison with manufacturers, Transport Scotland and other bodies to ensure compliance, compatibility, training and operability. Stagecoach now has ticket machines in place, as do Orkney Ferries.

Phase 4: Investigate bus and ferry tariff structure including incorporating vehicle element of local concessionary travel scheme.

At the present time the charging structure for the ferry services are regarded as relatively complex. MVA have been commissioned to undertake a review and recommend how best this structure can be simplified to fit with an integrated ticketing package.

A workshop with Alco consultants took place on 4th April 2009 to consider the technical and management issues of the project. This workshop was attended by representatives of the project partners and was a very useful session covering a number of factors that must be considered in the development of the Pilot Project and the issues that could undermine the success of the project. The workshop session has helped map out the aims and objectives of each partner in the project and has helped flag up a number of issues that require partner agreement before proceeding to the next phase of the project.

The next stage in the project will be the completion of the MVA review of Orkney Ferries fare structure. This will feed in to the next Project Group meeting where partners will consider the budgetary implications of the project and how to move the pilot forward. Transport Scotland have indicated that a budget is likely to exist to fund the development of Integrated Ticketing in Scotland as this is a key delivery area identified in STPR. Transport Scotland support this and

also agree that Pilot Projects are key to the development of Integrated Ticketing solutions in Scotland. They have been very supportive of the Orkney Project as key partners.

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note the report.
2. The Partnership Manager and OIC Permanent Advisor will report back to the Partnership at the next critical phase in the project.

Author: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 21st May 2009