

AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

JANUARY 2020



COMBINED SURVEILLANCE CENTRE (CSC)

The Board approved the purchase of New Century House, Stadium Drive, Inverness for the CSC building. It is expected that the purchase of the building will be concluded by the end of this financial year, with funding coming from Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) existing capital budget.

The building will require a complete refit to ensure it delivers the requirements for the ATMS programme.

By utilising an existing property and ensuring the refurbishment meets the highest possible Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) standard, demonstrates our commitment to developing a new Air Traffic Services (ATS) centre of excellence whilst protecting our environment.

We are currently in negotiation to purchase the building and we expect the contract will be concluded imminently. Once the period of commercial sensitivity is over, we will share more detail with you.

Q. Why not deploy Surveillance positions at each unit and avoid centralisation?

A. While dispersed surveillance positions will allow us to mitigate existing operational risk, it will not address the current resilience risk.

Each unit will continue to require dedicated staff who will be unable to support other operations.

Additionally, this would drive an overall increase in staff numbers, with resultant recruitment challenges and additional cost of both surveillance equipment and staffing to the organisation.

Q. How long will it take to complete the refurbishment works and where will the budget for the works come from?

A. Refurbishment will begin in April 2020 and it is anticipated it will take place approximately two years.

There will be input from industry specialists and unit representatives.

The costs have been included in the overall ATMS project budget.

Q. Why was an existing property favoured over a new build?

A. New Century House presented as an opportunity. It was available at the right time, it was the size needed, is in a central and easily accessible location, with a bus route and room for expansion and ample parking facilities.

Overall, the cost of the building and the refurbishment works is estimated to be £0.5m cheaper than the option of a new build.

Q. Who will be located at the CSC?

A. The building is primarily for the use of Air Traffic Services (ATS) staff. Therefore, the expectation is that all Air Traffic Control (ATC) staff, including Air Traffic Service Assistants (ATSAs), will eventually relocate to this building. Air Traffic Engineering (ATE) and other support staff are also likely to relocate.

Q. Is there a separate contingency facility, if so, then where will it be located?

A. Yes, a new contingency facility will be required for both contingency and day to day training purposes and will be available prior to the first transition. Whilst no decisions has been made on the location of the contingency facility, there is a requirement for it to be located a minimum of 1km away from the new CSC.

Q. Will the CSC have staff accommodation?

A. The CSC will have suitable rest facilities for staff but living accommodation has not been costed as part of the current ATMS case.

AIRSPACE AND SURVEILLANCE OPTIONS

Airspace

As part of the modernisation of the Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) Air Traffic Control (ATC) operations, a re-classification of airspace is being explored at airports where this would be appropriate. This will assist with the reduction of risk of airborne conflict and, thereby, increase safety margins.

This project is also influenced by European Union (EU) regulation and United Kingdom (UK) regulatory momentum, which will require Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) to introduce controlled airspace at aerodromes that provide an 'ATC' service.

Detailed briefings on proposed options for airspace management will be delivered to the relevant units. In line with UK policy, and in accordance with Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulation, full stakeholder consultation will be undertaken in due course.

Early engagement on Airspace Change Proposals (ACPs) will commence in over the next few months to begin the lengthy ACP process.

Surveillance

In conjunction with the project for re-classification of airspace, the introduction of surveillance methodologies at all in-scope airports within the ATMS programme has been refined. Primary Radar (PSR) and Secondary Radar (SSR or MLAT) feeds will be delivered for each airport, to assist in reducing the risk of airborne conflict and, thereby, increase safety.

Detailed briefings on the delivery programme and methods of operation being considered will be delivered to the relevant units.

Q&As

Q. Why not deploy Surveillance positions at each unit and avoid centralisation?

A. While dispersed surveillance positions will allow us to mitigate existing operational risk, it will not address the current resilience risk.

Each unit will continue to require dedicated staff who will be unable to support other operations.

Additionally, this would drive an overall increase in staff numbers, with resultant recruitment challenges and additional cost of both surveillance equipment and staffing to the organisation.

Q. The stated intent was for MLAT only operations, why has this changed?

A. The ATMS programme team has carried out significant analysis work on methods of operation (and the types of surveillance that will support them). Technical experts within the current operations have supported this work.

The analysis concluded that MLAT (or any SSR) only operations do not deliver the stated safety objectives for the organisation, within the current regulatory framework.

Q. What are the cost implications of moving away from MLAT only surveillance?

A. Our aim is to deliver surveillance within our projected budget. In order to manage the costs, while still delivering the PSR/SSR operations required, all options for the provision of surveillance feeds, including sourcing existing feeds and HIAL provision are under analysis.

Q. Where will you get the feeds from?

A. There are numerous surveillance feeds throughout the HIAL estate. Survey work is ongoing to identify the optimum feeds available. However, there are other options to obtain surveillance feeds which will be explored.

Q. Will Brexit have any impact on regulations?

A. At present there is no change anticipated. However, we will work with the CAA and Department for Transport (DfT) to monitor any future legislative changes.

SUMBURGH APPROACH RADAR SERVICE

The Board approved bringing the provision of Sumburgh Radar in-house.

The ATMS Programme will manage the project with a view to transitioning the Sumburgh Radar position into the new contingency facility ahead of it eventually relocating it to the new Combined Surveillance Centre (CSC).

The operational transition is expected to be complete by the end September 2021, with transition into the CSC Operations room in early 2023.

The current contract with National Air Traffic Services Ltd (NATS) expires at the end of Mar 2020. This has been extended for a further two-year period to ensure continuity of the service up to the time that the transition to the contingency facility has been fully completed.

The service will later relocate to the CSC as per the wider ATMS transition plan.

In order to deliver the Sumburgh Radar within the timescale, the ATMS Programme are currently running an external recruitment campaign with a view to attracting qualified Radar Approach Control (APS), Air Traffic Control Officers (ATCOs) to supplement existing ATCO compliment.

Q&As

Q. Where are staff coming from to support introduction?

A. We are currently running an external recruitment campaign for qualified APS ATCOs who will supplement our existing ATCOs and support the introduction of the Sumburgh radar in house.

Q. Where are the instructors coming from?

A. We will be recruiting a number of On-the-Job Training Instructors (OJTIs) and will discuss how this will be provided with the regulator.

Q. Has this been discussed with the regulator?

A. The regulator has confirmed they will view the new Sumburgh radar as a greenfield site. (This is a different assessment requirement for approval).

Q. Will the new CSC be ready to deliver this service by 2021? Will it be sited in the contingency centre first?

The CSC will be available within the timeframe to allow a temporary radar room operation to go ahead. The completion of the full Operations (OPS) room will follow in early 2022.

Q. Has Scatsta been considered as part of the programme?

A. Scatsta is not within the scope of the programme.

Air Traffic Services (ATS) TRAINING

A significant volume of Air Traffic Control (ATC) training will be required to ensure that we have a sufficient number of Air Traffic Control Officers (ATCOs) and Air Traffic Control Assistants (ATSAs), with the necessary qualifications, to deliver the programme on schedule.

This will involve those ATCOs that do not currently have Radar Approach Control (APS) ratings undergoing an APS course at college followed by unit training.

ATCOs who already hold APS ratings and validations will be required to undergo conversion and transition training for the new systems installed in the Combined Surveillance Centre (CSC). Furthermore, there is likely to be a requirement for additional On-the-Job Training Instructors (OJTIs) and Assessors.

The Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) Board have approved a proposal for APS, OJTI and Assessor courses for existing ATCOs and ab-initio courses for new inductees to be conducted at an approved Initial Training Provider (ITO) as per the current arrangement.

However, all development training associated with the ATMS programme e.g. conversion, transition and systems training etc. will be conducted at the HIAL Training Centre which will be located at the new Contingency Centre.

Q. What support will staff be given prior to undertaking external APS Courses?

A. We appreciate that many of our staff have not undertaken a formal ATC training course for some time. Therefore, our intention is to ensure that staff are well prepared and feel confident to undertake the APS course.

We are exploring the development of a “pre-course programme”. We will work with staff to identify any other support that be may required.

Q. What happens if staff do not pass APS course or unit endorsement?

A. We understand the challenge of obtaining an additional validation and of using new technology. Therefore, we will work with staff to review what support may be required to assist staff to pass the APS course and help attain endorsements.

Ultimately, we want to ensure the best outcome for all concerned. We will explore re-deployment into a suitable role where necessary.

Q. Will staff have to relocate before I do my APS course?

A. The training schedule will be linked to the transition plan to ensure minimal disruption to family life and ensure staff have additional licences ratings before relocating.

REVISION OF ATS PROVISION AT BENBECULA & WICK JOHN O’GROATS

Currently, Benbecula and Wick John O’Groats handle a low number of aircraft movements at around 4,000 per year, in comparison to Stornoway, which handles over 10,000, and Kirkwall at over 14,000.

To provide an appropriate level of air traffic service proportionate to the volume and complexity of air traffic at Benbecula and Wick John O’Groats, the Board agreed to a recommendation to pursue a revision in the level of air traffic service from an Air Traffic Control (ATC) service to an Aerodrome Flight Information Service (AFIS).

This is on the basis that the ‘Wick Approach’ function will be provided from a joint Kirkwall/Wick John O’Groats surveillance sector in the new Combined Surveillance Centre (CSC) during normal opening hours.

The earliest possible date for a change in the level of Air Traffic Service (ATS) at Benbecula will be December 2021. The change of service at Wick John O’Groats is scheduled for December 2023. This will allow us time to consult with our staff, trade unions and stakeholders and ascertain the most appropriate date for Benbecula to make the transition within the wider ATMS programme.

The level and complexity of traffic using the airports and operating in its environs is low and as such can be handled safely and efficiently as an AFIS unit. This is in line with industry norms for this type of airport.

Benbecula and Wick John O’Groats have only slightly more traffic movements than Islay, which has provided a safe and efficient service for many years.

However, the new AFIS unit at Benbecula will be larger than the unit at Islay and will have the benefit of a newly installed surveillance based ‘Aerodrome Flight Information Service Officer (AFISO) situational awareness tool’.

Wick John O’Groats will have a new radar position provided at the CSC.

Furthermore, the AFIS units at Benbecula and Wick John O’Groats will retain a significant amount of the ATC systems including a Semi-Automatic Meteorological Observing System (SAMOS), Voice Communication Control System (VCCS) and Airfield Ground Lighting (AGL).

The recommendation is primarily based on providing a proportional level of ATS relative to the volume and complexity of air traffic that operates at and in the environs of the aerodrome.

This decision is also influenced by European Union (EU) regulation and United Kingdom (UK) regulatory momentum, which will require ANSPs to introduce controlled airspace at aerodromes that provide an ‘ATC’ service.

Based on the level of traffic and complexity at Benbecula and Wick John O’Groats it is highly unlikely that an application to introduce controlled airspace will be approved by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Therefore, Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) would have to consider replacing the ATC service with a more proportionate level of ATS, which does not require controlled airspace, at some stage in the future.

The revision of the level of ATS will allow staff who do not wish to relocate to the CSC an alternative role as an AFISO in Benbecula and Wick John O’Groats respectively, and provide employment opportunity in the areas.

Q. Is this decision based on cost-saving?

A. The recommendation is based on a proportional level of ATS and impending EU regulation and UK requirements for controlled airspace at aerodromes that provide an ATC service.

Whilst there will be some efficiencies in the overall ATMS programme costs, the introduction of a full-time AFIS will require investment in Benbecula. There will be considerable investment in the provision of radar surveillance equipment at Wick John O’Groats, and in the installation of a surveillance based ‘AFISO situational awareness tool’ and the creation of a number of full time AFISO positions at both Benbecula and Wick John O’Groats.

Q. Is this change a reduction of service at Benbecula and Wick?

A. This is a move towards a more proportionate level of service. This will offer additional operational flexibilities for airlines and local communities to facilitate late or early running flights.

Q. Will a change to AFIS mean safety will be compromised?

A. The change in service provision will not affect the safety of air traffic. The volume and complexity of air traffic can be handled safely and efficiently as an Aerodrome Flight Information Service (AFIS) unit. This is in line with industry norms for this type of airport and has operated safely and successfully at four other HIAL airports for a number of years.

Q. Will this remove employment opportunities on the island?

A. The HIAL Board is seeking to implement the new proposals to ‘future-proof’ air service operations across each of the seven airports in order to protect the services that we deliver to the communities we serve.

Whilst there may be a relocation of a number of jobs, HIAL will remain a significant and committed employer in our communities, offering high quality local employment.

We want to offer our air traffic control staff the best opportunities for career progression within the organisation; therefore, the company must modernise its operations.

There will be new full-time AFISO roles, which will provide employment opportunities in the area.

Q. What work needs to be completed to allow the change in service provision at Wick John O’Groats and Benbecula?

A. We need to consult with our staff, trade unions and key stakeholders on the revised ATS.

We must also agree the changes with the regulator and then consider the overall workload of the programme and the resources required to support a service change in line with other priorities within the programme.

Q. Has the CAA already approved the proposal to introduce an AFIS at Benbecula and Wick John O’Groats?

A. Whilst informal discussion has taken place with the CAA, no change can take place until such time as an operational plan, detailed safety case and comprehensive transition plan has been submitted to the CAA for consideration and approval.

Q. Why is the approach different at Wick John O’Groats to that for Benbecula?

A. Whilst the volume of air traffic is similar to that at Benbecula, the complexity of air traffic over Wick John O’Groats and potential conflicts between overflights and arrivals and departures requires a radar position to be established in the CSC.

The joint radar position is being created due to the close proximity of both aerodromes and the integrated nature of the airspace. This will allow the efficient management of approach services to both units.

Q. How many AFISO posts will there be?

A. There will be a minimum of three new full-time AFISO positions in addition to the six existing part-time positions at Benbecula and Wick John O’Groats.

The full-time AFISOs at each airport will manage the day-to-day AFIS whilst the six part-time AFISOs will continue to provide the out of hours on-call service for the emergency services.

This will provide an additional option for Air Traffic Control Officers (ATCOs) who may not want to relocate to the new CSC and/or part-time AFISOs that might aspire to a full-time position in ATS.

Q. Can ATCOs at Benbecula and Wick John O’Groats transfer to the CSC as an ATCO?

A. Yes absolutely, all ATCOs will have the same opportunity as ATCOs from other locations to transfer to the CSC and acquire new ratings and validations.

ATCOs who do not wish to transfer to the CSC will be given the option to be redeployed in this role.

Q. What are the options for staff who don’t transfer to the CSC and do not wish to be considered for the AFISO role?

A. We will endeavour to accommodate all staff to join the programme, but recognise this may not be possible for some. We will explore all avenues for those who choose not to join the programme. To support us with specialist advice, we plan to engage with outplacement specialists to tailor individual support packages to help staff make the right choice for them.

DUNDEE TRANSITION IN PROGRAMME

Dundee, as part of the ATMS Programme, presents a challenge in defining the most appropriate solution for Air Navigation Services.

Dundee has the highest number of aircraft movements of any airport in the Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) group. However, apart from a small number of scheduled flights the majority of aircraft operating at Dundee are general aviation, training and charter flights.

Additionally, given the complexity and density of traffic in the Dundee area, it will not be possible to provide an Air Traffic Control (ATC) service from a single combined aerodrome and approach radar position in the new Combined Surveillance Centre (CSC).

Dundee will require a two-controller position operation i.e., a remote tower and an approach radar position, similar to Inverness and Sumburgh.

In order to deliver services from these two positions, an increase in staff will be required, from the seven in the current operation, to 14 in the CSC.

The introduction of controlled airspace at Dundee remains a significant challenge, due to the busy and complex airspace in the region, the number of other airports in operation nearby and the volume of General Aviation (GA) traffic.

Due to the nature of the operation at Dundee, the Board agreed that it should be the final airport to transition to the CSC. This will allow time to assess the optimum operating model.

Q. What are the long-term plans for Dundee Airport?

A. Dundee is an integral part of the ATMS Programme, albeit that it will be the last airport to transition.

The Board is fully committed to increasing passenger numbers for scheduled flights at Dundee and welcomes the new Public Service Obligation (PSO). This demonstrates the ongoing commitment and public funding to support the operation.

HIAL will work closely with Dundee City Council and Loganair to promote the new routes, particularly amongst the business community.

We will also explore different operating models to ensure the longevity and commercial success of the airport.

Q. Will a surveillance service be introduced for Dundee Airport?

A. A feasibility study, completed by Osprey Consultants Ltd., has explored a number of options for service provision and examined the technical, operational, infrastructural, airspace and business aspects of the proposal. We will consider all opportunities the study presents.

Q. Will controlled airspace be introduced at Dundee Airport?

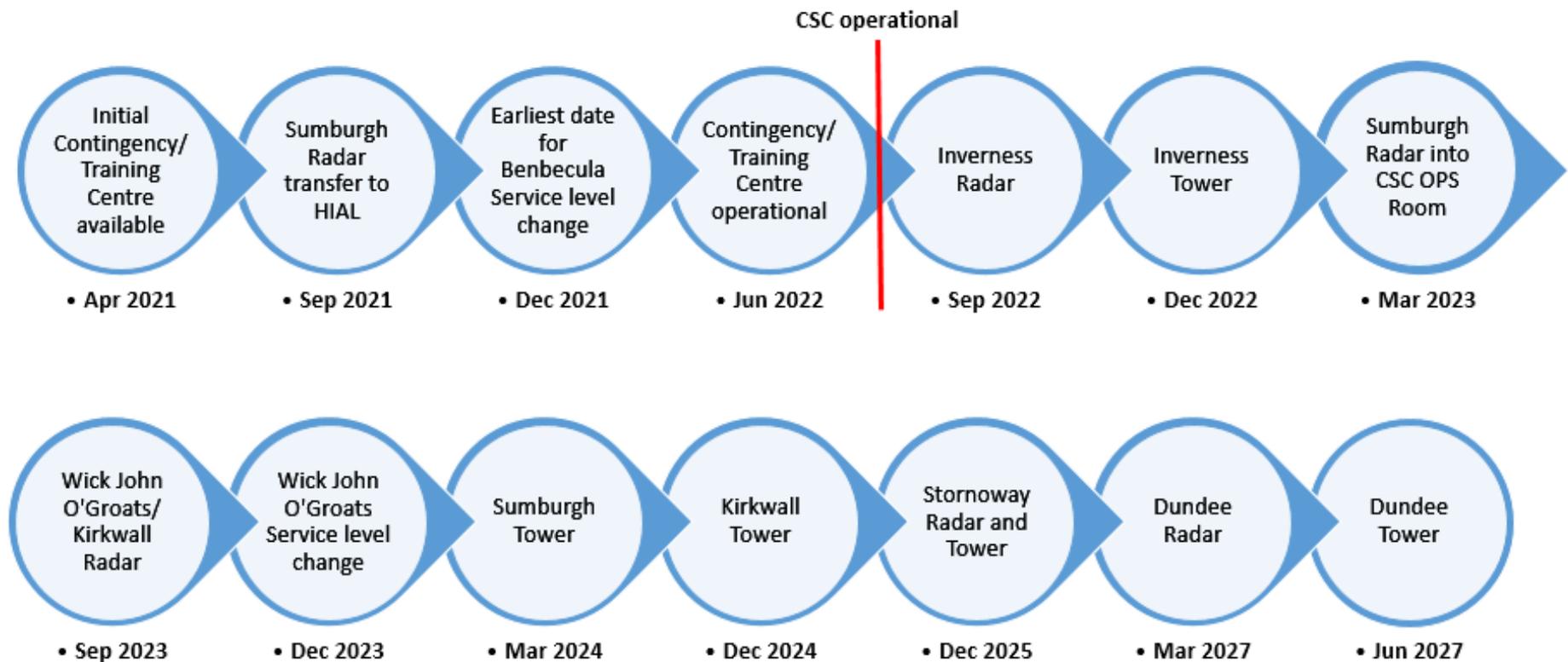
A. To meet our stated business need and to comply with future legislation around controlled airspace being mandatory at ATC airports, it is our intention to introduce controlled airspace around Dundee Airport.

To this end, consultation will kick off in 2020, commencing with the Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) process. However, significant challenges exist due to the busy and complex airspace in the region, the number of other airports in operation nearby and the volume of GA traffic.

OPERATIONAL/PEOPLE TRANSITION PLAN

The ATMS Programme Team designed a transition plan to manage the need to staff the new Combined Surveillance Centre (CSC) and allow existing Air Traffic Control Officers (ATCOs) to obtain additional licence endorsements whilst at the same time maintaining current operations. The plan is a mature draft and may be subject to change as the programme moves forward. Any changes to the plan will be communicated to all colleagues, in a timely manner.

A summary of this Transition Plan is shown below (Display on Screen – hand out copies)



Narrative for Transition Graphic:

Initial Contingency/Training Centre

- The training facility will be in place to support the training needs of the programme.
- The contingency centre will be operational in line with the first transition and will be scaled-up as further units transition into the CSC.

Sumburgh Radar

- Recruitment campaign to enable transition from third party provision to in-house, and the first transition to the CSC.
- Radar will be established in temporary facility before transitioning to CSC Operations Room.

Benbecula

- This is the earliest possible date for a change in the level of Air Traffic Service (ATS) at Benbecula. It will allow us time to consult with our staff, trade unions and stakeholders on the change in service level from Air Traffic Control (ATC) unit to Aerodrome Flight Information Service Officer (AFISO) unit, and ascertain the most appropriate date to make the transition within the wider ATMS programme.
- ATCOs at Benbecula will have the opportunity to embark on Radar Approach Control (APS) training course and relocate to Inverness.
- Part-time Flight Information Service Officers (FISOs) at Benbecula will be unaffected.

Inverness Radar

- First transition from current operations into the live CSC Operations (Ops) room will result in a change of workplace for approximately 50% of staff who then embark upon CSC equipment and unit training and join the CSC operational team.

Inverness Tower

- Second transition from current operations into the CSC Ops room will complete the change of workplace for Inverness based staff and allow remaining staff to embark upon CSC equipment and unit training and join the CSC operational team.

Sumburgh Radar

- Third transition into the CSC Operations room.
- Will transition from temporary location in CSC/Contingency Centre (CC).
- With two airports operational this will allow the multi-unit endorsement training programme to begin

Wick John O’Groats/Kirkwall radar

- Fourth transition will see the new position, termed ‘Pentland Radar’ created in the CSC Ops room.
- The joint radar position is being created due to the close proximity of both aerodromes and the integrated nature of the airspace. This will allow the efficient management of approach services to both units.
- This will provide approach services to both Kirkwall and Wick John O’Groats. Tower services will remain at both units at this time.

Wick John O’Groats

- This date will allow us time to consult with our staff, trade unions and stakeholders on the change in Service level from ATC unit to AFISO unit, and ascertain the most appropriate date to make the transition within the wider ATMS programme.
- ATCOs at Wick JOG will have the opportunity to embark on APS training course and relocate to Inverness.
- Part-time FISOs at Wick JOG will be unaffected.

Sumburgh Tower

- Fifth transition into the CSC Ops room.
- ATCOs at Sumburgh will have the option to embark on APS training course and relocate to Inverness.
- Air Traffic Service Officer Assistants (ATSOAs) at Sumburgh will have the option to relocate and join the operational team at the CSC.
- The FISO service will not be required. However, we recognise the importance of the role as we move towards this transition. We will explore options with our FISO colleagues to recognise the valuable contribution and commitment to providing this service.

Kirkwall Tower

- Sixth transition into the CSC Ops room.
- ATCOs at Kirkwall will have the option to embark on APS training course and relocate to Inverness.
- ATSOAs at Kirkwall will have the option to relocate and join the operational team at the CSC.
- The FISO service will not be required. However, we recognise the importance of the role as we move towards this transition. We will explore options with our FISO colleagues to recognise the valuable contribution and commitment to providing this service.

Stornoway Radar and Tower

- Seventh transition into the CSC Ops room.
- ATCOs at Stornoway will have the option to embark on APS training course and relocate to Inverness.
- ATSOAs at Stornoway will have the option to relocate and join the operational team at the CSC.
- The FISO service will not be required. However, we recognise the importance of the role as we move towards this transition. We will explore options with our FISO colleagues to recognise the valuable contribution and commitment to providing this service.

Dundee Radar

- Eighth transition will be a new position created in the CSC Ops room.
- Will provide approach services to Dundee. Tower services will remain on unit at this time.

Dundee Tower

- Ninth transition into the CSC Ops room
- ATCOs at Dundee will have the option to embark on APS training course and relocate to Inverness.
- ATSOAs at Dundee will have the option to relocate and join the operational team at the CSC.

Q&As

Q: Is the ATMS programme linked to cost savings/staff cuts?

A: No. HIAL's overriding priority is, and always will be, to deliver safe and secure air services that serve our local communities.

HIAL requires a solution that will ease the issues of staff recruitment, retention and provide resilience at our airports. We have not budgeted for any staff savings.

Q. Why not deploy Surveillance positions at each unit and avoid centralisation?

A. While dispersed surveillance positions will allow us to mitigate existing operational risk, it will not address the current resilience risk.

Each unit will continue to require dedicated staff who will be unable to support other operations.

Additionally, this would drive an overall increase in staff numbers, with resultant recruitment challenges and additional cost of both surveillance equipment and staffing to the organisation.

Q. Why has HIAL gone for the most expensive and risky option?

A. The chosen option was not the most expensive option. Whilst the most complex and challenging, it was the only option from the Helios study that offers long-term solutions in terms of resilience and flexibility, both during normal and out-of-hours operations.

It also provides a long term solution to the issue of recruitment and retention of air traffic staff. The combination of controlled airspace, centralised surveillance and the technology employed in remote towers will significantly modernise HIAL's air traffic management and most importantly, improve safety.

This option will allow HIAL to deliver sustainable aviation services well into the future and the costs associated with the introduction of the ATMS programme will be recovered by significant savings in the long term.

Q: Is the decision to integrate air traffic control in Inverness at odds with the aims of the Government's new Islands Bill?

A: HIAL's approach has been to prioritise air navigation service delivery in the future for all the communities we serve to ensure that vital lifeline links can be protected in the long-term. This is a concerted move to future-proof air links for our island communities.

However, we are in the process of developing an island and community impact assessment in line with the information we have to date on the requirements of the act, which has yet to be published in full. As more guidance emerges, we will review our approach.

We will circulate our impact assessments and engage with our key stakeholders as we work through the assessment process.

Q. When will the equipment for the CSC be procured?

A. The Periodic Indicative Notice (PIN) for the solution procurement was published and responses received throughout last summer.

Based, in part, on supplier responses the ATMS team has been working together with staff to define the solution requirements.

Due to the General Election and the timing of the planned budget announcement in March, we are anticipating publication of the Tender pack in April. There will then follow an extended supplier selection and analysis process, aiming to conclude by January 21.

Q. Do you have a technical specification for the equipment to ensure it will work in the harsh weather conditions in a number of locations?

A. HIAL's procurement specification will include a minimum operating standard for all equipment. This specification will require a solution that will deal with the geographical and meteorological conditions that currently prevail at each of our airports.

As part of the tender bid, suppliers will determine the best technical solution and detail the equipment that will meet, and exceed our requirements.

Q: Is the technology/infrastructure around the identified airports reliable enough to cope with a new system?

A: HIAL's overriding priority is the delivery of safe and secure air services. The project team will ensure the technology and the infrastructure required will be in place to support the new navigation systems.

Network connectivity is critical to the success of the programme and work to investigate the existing network infrastructure affecting our airport sites has been completed. The investigation highlighted the improving position of network infrastructure throughout the Highlands and Islands due in part to the 'Connected Communities Initiative'.

The proposed air traffic management solution will exceed HIAL's safety obligations and will be approved by the Regulator prior to delivery into service.

Q. Who will initially staff the CSC?

A. In order to deliver the programme within the timescale, we are currently running an external recruitment campaign to attract qualified APS ATCOs to supplement our existing ATCO complement. Existing staff, with this qualification, who wish to join the programme earlier than their transition date can apply through this route.

We will extend our campaign for other roles as required.

Q. Will the CSC run in tandem with the existing operation?

A. The operation in the CSC will be fully tested and receive regulatory approval prior to each transition in the programme.

Q. How will staff air traffic staff be supported?

A. We will work closely with our staff and develop a detailed ‘people transition plan’ that will include transition timings and details of the support that will be offered. This plan will be discussed with the Trade Union to ensure it is as comprehensive as possible. We will commit to give individuals at least six months’ formal notice of transfer dates.

We will ensure that any changes to the timings contained within the ‘people transition plan’ are communicated as soon as possible.

Q. What relocation package will ATS staff be offered?

A. The company has a relocation policy in place which details the minimum package available to all HIAL staff. There are times when specific projects demand enhanced terms to that currently available and the ATMS project meets this criteria.

Working with a relocation specialist, HIAL will develop a bespoke package to meet the project needs. This will be discussed with the trade unions prior to seeking approval from the HIAL Board and Scottish Government.

Q. Will there be a Voluntary Severance Package or Early Retirement Package for ATS staff?

A. HIAL is bound by the UK Government Framework. The current package on offer from HIAL is determined by age and length of service. This is currently set at a maximum of 21 months’ pay or the UK Government cap of £95K, whichever is less.

Q. What support will the organisation provide for colleagues who choose not to join the programme?

A. We will endeavour to accommodate all staff to join the programme, but recognise this may not be possible for some. We will explore all avenues for those who choose not to join the programme. We plan to engage with outplacement specialists to tailor individual support packages to help staff make the right choice for them.

Q. Can staff commute to Inverness for a period prior to permanently relocating?

A. We are exploring options to allow ATC staff to retain their existing base and commute to the Combined Surveillance Centre (CSC) in Inverness. We are examining roster patterns for the CSC to accommodate such working.