



Sustainability Strategy 2023-33

About us

Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) is a private limited company* wholly owned by the Scottish Ministers and responsible for the management and operation of 11 regional airports located at Barra, Benbecula, Campbeltown, Dundee, Inverness, Islay, Kirkwall, Stornoway, Sumburgh, Tiree and Wick John O’Groats.

Working with our stakeholders, we are committed to supporting the essential socio-economic role of aviation in Scotland by maintaining and developing our airports and the connections they provide for some of our country’s more remote communities.

Our core activities include:

- Operating airports which meet regulatory standards and support essential transport connectivity
- Maintaining and developing airport infrastructure and services
- Working with airlines and others to maintain and develop scheduled, charter and freight air services
- Developing our commercial revenue to build business resilience.



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* HIAL was incorporated in Edinburgh on 4 March 1986 as a private limited company. On April 1995, the ownership of the company transferred from the UK Civil Aviation Authority to the Secretary of State for Scotland and subsequently to the Scottish Ministers. HIAL receives subsidies from the Scottish Government in accordance with section 34 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 and is sponsored by Transport Scotland – Aviation, Maritime, Freight and Canals Directorate.

Introduction

This document presents the Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) Sustainability Strategy for 2023-2033.

It supports our Strategy and Covid-19 Recovery Plan 2021-2026 which sets the goals and strategic priorities we have identified to develop a Net Zero regional airport network while at the same time continuing to support economic prosperity and deliver social benefit for our people and communities throughout the Highlands and Islands.

The fight against climate change is an urgent issue for governments. Scotland has declared a climate emergency and has reviewed its climate commitments. These are now among some of the most ambitious in the world, calling for net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. Further, the Scottish Government has set a target for the Highlands and Islands to be the world's first net-zero aviation region by 2040.

To help meet that target, our ambition is that all flights to and from HIAL airports are doing so on a sustainable basis by 2040.

In 2020, the restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic greatly impacted the aviation industry, grounding most of the air traffic in Scotland, the UK, and worldwide. This helped bring our climate and environmental commitments into sharper focus.

The aviation sector is very much in the spotlight as the industry recovers from the pandemic. Passenger confidence and flights are increasing, and the focus is on building a green recovery that focuses on combating aviation's impact on climate change through the lens of an extremely challenging fiscal environment.

Our strategy is built around three key themes:

- Reducing our environmental impact
- Supporting our communities and our people
- Working in partnership with the wider aviation sector to achieve Net Zero.

These key themes are supported by 10 pillars of strategic focus.



Benbecula Airport



Stornoway Airport

Foreword

As we continue our journey of recovery following the pandemic, now, more than ever, we must strive to deliver a sustainable future for aviation in the Highlands and Islands.

HIAL operates in a unique, but challenging environment. The characteristics that make our airports exceptional can present their own demands. The vast and diverse geographical area we serve, as well as the remote location of many of our airports can lead to increased costs and reduced scope of opportunity to undertake activities to meet our sustainability commitments.

With limited surface travel alternatives, air links are vital for the more remote parts of the Highlands, and particularly the Islands. HIAL's airports enable lifeline services and essential air connectivity for our communities.

As we seek to retain, and even expand an integrated air service network to support and augment air connectivity for our region, we recognise the juxtaposition of reducing our environmental impact at the same time – and meet the Scottish Government's target of a net-zero aviation region by 2040.

HIAL inherited an estate that was largely founded on second world war infrastructure which has led to legacy issues. However, as custodians of our airports for future generations, it is our responsibility to modernise our infrastructure and commit to sustainable aviation mandates that will help us achieve our vision of becoming a net-zero carbon regional airport group.

The Scottish Government published its Resource Spending Review on 31 May 2022. This sets out the high-level parameters for resource spend for future Scottish budgets up to 2026-27. These indicative budgets show a decrease in available funding for HIAL over the next three to four years and present a significant future funding challenge for the company. The pressure this creates is further compounded by increasing inflation and rising price challenges which when combined, will impact upon our net zero ambitions.

However, these challenges also present opportunities to explore different operating models. There will be no one size fits all solution, and we will continue to explore innovative ways to decarbonise our operations and enable greener air services.

In the past year, we completed the programme to install energy efficient lighting at all our airports. Our plans to replace all diesel-powered airside equipment are well underway. We are introducing hybrid ground power charging units to support carbon reduction and improve exhaust emissions, and these will be leased to our ground handling agents.

The solar powered boarding ramps now in use at our airports provide a better passenger experience and an environmentally friendly solution to assist passengers on and off aircraft at all HIAL airports. The installation of solar powered aerodrome ground lighting at Campbeltown Airport earlier this year was a first for HIAL. These have proven both effective and efficient and the next installation of this lighting will be at Tiree Airport.

The first phase of the innovative Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE) programme successfully concluded in 2022. Phase 1 featured successful pioneering of sustainable aviation technology demonstration flights, which highlighted real life benefits for remote communities. None more so than the large drone trials to deliver mail to remote communities undertaken by Windracers and the Royal Mail, which has led Royal Mail to explore implementing this technology on a much wider scale.

Looking forward to 2022/23, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) awarded £8.9m as part of the Future Flight Challenge competition for the next stage of SATE's development. This will allow the project to scale up its ambition to become the UK Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Regional Aviation.

This is a long-term strategy, and we recognise that our priorities, and those of our partners and stakeholders will change over time as new trends emerge and we need to be flexible.

We appreciate the journey will be difficult, but we remain committed to delivering a sustainable airport network. We will continue to work with Scottish Government, our aviation partners, local stakeholders, and communities to deliver our strategy and realise our ambition to become a net-zero regional airport group.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lorna Jack".

Lorna Jack
Chair HIAL Board



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Inglis Lyon".

Inglis Lyon
Managing Director, HIAL

Our Mission and Ambition

We enable air connectivity and support lifeline services for the communities we serve through a network of sustainable airports.

Our ambition is to become a **'net-zero regional airport group'**.

Our Values

Our values underpin everything we do and how we do it. They shape our culture and define who we are; our expectations of each other; how we interact with each other and how we interact with our customers, communities, and other stakeholders. A strong values-driven culture that supports the delivery of our strategic priorities is key to our long-term success.



We work collaboratively to build trust in our expertise; we do not work in silos of self-interest.



We always listen and respond to customers and colleagues; we do not ignore the needs of others.



We always look to make things better in the future; we do not accept the status quo.



We always take responsibility for our actions; we do not expect others to cover for us.



We always try to deliver the very best we can; we do not and will not accept anything less.

Our approach to Sustainability

Our Sustainability Strategy sets out robust commitments towards a sustainable future for our airports over the next 10 years.

We are committed to supporting the essential socio-economic role of aviation in Scotland by maintaining and developing our airports and the connections they provide for some of our country's more remote communities. Underpinning this goal is a commitment to grow and develop sustainably.

We have adopted a practical and responsible approach to our social, economic, and environmental responsibilities. Our key priorities have been established and detailed action plans will be developed to enable us to achieve our commitments.

The Scottish Government has implemented a National Performance Framework, which aligns to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and sets a purpose and vision for Scotland through 11 national outcomes. Our strategy is aligned to these national outcomes.

Our sustainability strategy is built around three key themes:

- Reducing our environmental impact
- Supporting our communities and our people
- Net zero aviation



Theme 1 – Reducing our Environmental Impact

Pillar 1 – Waste Management

Pillar 2 – Water management

Pillar 3 – Energy Efficiency

Pillar 4 – Air Quality

Pillar 5 – Ecology and Landscape



Theme 2 – Supporting Our Communities and Our People

Pillar 6 – Our People

Pillar 7 – Our Communities

Pillar 8 – Noise

Pillar 9 – Surface Access



Theme 3 – Net Zero Aviation

Pillar 10 – Working in partnership with the wider aviation sector to achieve Net Zero

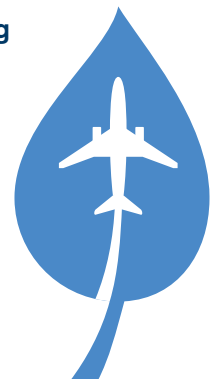
We recognise that we cannot deliver our goals in isolation, we must create strong partnerships and work together to successfully deliver our strategy. We will be working with a broad range of partners and stakeholders including our people, aviation partners and local communities, all of whom will play a critical role in helping us deliver our strategy. We commit to regular engagement with our stakeholders to help understand and address their key issues and concerns.

We recognise that our stakeholders' views and priorities will change over time and this strategy has been developed with flexibility in mind. We appreciate that each pillar may impact our airports in different ways over the strategy period. We are committed to developing an Environmental Management System (EMS) that will align to best practice quality standards detailed in ISO 14001 to support our airports in delivering this strategy.

Whilst we are committed to achieving Net Zero, the climate is changing and even if the most serious climate impacts can be avoided there will still be changes which may impact on our operations. Therefore, we will develop a work package to understand potential climate change impacts, assess our preparedness and any adaption that may be required.

We will develop a strong governance structure to ensure that our commitments are delivered, and that progress is monitored through regular performance reports.

Sustainability means meeting our current needs, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs and comprises three key themes; social equity, economic viability and environmental protection.







Theme 1 – Reducing our Environmental Impact

We recognise the impact that our operations can have on the local environment, and we are committed to understanding and reducing these impacts.

Pillar 1 – Waste Management

Approximately 80% of Scotland's carbon footprint comes from products and materials that we consume¹. Limited material resources and growing consumption patterns represents a global challenge. We have a responsibility to effectively manage the waste arising as a result of our operations and reduce the impacts of waste to as low as is reasonably practicable.

The creation of some waste is an inevitable consequence of the operation of a busy airport. We know we must take active steps to minimise the amount we produce and to recycle whatever we can, moving from a linear to a circular economy. However, our approach to waste management also needs to consider the logistical challenges at certain airports and local infrastructure. For example, some of our remote airports have limited access to recycling facilities and in such cases, we will work with local authorities to develop these circular opportunities.

HIAL has already implemented a Plastics Reduction Policy, committing to reduce plastic usage throughout the HIAL group and we have a number of planned initiatives to support the delivery of our key objectives.

Specifically, we will:

- Understand our waste streams and identify opportunities for improvement by conducting waste audits at all airports
- Work in partnership with our concessionaires to ensure preparedness for Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) legislation
- Ensure clear positioning of bins and signage to encourage and promote recycling
- Investigate and incorporate circular economy principles to capital projects
- Continue to engage with teams across our airports on waste reduction initiatives
- Support national campaigns with the likes of Zero Waste Scotland and Keep Scotland Beautiful. For example, conducting litter picks, and participating in working groups to support legislation development.

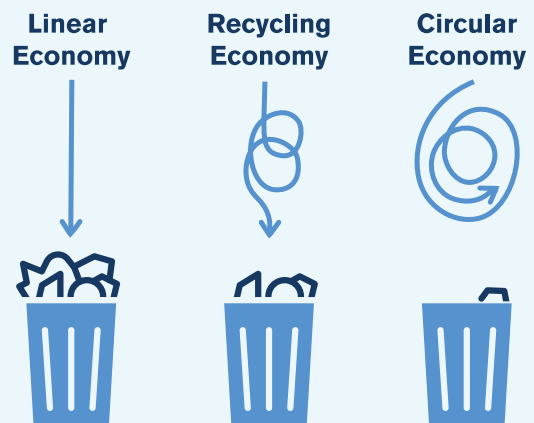
¹ Zero Waste Scotland, 2021

² With the exception of International Catering Waste (ICW) which is required to be disposed of via deep burial in an authorised landfill.

Case Study – The Circular Economy

Traditional economies are based on a linear model; resources are infinite, we extract, consume, and dispose of waste. We know now that this is not the case, and we must extend the lifecycle of materials through reuse, repair, and innovation as much as possible.

In 2022 we donated surplus fire and rescue equipment to the International Fire & Rescue Association (IFRA). The donation included personal protective equipment, trauma equipment, water rescue and firefighting equipment from a number of our airports. It is part of a larger shipment of donations sent overseas by the charity to help protect and equip emergency services in third world countries. To date IFRA have sent 107 vehicles, 77 containers and completed 72 training missions in 24 countries worldwide.



Key Objectives

- Support airport concessionaires to improve airport mixed-use recycling rates through implementation of the Deposit Return Scheme by 2023
- Promote re-use and recycling to minimise our waste streams with the aim of ensuring that no waste is sent to landfill by 2027²
- Phase out single-use plastics by 2027.



Reducing our Environmental Impact

Pillar 2 – Water

Airports have a high-water footprint due to the various operational uses of potable and non-potable water, including fire training, cleaning, toilets and drinking water. We want to ensure a reliable and efficient water network, focused on identifying and repairing leaks and maximising water efficiency.

The surface water run-off from airports can be harmful to the receiving environment due to contaminants used to ensure a safe operation, including firefighting foams, cleaning products, and de-icers. This can have a negative impact on receiving habitats and may affect water quality downstream of the airport. This is particularly important for designated sites such as Marine Protected Areas. We recognise the recreational and local importance of our waters and are committed to reducing any negative impact.

The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) set the discharge parameters through our operating licenses, and we are committed to complying with these standards. We have robust and regular monitoring and inspection procedures in place to monitor our discharges and make sure we are compliant with the terms of our licence.

Over the recent years, we have reviewed our water treatment procedures and have taken significant steps to improve water quality discharge, to negate the impact of our winter operations. We have a number of planned initiatives to support the delivery of our key objectives.

Specifically, we will:

- Engage with airport concessionaires on water usage
- Develop a Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Action Plan
- Continue monitoring of surface water run off
- Investigate water saving measures in new projects, such as rainwater harvesting
- Work with other airports to share best practice around water efficiency and discharges.

Case Study – De-icer Vehicles

During winter, de-icing of aircraft, roads, pathways and the airfield is essential to maintain a safe operation, however the chemicals used can have negative impacts on local watercourses. HIAL have taken a number of steps to improve the efficiency of de-icing operations and reduce these negative impacts whilst maintaining a safe operation.

We have invested in new de-icer vehicles for Inverness and Sumburgh, capable of de-icing runways, taxiways and aprons. The specialist vehicles deliver precise and efficient dosages of de-icer fluid and make use of a guidance system ensuring that coverage is 100% optimised with a memory system that prevents over-spray. Reducing the volume of de-icer applied at source is one of the best ways we can reduce our negative environmental impacts. At our other airports we have reviewed our operational requirements to ensure that the de-icing vehicles and processes are as efficient as possible.

Key Objectives

- Reduce water consumption by 35% across the HIAL group by 2027
- Achieve 'excellent' SEPA CAS scores for all our airports by 2027
- Tackle soil contamination at HIAL airports due to historical land use.



Reducing our Environmental Impact

Pillar 3 – Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency contributes greatly to improvements in carbon management and will help meet the Scottish Government's target of a net zero aviation region by 2040. HIAL takes a proactive approach to energy by monitoring consumption, identifying hotspots, and implementing energy efficiency improvements.

We have already made several steps to reduce energy consumption and support the delivery of our key objectives, including:

- Replacing airport operational vehicles with electric vehicles, with plans already rolled out at Sumburgh and Inverness airports and an upgrade programme in place across our other airports
- Plans to replace all diesel-powered airside equipment, which are well underway. We are introducing hybrid ground power charging units to support carbon reduction and improve exhaust emissions which will be leased to our ground handling agents
- Progressing our LED replacement programme and insulation replacement programmes. In 2021 we completed the programme to install energy efficient lighting at all our airports
- Ongoing replacement of large fire fighting vehicles with smaller vehicles, with 30% fuel savings on diesel consumption
- The installation of a sustainable combined heat and power (CHP) system at Kirkwall Airport in collaboration with European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC). This project will see the first 100% hydrogen CHP system installed in the UK
- Introducing solar powered boarding ramps to assist passengers on and off aircraft
- As a key partner of communities in the Highlands and Islands region, HIAL will work with this stakeholder group to pursue renewable energy partnerships.

Case Study – Going electric

We have replaced three operational vehicles at Sumburgh Airport with fully electric models. The operational vehicles are used for airside and landside operational duties and switching to electric not only helps to drive down our carbon emissions but also reduces negative air quality impacts. There is an ongoing programme in place to further roll our electric vehicles, where possible, across our airports.

Our Vehicles and Equipment Strategy supports our Net Zero target through modernising our fleet of operational vehicles. Purchasing multipurpose equipment and vehicles, introducing a range of electric, hybrid and emissions regulations compliant vehicles not only minimises our environmental impact but also improves operational efficiency and standardises our fleet allowing for efficiencies during maintenance.

Key Objectives

- Exploring the development of community energy hubs with local councils by hosting local renewable energy infrastructure capacity
- Identify and implement building and infrastructure de-carbonisation opportunities
- Engage with tenants to raise awareness on energy efficiency. Identify opportunities for partnership working and innovation to pursue renewable energy partnerships to support HIAL's energy and carbon targets while providing income and infrastructure to local communities.



Reducing our Environmental Impact

Pillar 4 – Air Quality

Local air quality can be affected by many different sources of pollution. These include airside and ground operation emission sources, such as airside vehicles and ground level aircraft activities as well as emissions from vehicles travelling to and from the airport generated by passengers, airport employees and deliveries.

Air quality is monitored by Local Authorities, with only one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) located in Inverness City Centre declared. This AQMA is predominately due to the impacts of local road traffic and not associated with the airport operation.

We recognise the potential health impacts that poor air quality can cause and will continue to look for the most effective ways of reducing emissions from our operations.

To support with the delivery of our key objectives we will:

- Introduce efficient driving practises in our driver training modules
- Monitor changes to legislation and work with local authorities as required
- Work with our airline partners on initiatives to improve local air quality
- Transition to low emission vehicles
- Promote public transport options for staff and passengers
- Encourage flexible and hybrid working by our staff to reduce the need for car journeys to our airports.

Case Study – Electric Ground Power Units

Ground Power Units (GPU) supply power to aircraft when on stand and provide the power source needed to start the aircraft. Traditionally GPUs are diesel powered, as well as contributing to our carbon footprint the diesel GPU's can negatively impact on local air quality.

HIAL have invested in over 17 electric or electric hybrid GPUs serving Inverness, Benbecula, Sumburgh, Kirkwall and Stornoway helping to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality.

Key Objectives

- Reduce impacts on air quality from operational activities against a 2019 baseline by 2032
- Work with airlines, airline handling agents and partners to reduce air quality impacts through investment in new technology such as low emission vehicles, fuels and ground equipment
- Carry out regular inspections and emissions tests on all vehicles that operate on our airfields
- Introduce company-wide policy to procure hybrid/electric and Euro-6 standard vehicles as first choice
- Investigate options for vehicle permitting based on an emissions hierarchy: low emissions, low permit cost; high emissions, high permit cost.



Reducing our Environmental Impact

Pillar 5 – Ecology and Landscape

Environmental emissions from airports, such as water, air, and noise can have detrimental effects on local habitats and species. Capital activities such as construction can impact landscape character and visual amenity as well as geology, drainage, geomorphology. Operational activities can also impact landscape and ecology, for example light and noise pollution.

HIAL is responsible for a large estate that contains a significant amount of important flora and fauna. Much of this estate comprises large areas of grassland habitats with many sites adjacent to the freshwater and marine environments. In addition, many of HIAL's sites are situated adjacent to, or within close proximity to areas designated for their nature conservation. These include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar sites and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). These habitats support a wide range of wildlife including otters and bird assemblages. HIAL maintains close liaison with NatureScot, RSPB and other environmental bodies to ensure a balance is maintained between conservation and aircraft safety.

To support with the delivery of our key objectives we will:

- Investigate biodiversity benchmark and award opportunities
- Build on findings of Phase 1 Habitat Surveys to create ecology management plans for each airport
- Aim for biodiversity net gain to help combat the effects of climate change
- Consider biodiversity improvements and opportunities in capital project development.

Key Objectives

- Establish partnerships with local communities and conservation trusts to identify and coordinate community-led projects to enhance biodiversity and improve habitats on the airport estate
- Implement changes to our wildlife reporting mechanisms to ensure that we continually improve on the monitoring of wildlife safety trends, allowing us to periodically review any identified problem areas and update our risk assessments, including the risk

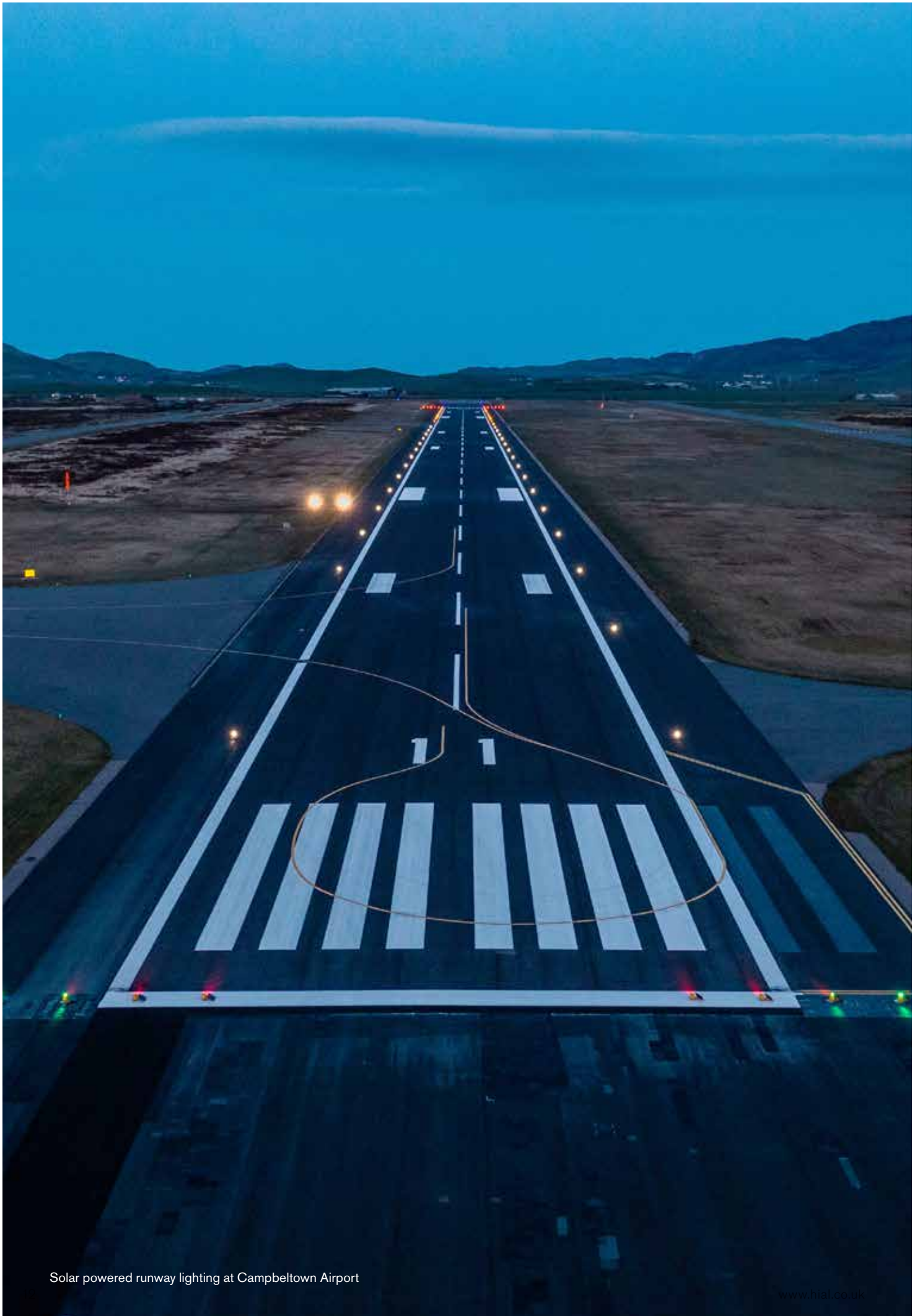
Case Study – Biodiversity

Our airports lie within, adjacent to or near areas protected nationally and internationally for their nature conservation. These include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar Sites and Marine Protected Areas (MPA). There is a broad and diverse range of habitats which support plants, invertebrates, fungi and small to large wildlife across our airports and we are committed to taking action to improve biodiversity conservation across our estate including:

- Vegetation management such a maintaining long grass policies to protect native species of plants, insects and birds
- Bird management including working with the RSPB to survey and map areas where birds nest and roost to identify flight paths and feeding grounds
- Water management including litter picks and actively engaging with the River Basin Management Planning process as a member of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency's (SEPA) North Highland Area Advisory Group
- Habitat enhancement and creation including coastal protection barriers and dune stabilisation projects as well as 'hare runs' to direct hares away from the runway and taxiways.

controls and technologies used to control wildlife on the airfields

- Utilise our land to the benefit of our local communities
- Ongoing collaboration with NatureScot to manage local bird habitats and the effective use of non-lethal means for the prevention of bird strikes at HIAL airports
- Develop a Biodiversity Strategy, covering all 11 airports.



Solar powered runway lighting at Campbeltown Airport



Theme 2 – Supporting Our Communities and Our People

With limited surface travel alternatives, air links are vital for the more remote parts of the Highlands, and particularly the Islands. HIAL's airports support lifeline services for our local communities and support social benefit and economic prosperity for the communities we serve.

Our people lie at the heart of HIAL and are responsible for ensuring we operate a safe, welcoming airport network to the very highest professional standards. Our goal is to create a positive working environment focused on the wellbeing of our people and an effective work-life balance.

Pillar 6 – Our people

Our people lie at the heart of HIAL and are responsible for ensuring we operate a safe, welcoming airport network to the very highest professional standards. Our goal is to create a positive working environment focused on the wellbeing of our people and effective work-life balance. We want to ensure that HIAL remains an employer of choice and attracts a wide range of people from across our society, we continue to review our employment practices and packages to ensure that they match the aspirations of our future workforce.

Safety underpins every aspect of our operations. We have a robust safety and security programme that achieves regulatory compliance throughout our organisation. We continuously review our systems and procedures to ensure that our organisation and every one of our airports has the very highest standards of safety performance and resilience. The wellbeing of our people is important to us, and our Health, Safety and Wellbeing strategy encourages healthy lifestyles and promotes a positive work culture.

To support with the delivery of our key objectives we will:

- Publish a Gender Pay Gap Report and develop an Action Plan
- Promote learning and development opportunities to our people
- Introduce additional technology to improve effective communication and people management
- Promote the Employee Assistance Programme.

Case Study – Environmental Champions

We have a team of Environmental Champions, representing all our airports. The Champions support the delivery of the strategy by collating environmental information, identifying local initiatives and raising awareness of issues at the local level.

Prior to Covid-19 our Environmental Champions introduced composting facilities, placing food waste containers at Head Office and within the Motor Transport Building and began to collect textiles for charity donations.

Key Objectives

- Ensure the continuous enhancement of effective change management throughout the business
- Ensure we have the right people with the right skills to deliver safety critical, high-quality services
- Manage and develop people to be flexible and responsive while continuing to deliver excellent results.



Supporting Our Communities and Our People

Pillar 7 – Our Community

HIAL's airports are an essential element of the strategic transport network in Scotland. Each airport provides essential air connectivity and supports the lifeline services so vital for our local communities.

We continue to work closely with our local partners and communities and have taken a number of positive actions in recent years. We have:

- Developed a partnership with the University of Highlands and Islands, acting as a case study for business studies students as well as providing staff to speak to students
- Developed a staff volunteering policy offering two days paid leave per year for staff to undertake community or charitable activities
- Opened a Changing Places facility at Sumburgh Airport in partnership with Ability Shetland.

To support with the delivery of our key objectives we will:

- Develop and publish an Engagement Policy and associated guidance, to ensure an effective engagement framework
- Undertake a review of formal community engagement forums in place at HIAL airports to ensure a consistent, but tailored approach for a structured exchange of information and input from local stakeholders on matters relating to individual airports
- Work with local school, colleges and universities to promote aviation employment opportunities and work collaboratively on projects
- Support local charity and community organisations through funding, resource sharing and volunteering opportunities.

Case Study – Fire Fighting Training

Our Airport Fire Service deliver a range of maritime fire training courses in Sumburgh and Kirkwall. These courses offer the benefits of providing regulatory mandated training to maritime workers on their home islands with the following benefits:

- The environmental impact of travel to mainland facilities is negated in full
- Costs related to travel and subsistence are minimised, keeping money in the local economies
- Staff remain on-island and available as required by their employers
- HIAL and UHI Shetland, Shetland Islands Council and UHI Orkney have developed effective working relationships.

Work is ongoing to introduce this training to Stornoway and to expand the offer to include Advanced Marine Firefighting, which will extend the benefits to a larger group of employers.

Key Objectives

- Maintain an open and transparent relationship with our local communities
- Ensure our airports and facilities are accessible to all
- Support charity and community organisations
- Support local business through our supply chain
- Work with local schools, colleges and universities to integrate industry and academia and develop partnership opportunities to support the shared goals of all involved.



Supporting Our Communities and Our People

Pillar 8 – Noise

While noise generated by aircraft during take-off and landing is the main source of noise pollution at airports, traffic travelling to and from, as well as around the airport also contribute. Except for Inverness, most of our airports are served by turboprop aircraft in the main which are relatively quiet. There may also be noise impacts during construction or maintenance works.

Noise pollution can impact airport staff, local communities, and wildlife. These impacts may be particularly significant in rural or remote locations where background noise is low. However, noise impacts can also be experienced by people in urban areas.

Noise at work can cause hearing loss that can be temporary or permanent and we are required to protect employees from noise. Noise assessments have already been completed for Dundee and Inverness airports and we are currently working through recommended actions.

To support with the delivery of our key objectives we will:

- Develop a guide explaining arrival and departure procedures for local communities
- Engage with local communities and stakeholders to understand noise impacts and mitigate where possible
- Engage with local planning authorities to ensure aircraft operations are considered during land development.

Key Objectives

- Undertake employee noise exposure assessments at all HIAL airports
- Investigate all noise complaints within 20 working days
- Work with airline partners and Air Traffic Control (ATC) to reduce noise associated with aircraft movements during take-off, landing, and taxiing
- Work with airline partners to promote the use of most efficient aircraft at our airports
- Develop an engagement platform to educate local communities on aircraft procedures and noise
- Investigate changes to arrival and departure routes that could be delivered to achieve operational efficiencies and noise reduction.

Case Study – Continuous Climb and Descent Operations

We recognise that noise from aircraft operations can adversely impact those living close to airports or flight paths. Continuous Climb and Descent Operations (CCOs and CDOs) are aircraft operating techniques that allow arriving or departing aircraft to descend or climb continuously, to the greatest extent possible. Using optimum flight paths helps to reduce noise as well as fuel burn without adversely affecting flight safety.

HIAL will review operations at its airports to determine whether introducing these operations would be feasible and deliver noise and fuel reduction benefits.



Campbeltown Airport



Supporting Our Communities and Our People

Pillar 9 – Surface Access

Surface access covers the transport routes taken by passengers and airport staff travelling to and from airports. Surface access is a significant source of Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions (indirect emissions caused as a result of the airport's operations including aircraft movements, staff and passenger surface access, waste disposal and water consumption) and also contributes to local air and noise pollution. We recognise that due to the location of our airports we will need to work in partnership with transport partnerships such as HITRANS, ZETRANS and local authorities to address surface access issues.

Our airport locations present several challenges as some of our remote airports are not served by regular public transport routes. In these instances, the majority of surface access is by private car.

In order to support with the delivery of our key objectives we will:

- Promote public transport options to staff and passengers where possible
- Conduct travel surveys to help understand and address barriers to using public transport
- Promote active travel options for travelling to and from the airports
- Engage with car rental operators to accelerate the transition to a fully electric fleet of hire car vehicles
- Work in partnership with local authorities and key stakeholders to identify opportunities to develop charging infrastructure.

Key Objectives

- To have 20% of HIAL parking spaces offer Electric Vehicle (EV) charging ports at airports with existing infrastructure by 2030
- Work with our car rental operators to encourage, support and promote the roll out of a fully electric fleet
- Introduce a company-wide sustainable transport policy for business travel with a focus on public transport and flexible working arrangements
- Engage with local transport partners to develop zero and ultra-low emission travel options.



Run the Runway Community Charity Event at Inverness Airport



Theme 3 – Net Zero Aviation

The Scottish Government has set a target for the Highlands and Islands to be the world’s first net-zero aviation region by 2040. We are committed to playing our part and working in partnership with others to delivering this target.

Pillar 10 – Net Zero Objectives

In 2019, the aviation sector accounted for approximately 7% of UK CO₂e emissions³. The Covid-19 pandemic caused a reduction in worldwide emissions. However, these are expected to rise to pre-pandemic levels by 2024 and continue to grow thereafter. HIAL plays a crucial part in reducing emissions at the airports and collaborating with airlines to meet the carbon management challenges.

Scottish Government has shown a bold commitment in carbon management of the Highlands and Islands becoming a Net-Zero Aviation Zone by 2040.

In order to achieve Net-Zero we must have a thorough understanding of our current and future emissions. We calculate our carbon footprint annually using the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, the most widely used international accounting tool.

The GHG Protocol categorises emissions into three scopes:

Scope 1 – Direct emissions coming from fuels burnt on site, such as boilers, generators, operational vehicles and fire training, refrigerant gas losses and airport de-icer

Scope 2 – Indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity

Scope 3 – Indirect emissions caused as a result of the airport’s operations including aircraft movements, staff and passenger surface access, waste disposal and water consumption

HIAL has chosen to use the 2018/19 carbon footprint as the baseline year for reducing emissions. Our primary objective is to reduce carbon emissions – beginning with the Scope 1 & 2 emissions, those over which we have direct control. We will then look at how we can reduce Scope 3 emissions (which are third party emissions) in partnership with others including airlines. During this period Scope 1 and 2 emissions were 5,074 tCO₂e.⁴

	Total 2018/19 emissions (tCO ₂ e)	% of total emissions
Scope 1	2735	54
Scope 2	2339	46
Out of Scope	8	0
Total	5082	100

Understanding our emission sources allows us to develop initiatives to reduce emissions. HIAL are currently developing a Net Zero Roadmap, due to be published in 2023; this will set out a programme of carbon reduction measures required to achieve Net Zero by 2040. Our primary objective is to reduce carbon emissions, beginning with the Scope 1 and 2 emissions and then Scope 3 emissions in partnership with others, including airlines. Offsetting is seen as a final option, an action to be taken to deal with those emissions that cannot be reduced.



Sumburgh Airport

³ Sustainable Aviation, 2020

⁴ Location Based Methodology



Net Zero Aviation

Pillar 10 – Net Zero Objectives (continued)

We have already made several steps to reduce our carbon emissions and energy consumption, including:

- Installing a hydrogen CHP system through an innovative partnership at Kirkwall airport
- Leading in the Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE) programme based at Kirkwall airport to trial low-carbon aircraft, sustainable aviation fuel accelerating the low-carbon transition in aviation
- Developing a Carbon Management Plan (CMP) for each airport to address site specific challenges and ensure regular monitoring of progress against targets
- Achieving accreditation to Level 1 (Mapping) of the Airport Carbon Accreditation Scheme and reporting emissions in line with ACA Level 4 reporting requirements.

We recognise that we have a long way to go in achieving Net Zero, and to support the delivery of our key objectives we will:

- Develop and publish a Net Zero Roadmap
- Evaluate current aircraft arrival and departure procedures to identify potential emission saving opportunities and develop a roadmap to implement identified savings
- Develop and offsetting strategy, recognising that offsetting is an interim step and that any offsets purchased must be credible
- Investigate offsetting opportunities, becoming carbon neutral for Scope 1 and 2 activities through PAS 2060 certification
- Support the development of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) and encourage their use at our airports through economic incentives
- Support wider industry and work with airline partners on low carbon technology.



Dundee Airport

Key Objectives

- Introduce a programme of activity to decarbonise airport operations, infrastructure and flights within the Highlands and Islands
- Reach Level 2 of the ACA scheme in the short term and work towards level 4+ in the longer term
- Explore all opportunities to support low carbon technology and work with partners to develop the infrastructure to test zero emission aircraft and, where practicable, introduce them into service for some routes within our network
- Incentivise low carbon aircraft at HIAL airports
- Seek new partnerships for collaboration.



Net Zero Aviation

Case Study – Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE)

The first phase of this innovative project created the UK's first operationally based, low-carbon aviation test centre at Kirkwall Airport in the Orkney Islands.

Phase 1 featured pioneering sustainable aviation technology demonstration flights, highlighting real life benefits for remote communities:

- First hybrid electric flights for Scotland pioneered by Ampaire
- Large drone specialist technology firm Windracers with Royal Mail on autonomous flights, successful trial delivering mail to remote communities, leading to Royal Mail exploring implementing this technology on a much wider scale
- Dedicated hangar facilities and office space have also been created at Kirkwall Airport which is the UK's first low-carbon aviation test centre embedded at a commercial airport
- Providing a £5m boost for Orkney.

Looking forward to 2022/23, the funding of £8.9m provided by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) as part of the Future Flight Challenge competition, will allow the programme to progress the next stage of SATE's development.

While the SATE facilities are based at Kirkwall Airport, Phase 2 involves plans to work with other Highlands and Islands communities and will match the new technology with practical use cases to benefit communities in the Highlands and Islands as part of Phase 2.

Phase 2 will help deliver the project's ambition which is to scale up and become the UK Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Regional Aviation.



Royal Mail team up with Windracers to deliver post to North Ronaldsay on Orkney by drone (credit Colin Keldie, Courtesy of SATE project)



Snow clearing at Wick John O'Groats Airport

Contact Us

We are fully committed to rebuilding and improving our services and appreciate the view of our partners, customers and passengers.

We use the feedback we receive to monitor our performance and incorporate this information into our planning and governance process to continually improve our service. We are pleased with the positive feedback we receive and we are keen to hear examples of good practice and quality service that exemplifies the standards of service we strive to provide.

If you have something you would like to share with us, or you would like more information about Highlands and Islands Airports Limited, please get in touch:

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