



The Scottish Rural Landscape: Does Mobility Feature?

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Scotland's Landscape



- Rural is defined by the Scottish Government on travel by car and time
- **98%** of Scottish land mass is rural
- **20%** of the population lives in rural areas which are growing faster than urban areas and contribute 25% to GDP
- Car dominates but 10-15% of the rural population are without a license
- Mixed population – eclectic mix
 - Visitors – traditionally, UK and overseas
 - Employment; fruit picking and tourism attracts traditionally overseas workers
 - Seasonal – peaks and troughs
 - Second Home owners – 3,829 in the Highlands, Highest area with Argyll and Bute second;
 - Ranked 6th on empty homes 6months or more
 - Ranked 1st on empty homes 12months or more
 - Commuting – London, Edinburgh, Glasgow and indeed America.
 - Home working – micro businesses, internet connectivity

Scotland's Landscape



- De-urbanization post COVID?
- Average house price
- Industries have diversified and modernized
- Connectivity
- Remote Rural Bill proposed
- The Islands act (2018) – improving outcomes for Islands, meeting their needs and empowering. A National Islands Plan has been developed with Stakeholder Engagement completed, and a key theme was that of transport and mobility.

Real World Visitor Challenges

Chris and his wife and four friends are travelling from Bristol for a cycling holiday taking their bikes with them. They are travelling to Aviemore and will cycle from Aviemore to John O'Groats and staying in Golspie after reaching John O'Groats.

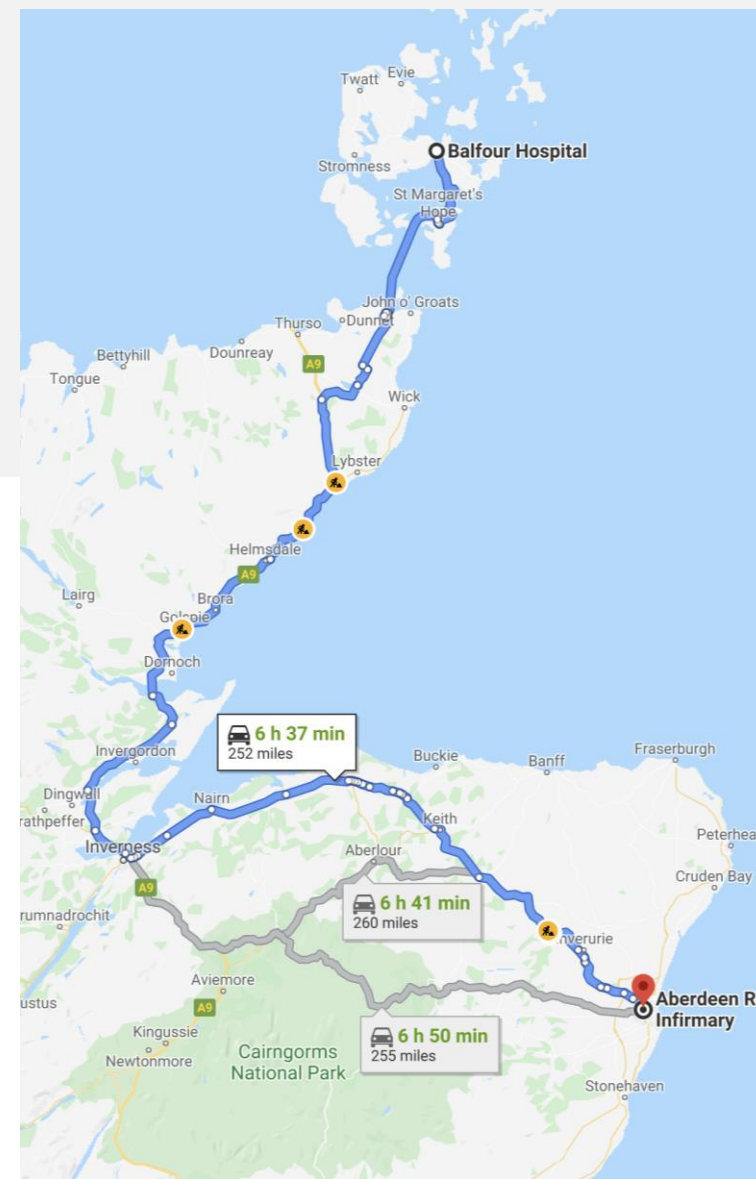
- How do the group of friends travel from Bristol to Aviemore with 6 bikes?
- Why do they choose this mode of transport?
- The weather turns poor near John O'Groats. How do they reach their Bed and Breakfast at Golspie on a Saturday on their return journey to Aviemore?





Orkney Facts

- Islands are their own ecosystem
- 9 vessels serving 13 island communities.
- Approximately 320,000 passenger trips, 82,000 vehicle trips per annum
- Orkney has a rural hospital but the main treatments in Aberdeen. Fly or Drive.



Hitch Hiking: Case Study

Anne and Toby from Germany in 2018

11th April Ullapool to Sac Pollaidh, 14miles (1040 or 1532 with return at 1331pm other than a Friday which has a 1535pm return, so you have to get 1040am, otherwise you can't go)

27th March on Orkney – good service but no bus further south than St Margarets Hope (ie not to Tomb of the Eagles 8miles away) 717am or 1603pm

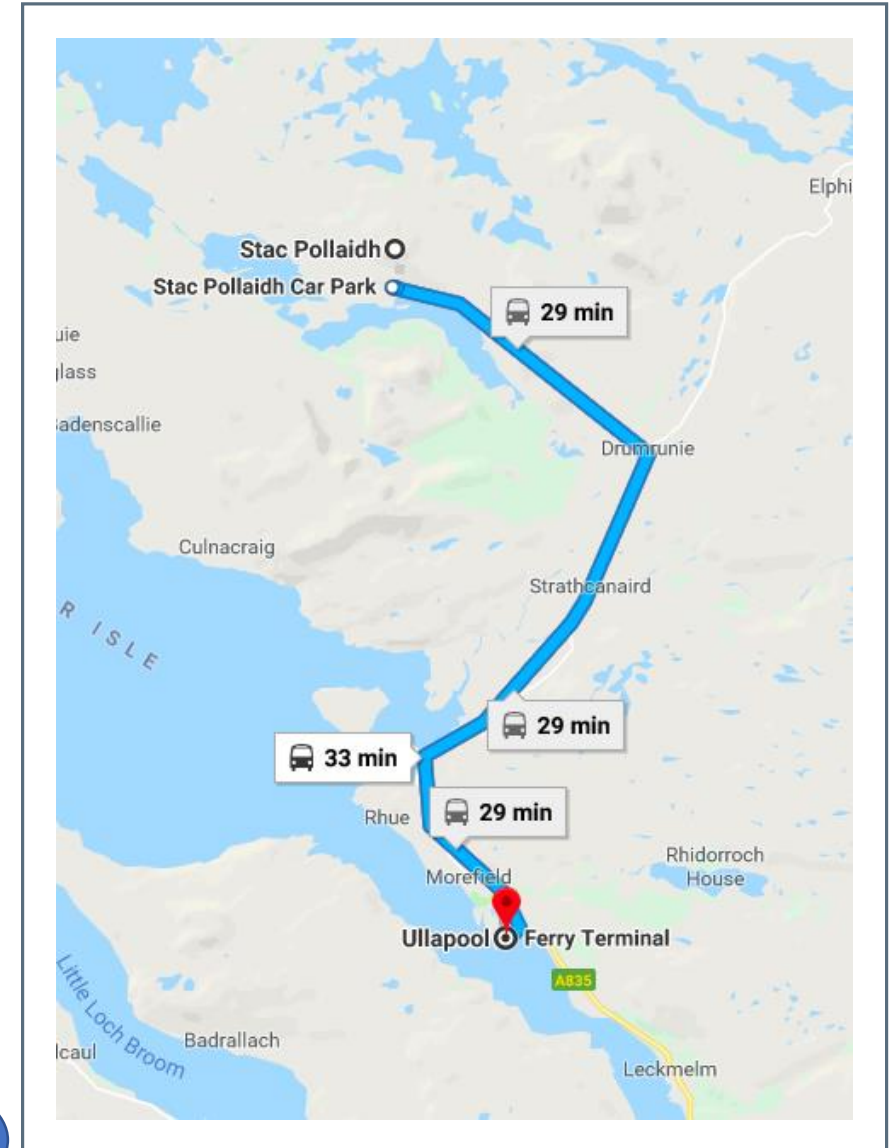
13th April on Skye trying to see the Isle of Skye Museum of Island Life, Duntulum Castle and Flora Macdonald Grave starting from Auchtertyre

Auchertyre to Fairy Pools – draws a blank on google

Think twice –
HH not due to
lack of money

Common
Solution
for visitors

Highlights
transport gaps

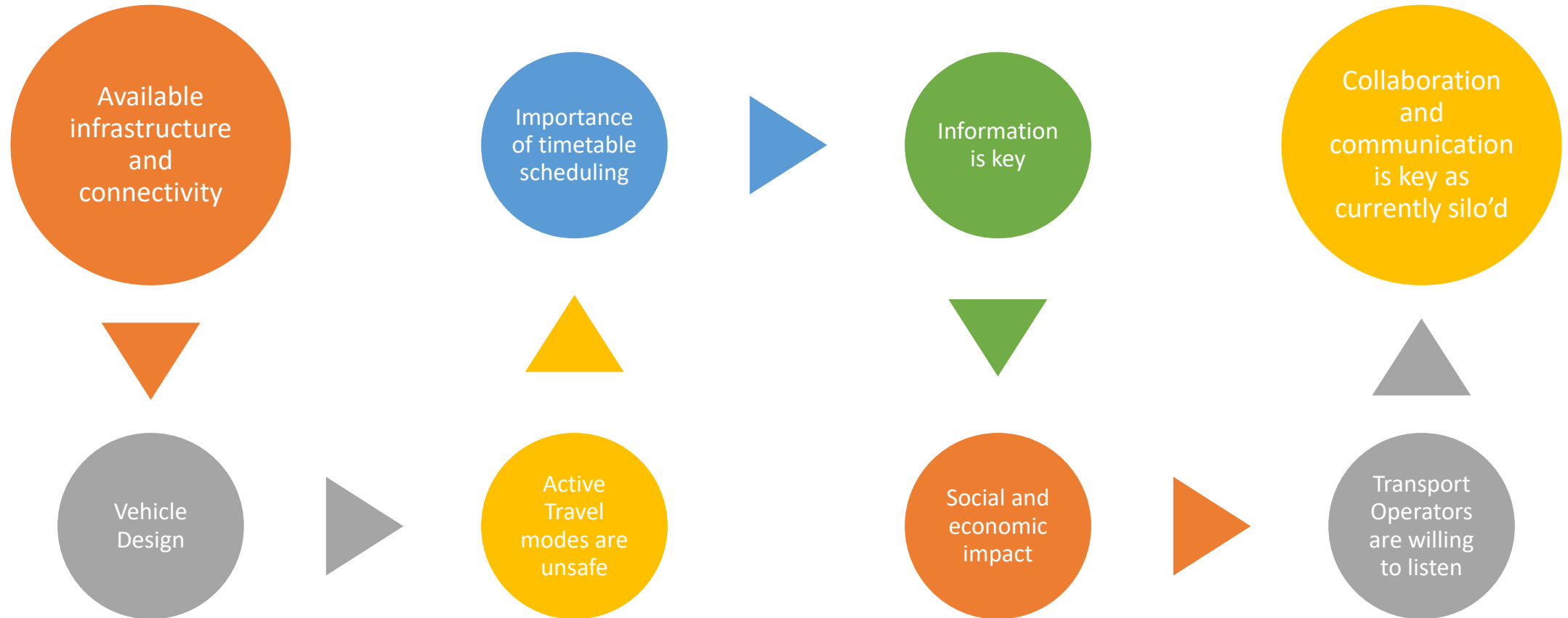




Cairngorms National Park Case Study

Conclusion of Findings

We all know (and have heard about the barriers to rural mobility)





Are these findings new
or unfamiliar?

NO



Does Mobility have a future in Rural Areas

More questions than answers but I do believe we are making progress but

- How do we provide transport to the mix of people living in our rural areas?
- How will COVID impact?
- Funding and subsidy are always seen as the blocker but have we got the right approach? What needs to change?
- Scottish Rural and Island Transport Convention and Community (www.ruralmobility.scot) - Cafes (BYOC)

The Future....

- Let rural people plan and be involved be that co-create/design
- Collaborate, don't silo – departments, policy or people
- Stop the fascination on business models and how government will fund rural areas and the Islands
- There needs political buy-in **AND** changes to legislation which ultimately would aid achieving policy objectives.
- We also need those working in urban areas or developing urban products, to stop trying to make one size fits all.
- Remember - Rural areas are very innovative – Sat nav from farming in Canada; COVID deliveries and changes to business models to survive.
- Rural areas are uniquely different and that's the attraction to all those living and coming to the area. It's the USP – Unique Selling Point.



Does Mobility have a Future in Rural Areas?

Yes

(but...)



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