

All-electric airships for Highlands and Islands prepare for take off with new study

By [Simon Warburton](#) 🕒 November 9, 2022, 12:02 am



Airlander aircraft can also land and take off from the sea. Image: Hybrid Air Vehicles.

All-electric airships could soon be a familiar sight in Highland and Island skies – and on the water – if a concept study turns into reality.

[Hybrid Air Vehicles](#) [HAV] has commissioned the study to explore the use case for introducing an electric version of its Airlander 10 aircraft for passenger transport and freight in the Highlands and Islands by the end of this decade.

The evaluation is supported by a consortium of organisations including [Highlands and Islands Airports](#) [HIAL], [Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership](#) [HiTrans), [Highlands and Islands Enterprise](#) [HIE], [Orkney Island Council](#) [OIC] and [Loganair](#).





a vital lifeline transport alternative in the teeth of [increasing ferry service woes](#).

The study will compare emission reductions with existing transport options and assess the opportunities to operate at non-airport locations, taking advantage of the aircraft's water operation capability.

The project will also consider Airlander's potential to deliver freight with a combi variant of the aircraft. With a 10-tonne payload, Airlander 10 could boost regional passenger connectivity and logistics.



The Airlander 10 is one of the largest aircraft in the world. Image: Hybrid Air Vehicles.

HIAL managing director Inglis Lyon said: "HIAL's aim is to become a net-zero carbon regional airport group. To achieve this, we need to investigate innovative solutions for sustainable air travel.

“This collaboration allows us to explore the potential use of Airlander 10 as part of the region’s transport network. A network that provides essential and lifeline services to some of Scotland’s most remote regions.”

HAV Airlander 10 aircraft will enter service with Spanish regional airline, [Air Nostrum Group](#) in 2026.

Standard Airlander 10 aircraft have four combustion engines, which the company maintains deliver up to 75% reduction in emissions compared to comparable aircraft.



Hial managing director Inglis Lyon. Image: DC Thomson.

For his part, Tom Grundy, CEO of HAV said: “Hybrid Air Vehicles are changing the way we think about regional travel and sustainable aviation.

“This is particularly the case for sometimes hard-to-reach regions such as the Highlands and Islands.

“This study will, I hope, pave the way for a revolution in green short-haul flights in this wonderful, beautiful, if sometimes inaccessible, part of the world, boosting connectivity and the local economy as we do so.”

Helium offsets weight of airship

Bedford-based HAV is the company behind Airlander technology. The existing Airlander 10 aircraft uses a combination of buoyant lift from helium, aerodynamic lift (from air flow) to take off and vectored thrust to stay airborne.

The helium offsets the weight of the airship and as a result the company says it produces up to 10 times fewer harmful emissions than conventional passenger aircraft.

HAV expects Airlander to be the first large scale aircraft (capable of carrying up to 100 passengers or 10 tonnes) to achieve zero emissions flight.

A key feature is its ability to land anywhere, be it fields, tarmac or sea and as a result, does not need to rely on current airport infrastructure.



Airlander 10 will be one of the largest aircraft in the world.

The production standard aircraft is expected to be in flight from 2023 and in service in 2026.

For regional passenger travel, typical trips on Airlander will be around 190-250 miles carrying a 10-tonne max payload and travelling at a top speed of 80mph.

HAV is working to launch the certification and production of Airlander aircraft this year. This will establish a new production line in South Yorkshire, employing more than 1,000 people.

The first three Airlander 10 aircraft to be built will be flying in 2025 and in service with customers including Spanish regional airline Air Nostrum in 2026. Pilot

training and other activities will run alongside production to be ready for the aircraft to enter service.

The Airlander family of aircraft serves customers in mobility, logistics, experiential travel, communications & surveillance.

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