



The Orkney Partnership

Working together for a better Orkney

Draft for Consultation

Draft v1.1

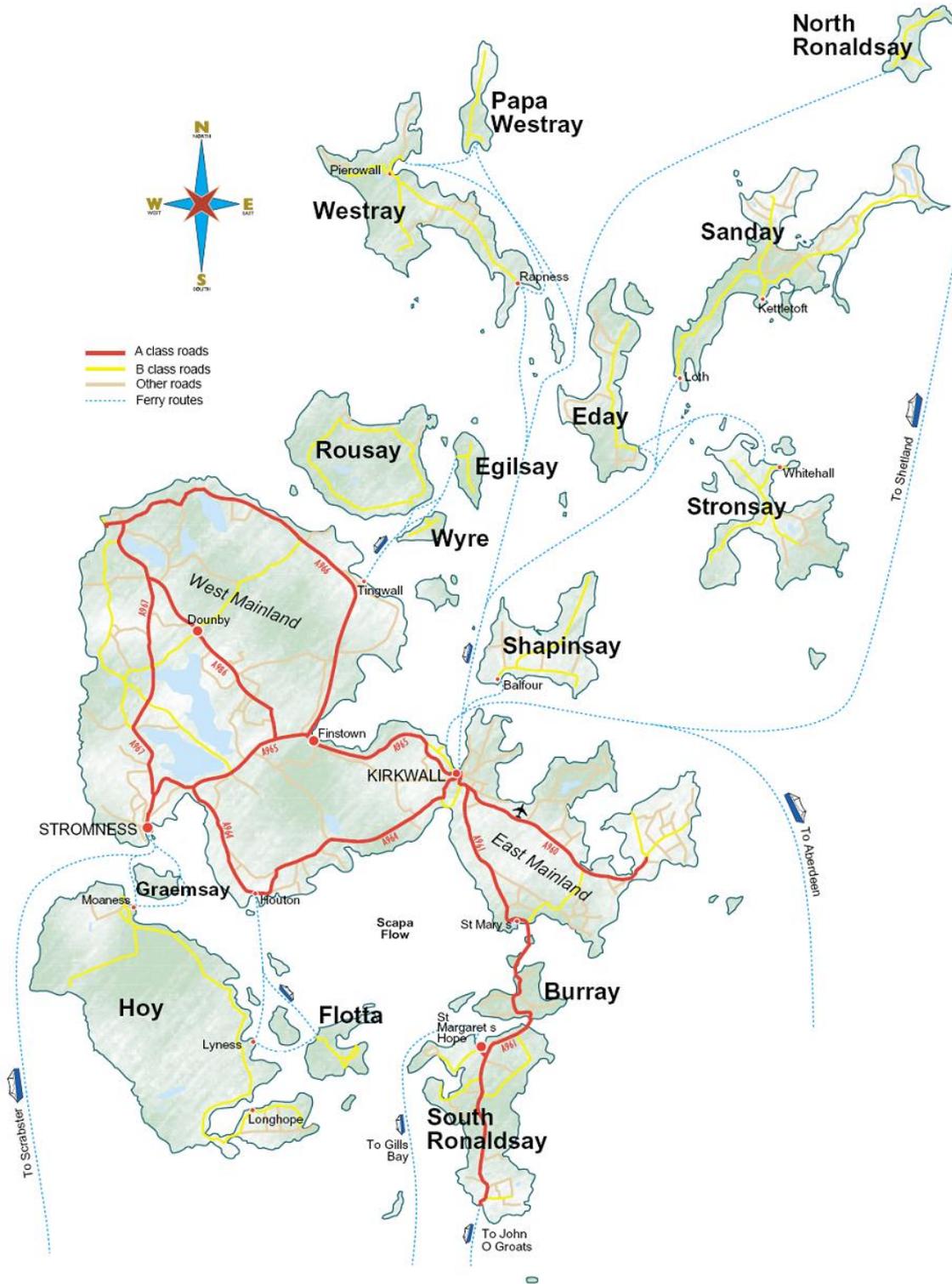
20 December 2022

Orkney Community Plan

Incorporating Orkney's

Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

2023 to 2030



If you would like this plan in a different language or format, please contact the Community Planning Business Manager, Orkney Islands Council, School Place, Kirkwall KW15 1NY.

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Introduction

Welcome to Orkney's Community Plan for 2023-30.

Community planning brings together local providers of public services to improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities, and especially to combat inequality and prevent disadvantage. Orkney's Community Plan describes what the members of the Orkney Partnership aim to achieve by working together, and how this adds value to what we can achieve as individual organisations. Our plan also serves as our statutory Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, or LOIP.

Our last plan, for 2021-23, was shorter than usual, reflecting the need for immediate short term action to support Orkney's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. This time we are looking much further ahead, towards the Partnership's ambition to see Orkney reach net zero by 2030, fifteen years ahead of the national target for Scotland. Orkney has a unique opportunity to capitalise on the rapid expansion of the green and blue economies but to do so will require significant new infrastructure and especially more housing. We want our future economic development to benefit everybody in our communities, with nobody left behind. Our choice of Sustainable Development as a strategic priority will help us promote and achieve this ambition.

We are well aware that many Orkney's residents cannot afford to look so far ahead and are much more concerned about the very present threat of the cost of living crisis. It is essential to support all our people, children and families through this difficult time and we have chosen the Cost of Living as an urgent strategic priority. The Partnership adopted a Poverty Pledge in 2022, undertaking to commit time, energy, and resources to work towards the elimination of poverty throughout Orkney. A Cost of Living Task Force has been established and will continue to address both immediate need and longer-term initiatives to combat persistent poverty.

Our third strategic priority, Local Equality, addresses another persistent issue – the continuing disadvantage experienced by some of our communities when trying to access services, facilities, and opportunities. Our ferry-linked isles have well-known, longstanding challenges but parts of Kirkwall also have high levels of socio-economic inequality and many localities on the Orkney Mainland and south linked isles have gaps in transport provision or digital connectivity. The adoption of this priority will lend support to local community-led development plans and help achieve the outcomes they want for their communities.

Our plan will evolve over the years as it adapts to Orkney's changing circumstances, but our sights will stay strongly focused on 2030 and our ambitions for Orkney's successful future, to be shared by all our communities and all our people.

Councillor James Stockan
Chair

Meghan McEwen
Vice Chair



Orkney Partnership Board

Orkney Community Plan 2023-30 : Outline summary

Strategic priorities	Short term outcomes 2023-25	Medium 2025-27	Long term 2027-30
<p>Cost of Living</p> <p>Our aim is to co-ordinate an agile response to the cost of living crisis, supporting both immediate need and longer-term prevention of poverty and disadvantage.</p>	Public understanding of human rights-based approaches to poverty.	Adoption of advice-and-cash-first approach to address hardship.	Demonstrable mitigation of the immediate cost of living crisis.
<p>Sustainable Development</p> <p>Our aim is to exploit the synergy between two linked themes: the development of a wellbeing economy and combatting the climate emergency.</p>	Integrated route map for the wellbeing economy and climate action	“Just Transition” towards a wellbeing economy with a focus on climate change, fair work, and diversity.	Shared understanding, adoption and implementation of Community Wealth Building.
<p>Local Equality</p> <p>Our aim is to improve the viability of Orkney’s most disadvantaged communities by levelling up the availability of services, facilities and opportunities.</p>	A Locality Plan which supports local community-led development plans	Digital connectivity in every community improved to the best standard achievable	Transport connectivity in every community improved to the best standard achievable
	Measurable progress towards Orkney’s target of net zero emissions by 2030.	Adaptation and mitigation strategy to protect our communities, habitats and wildlife from the effects of climate change.	Improvement in the population, demographic balance, resilience and wellbeing of Orkney’s most fragile communities.
	Improvement in the ratings of Orkney’s most disadvantaged communities in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.		

The Orkney Partnership: how it works

Orkney’s community planning partnership has been in existence since 2000. Our shared mission is:

Working together for a better Orkney

The Partnership’s seven values guide the way we work and influence everything we do:

Resilience
Enterprise
Equality
Fairness
Innovation
Leadership
Sustainability

The Orkney Partnership is led by the Orkney Partnership Board. An Executive Group supports the Board and comprises senior officers of the five partners with a duty to facilitate community planning in Orkney, plus Voluntary Action Orkney. The Board assigns each of its strategic priorities to a delivery group for action. As at 1 April 2023, the delivery groups are the Cost of Living Task Force, the Local Equality Delivery Group, and the Sustainable Development Delivery Group, which is advised by a Business Forum.



The Orkney Partnership: who we are

Membership of the Board is in part determined by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which sets the statutory framework for community planning in Scotland. Five partner agencies share a statutory duty under the Act to **facilitate** community planning in Orkney:



Others have a statutory duty under the Act to **participate** in community planning:



The Board also includes key local and co-opted partners:



Orkney Partnership Board selects its Chair from among its membership: currently the Board is chaired by the Council Leader with the Vice Chair being the Chair of NHS Orkney. Delivery groups are chaired by members of the Board. As at 1 April 2023, the Cost of Living Task Force is chaired by Craig Spence of Orkney Housing Association, the Sustainable Development Delivery Group is chaired by XX of YYY and the Local Equality Delivery Group is chaired by YY of ZZZ.

An important role of the Executive Group is to manage the Partnership's resources. Facilitating partners jointly fund the role of Community Planning Business Manager to ensure the good governance and efficient operation of the Partnership.

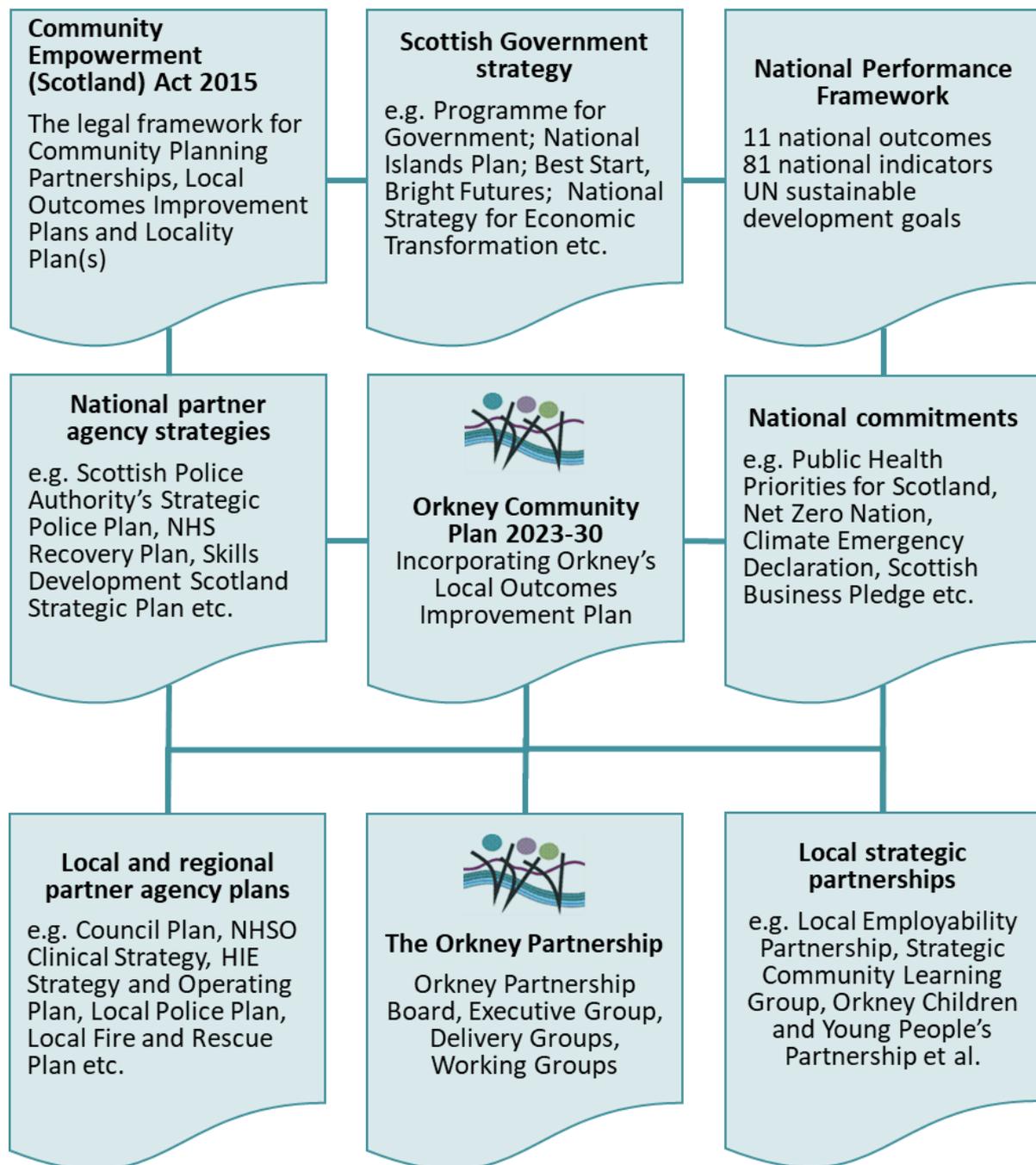
The Orkney Partnership is networked with other local partnerships: for example, the Integration Joint Board for Health and Social Care and the Orkney Community Justice Partnership each have a seat on the Orkney Partnership Board, while the Local Employability Partnership is a key contributor to the Sustainable Development Delivery Group.

All our plans, terms of reference, reports and more can be found on the Orkney Partnership's website at <http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/communityplanning/>

The strategic context for community planning in Orkney

On this page you can see the strategic context for community planning in Scotland, and how it influences our planning and decision-making. Our plans must work within the legal and political frameworks determined by the UK and Scottish Governments.

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and National Islands Plan has focused national attention on many areas of critical importance to Orkney, including demographic balance, ferries, and housing. The Community Plan addresses the strategic priorities which need concerted partnership action, while individual partner plans address the priorities and actions to be delivered by that particular agency.



How Orkney’s communities helped to form this plan

Consultation to inform this plan was carried out in two stages. The first stage took place between October 2021 and March 2022, when the Council, Voluntary Action Orkney and the LEADER Local Action Group jointly conducted an extensive consultation exercise under the banner “Orkney Matters”. This comprised a questionnaire, a series of online meetings, and dedicated sessions for schools and community groups which used art to engage with people less likely to respond through regular channels. The second stage was a public consultation on the draft Community Plan itself, which was conducted during December 2022 and January 2023, prior to the finalisation of the plan.

Orkney Matters recorded the views of all of Orkney’s communities, including residents of the ferry-linked isles, young people, and lesser heard voices. The survey found that the main priorities overall were:

- Consultation fatigue and communication
- Volunteer fatigue
- Single community-led plan for each community
- Housing
- Digital connectivity
- Climate change
- Transportation
- Sense of community
- Enjoyment of Orkney’s outdoors and the environment
- Equality
- Health
- Economic opportunities

Some of these issues require concerted action by multiple partner agencies and have been selected as strategic priorities by the Orkney Partnership for this Community Plan. Other issues are matters primarily for specialised partnership groups or individual partner agencies to address, and these will be included in their own plans.

Orkney families with experience of poverty and hardship contributed a wealth of information in response to the Partnership’s “Making Ends Meet” survey, conducted in autumn 2021 to inform the Child Poverty Strategy 2022-26. As described on page 10, this survey also influenced the selection of the Cost of Living as a strategic priority in this Community Plan.

National consultation also played a part in the development of this plan. A total of 790 Orkney residents participated in the first National Islands Plan survey, conducted in October 2020, answering questions on their experience of employment and business opportunities, transport, housing, fuel poverty, digital connectivity, health, social care, the environment, climate change, culture, and education. The survey is due to be repeated in 2023 and every two years thereafter for the lifetime of the National Islands Plan. Results are published online with responses from Orkney Mainland and Isles respondents split out, making this a useful resource for measuring future progress. We have used some of the survey questions as indicators of progress in this plan.

Strategic priority: Cost of Living

During 2021-22, a key workstream for the Partnership was to develop Orkney's Child Poverty Strategy 2022-26. We consulted local families with experience of hardship in our "Making Ends Meet" survey, and learned about the challenges they faced daily, exacerbated for some by family illness or disability, the high cost of travel or the additional cost of living on the ferry-linked isles.

At the same time, Voluntary Action Orkney led the development of a report on food security in Orkney. The cost of living crisis began to impact noticeably on many Orkney residents with the first large fuel rises and increases in inflation especially for key food items, with wage and benefit increases being much lower.

In June 2022, the Orkney Partnership Board agreed to adopt a Poverty Pledge:

"We believe that it is not acceptable that people in our community live in poverty. Over the coming years, we will commit our time, energy, and resources to do all we can, in partnership, to work towards the elimination of poverty throughout Orkney."

A dedicated working group, the Cost of Living Task Force, was created by the Partnership to draw together into a single co-ordinated action plan the different and overlapping workstreams arising from the Orkney Child Poverty Strategy and Food Dignity Report, and the pending Fuel Poverty Strategy in preparation by the Council. Funding was secured by Voluntary Action Orkney from the Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery Fund (LACER, awarded by the Council) and the Community Led Local Development Fund (awarded by the Orkney Local Action Group) to develop an Advice-and-cash-first referral pathway, ensuring that anyone in need of help would be fast-tracked to both immediate cash support (via the Scottish Welfare Fund) and assistance to access all the benefits and associated support to which they were entitled.

The Board agreed that one of its key priorities for the new LOIP should be the immediate cost of living crisis, with a longer-term aim to take preventative measures to ensure that fewer Orcadians live in poverty in future. The Cost of Living Task Force was redesignated a long-term delivery group reporting directly to the Board and will take forward this agenda.

The Partnership's aim for the Cost of Living is to co-ordinate an agile partnership response to the cost of living crisis, supporting both immediate need and the longer-term prevention of poverty and disadvantage.

The Partnership's target outcomes for the Cost of Living are:

- Better public understanding of the need for cash-first and human rights-based approaches to the mitigation of poverty and hardship.
- The adoption of a co-ordinated advice-and-cash-first approach to address hardship and avert people falling into crisis.
- Demonstrable mitigation of the immediate cost of living crisis, evidenced through statistical data and/or feedback from Orkney residents.

- The co-ordination, monitoring and reporting of partnership action plans relating to child poverty, food dignity and fuel poverty.
- A measurable reduction in persistent poverty in Orkney.

Measuring progress in the Cost of Living

The indicators below have been selected to show how well we are progressing towards the outcomes we want for the Cost of Living priority in Orkney. They do not evaluate directly the actions of any particular partner or group, but they indicate whether collective local and national action is moving us in the right direction.

The Scottish Household Survey¹ is conducted annually and in 2019 the survey base comprised 590 persons in 260 households across Orkney. The Scottish House Condition Survey² has a smaller survey base (80 households in Orkney) so data is averaged over three years to improve accuracy. It includes data for fuel poverty, which was redefined nationally in 2019. A household is in fuel poverty if total fuel costs necessary to maintain a satisfactory heating regime are more than 10% of the household's net income (after certain deductions) and the remaining income is insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living. Extreme fuel poverty follows the same definition except that a household would have to spend more than 20% of its net income.

The National Islands Plan Survey 2020³ measures progress towards the planned outcomes in the National Islands Plan and will be repeated periodically. It differentiates between households in the Orkney mainland and linked south isles, making it a useful source of data for our purposes too.

How households are managing financially in Orkney (Source: Scottish Household Survey 2019 and Data Explorer)			
	Baseline (2020/21)	2024 Milestone	2030 Target
Managing very well or quite well	66%	66%	66%
Get by all right	31%	32%	34%
Don't manage very well and have some financial difficulties	3%	2%	0%

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-survey-2019-annual-report/>

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-house-condition-survey-local-authority-analysis-2017-2019/pages/6/>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2021/07/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/documents/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report/govscot%3Adocument/national-islands-plan-survey-final-report.pdf?forceDownload=true>

Percentage of dwellings in Orkney in Fuel Poverty 2017-19 (Source: Scottish House Condition Survey Local Authority Analysis 2019)			
Baseline (2017-19)	Milestones each year	2030 Target	
30.5% (Scottish average 24.4%)	Reduce	Same as Scottish average	
Percentage of dwellings in Orkney in Extreme Fuel Poverty 2017-19 (Source: Scottish House Condition Survey Local Authority Analysis 2019)			
Baseline (2017-19)	Milestones each year	2030 Target	
21.8% (Scottish average 11.9%)	Reduce	Same as Scottish average	
The number of crisis payment applications to the Scottish Welfare Fund			
Baseline (2021-22)	Annual milestone	2025 target	
1.1 per 1,000 population (Scottish average is 15.2 per 1,000 population)	Increase	Equal to the Scottish average	
The percentage of crisis payment applications to the SWF that are successful			
Baseline (2021-22)	Annual milestone	2025 target	
40% (Scottish average is 66%)	Increase	Equal to the Scottish average	
The total additional benefits that those assisted by Orkney Money Matters are able to claim as a result of support from the project (Source the Orkney Money Matters project and Orkney CAB)			
Baseline (2021-22)	2023-24 target	2024-25 target	2025-26 target
N/A – Project in set up	£0.5m	£0.6m	£0.7m
The number of children in Orkney who are in Relative Poverty (Source: https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-child-poverty-statistics-january-2022/)			
Baseline (2020-21)	Annual Target	2030 Target	
13.1%	Reduce	TBC	

The number of individuals supported by a Mental Health Support Worker through the Orkney Money Matters project (Source: the Orkney Money Matters project)

Baseline (2021-22)	Annual milestone	2025 target
TBC	TBC	TBC

Strategic priority: Sustainable Development

Climate change is already having an impact: in summer 2022 there were record temperatures across the UK while floods in Pakistan killed hundreds and displaced millions. In 2019, Orkney Islands Council joined other local authorities worldwide in declaring a climate emergency, and the Orkney Partnership began work to develop future Partnership policy on climate action and adaptation.

During the recovery period from Covid-19, the Economic Recovery Steering Group focused on developing a strategy for Orkney's economic recovery while the Sustainable Recovery Delivery Group began work to tap into the synergy between measures to combat the climate emergency and the potential for Orkney's economy to benefit significantly from future growth in the renewable energy sector.

Orkney has abundant wind and tidal resources which can be harnessed to provide renewable energy and significantly reduce the negative impact of UK energy consumption on the climate. This is a double opportunity for Orkney: to make a positive contribution to the climate emergency and to be a global leader in the development of the blue (offshore) and green (onshore) economies. Consequently, the Board agreed that it was logical to link Orkney's aspirations for Net Zero with its ambition to achieve a wellbeing economy, benefiting everyone in Orkney, and adopt Sustainable Development as a strategic priority.

Sustainable development balances the needs of people against those of the environment: the concept behind the Doughnut Economics model, which the group is adapting for Orkney. A key mechanism for delivery will be Community Wealth Building, which uses the levers available to anchor institutions – such as the Council or NHS Orkney – to ensure that value is retained within Orkney and shared more equitably. The Four Pillars model – natural capital, social capital, economic capital and human capital – is also helpful in understanding why this is important to Orkney.

The island of Hoy has been selected by Scottish Government for its Carbon Neutral Islands project, which will enable us to pilot innovative low carbon techniques in sectors of particular importance to islands, such as agriculture and marine transport. Achieving net zero overall will require the greening of Orkney's internal ferry fleet, already long overdue for replacement. This is a significant challenge, and the Council is working with the Scottish Government to find a sustainable solution.

Our Sustainable Development work will build on the ASPIRE principles, developed by the Economic Recovery Steering Group and adopted by the Partnership in 2020. ASPIRE prompts us to remember that everyone has a stake in Orkney's future.

Ambitious: harnessing Orkney's unique resources to drive our future

Sustainable: balancing the interests of people with those of the planet

Prosperous: investing in the local economy to build community wealth

Inclusive: committing to equal wellbeing, opportunity, and access to services

Resilient: bouncing back from adversity, challenge, and change

Enterprising: empowering our communities to achieve their ambitions

The Partnership’s aim for Sustainable Development is to exploit the synergy between two themes which in Orkney are intrinsically linked: the development of a wellbeing economy and combatting the climate emergency.

The Partnership’s target outcomes for Sustainable Development are:

- The planning and delivery of an integrated route map which shows the links between the development of a sustainable economy and combatting the climate emergency.
- A “Just Transition” towards a wellbeing economy with a focus on climate change, fair work, and diversity.
- Shared understanding of the Four Pillars approach to sustainable development, Doughnut Economics and Community Wealth Building, and why they matter to Orkney.
- Measurable progress towards Orkney’s target of net zero emissions by 2030.
- An adaptation and mitigation strategy to protect our communities, infrastructure, businesses, habitats, and wildlife from the effects of climate change.

Measuring progress in Sustainable Development

The indicators below have been selected to show how well we are progressing towards the outcomes we want for Sustainable Development in Orkney. They do not evaluate directly the actions of any particular partner or group, but they indicate whether collective local and national action is moving us in the right direction.

The indicators in this section come from a wide range of sources and some depend on data collected locally; for example the figure for house completions includes those built by the Council, Orkney Housing Association Ltd and private developers, both commercial and individuals. House building was severely impacted by lockdown and continues to be affected by the high price of building materials.

In view of the longer than usual perspective taken by this plan we have included some long-term targets for the indicators in this section. For CO₂ emissions, different bodies and sectors have varying timescales to reach Net Zero. 2045 is the Scottish Government’s target, while the Orkney Partnership is aiming for 2030 for Orkney overall.

% of 16-19 year olds participating in education, employment and other training and development activities (source: Skills Development Scotland, Annual Participation Measure August 2019 and 2021)		
Baseline (2021)	Annual milestones	2030 Target
93.4%	Increase	Recover to previous high 95.4% (2018-19 figure)

House build completions in Orkney, all sectors (source: OIC Development and Marine Planning)			
Baseline (2020-21)	Annual milestones	Target	
92	Increase	225 pa	
Local Authority territorial CO2 emissions estimates 2019 and 2020 (kilotonnes CO2) (Sources – UK Government local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics 2005-2019 and 2005-2020)			
	Baseline (2020)	Annual Milestone	2030 Target
Commercial	3.8 kt	Reduction commensurate with achieving NetZero by 2030	Zero CO2 Emissions
Public Sector	2.5 kt		
Domestic	36.4 kt		
Transport	26.7 kt		
LULUCF**	123.9 kt		
Total for Orkney	277.2		
**Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry			
Average wages in Orkney (Source: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/placeofworkbylocalauthorityashetable7)			
Baseline (2021)	Annual milestones	2030 target	
£26,582 (average for Scotland £29,752)	Gap closing	Average wages for Orkney match those for Scotland	
Closing the Gender pay gap* (source: ONS website)			
Baseline (2021)	Annual milestone	2030 target	
20% (Scottish average is 10%)	Close the gap	The gap is no larger than the Scottish average	
*Gender pay gap defined as the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings as a percentage of men's earnings			

Strategic priority: Local Equality

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires community planning partnerships to identify areas within their boundaries that experience disproportionate levels of socio-economic disadvantage and develop one or more locality plans to reduce inequality. Areas chosen may be any geographical area that has a population of less than 30,000.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) measures socio-economic disadvantage using a basket of indicators across such areas as income, housing, crime, and geographical access to services. Within Orkney, the SIMD identifies our localities of greatest disadvantage as being some areas of Kirkwall and the ferry-linked isles.

The Partnership's first Locality Plan 2018-21 focused on the ferry-linked isles but was overtaken by the Covid-19 pandemic and failed to resolve some of the longstanding disadvantages experienced by isles communities in Orkney. In response, the Board decided to elevate Local Equality to a strategic priority, making it the focus of a dedicated delivery group reporting directly to the Board.

The Local Equality Delivery Group will develop and take ownership of a new locality plan supporting communities experiencing socio-economic inequality, both in the ferry-linked isles and elsewhere across Orkney. It is anticipated that the new locality plan will focus on improving digital and transport connectivity, widening the availability of services, and improving access to employment opportunities.

Local communities have told us that they do not want their own plans to be duplicated and the new Locality Plan will not do this; instead, it will lend support to existing community-led plans wherever the Partnership can contribute to their implementation. The delivery group will co-ordinate a programme of work to progress the Locality Plan.

The Partnership's aim for Local Equality is to improve the viability of communities at risk of depopulation by levelling up the availability of services, facilities, and opportunities to Orkney's most disadvantaged localities.

The Partnership's target outcomes for Local Equality are:

- The publication of a Locality Plan for Orkney which supports the priorities of local community-led development plans.
- The improvement of digital connectivity to every community in Orkney to the best standard achievable.
- The improvement of transport connectivity to every community in Orkney to the best standard achievable.
- Improvement in the population, demographic balance, resilience and wellbeing of Orkney's most fragile communities.
- Improvement in the ratings of Orkney's most disadvantaged communities as recorded by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Measuring progress in Local Equality

The indicators below have been selected to show how well we are progressing towards the outcomes we want for Local Equality in Orkney. They do not evaluate directly the actions of any particular partner or group, but they indicate whether collective local and national action is moving us in the right direction.

The National Islands Plan Survey 2020 measures progress towards the planned outcomes in the National Islands Plan and will be repeated periodically. It is particularly relevant to measure Local Equality because it differentiates between households in the Orkney mainland and linked south isles. Ofcom published its Connected Nations report in 2020 and plans to publish annual updates to allow year-on-year comparisons of the state of the UK's communications infrastructure.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is published every four years and uses a basket of indicators across six domains to create a league table of the relative disadvantage of all 6,976 datazones in Scotland. Lower scores signify higher levels of deprivation. Orkney's most prosperous areas are St Ola (East of Kirkwall) and North Stromness, while the highest levels of deprivation are found in Kirkwall and the ferry-linked isles.

Population of the ferry-linked isles (Source: Scotland's Census and calculations based on the NRS mid-year estimates)			
Baseline (2020-21)	Annual milestones	2030 target	
2,743 (2011 census, 2,862)	Maintain or increase	Maintain or increase	
Percentage of adult residents (18-75) planning to stay on the Ferry Linked Island for the next 5 years (Source: National Islands Plan Survey Report 2020 and online results explorer tool)			
	Baseline (2020)	Annual milestones	2030 Target
Orkney Outer Isles	Yes	79.0	Increase
	No	8.7	Decrease
	Don't know	12.3	Decrease
Orkney Mainland	Yes	87.2	Increase
	No	4.4	Decrease
	Don't know	8.4	Decrease

% Ferry Linked Isles residents whose internet connection at home is fast enough to do what they want online (Source: National Islands Plan Survey Report 2020 and online results explorer tool)			
	Baseline (2020)	Annual milestones	2030 Target
Ferry-linked isles	45%	Increase	100%
Orkney Mainland	70%	Increase	100%
% Orkney residents who have a good mobile phone signal at home (Source: National Islands Plan Survey Report 2020 and online results explorer tool)			
	2020-21 Baseline	2022-23 Target	Five-year target 2026-27
Ferry-linked isles	27%	Increase	100%
Orkney Mainland	78%	Increase	100%
% of Orkney residents who agree “When I make journeys to or from my home, it is easy connecting between different forms of transport” (Source: National Islands Plan Survey Report 2020 and online results explorer tool)			
	Baseline (2020)	Annual milestones	2030 Target
Ferry-linked isles	29%	Increase	50%
Orkney Mainland	46%		60%
% Orkney premises unable to access 30Mbps/s Broadband (Sources: Ofcom Connected Nations Report 2020 and Ofcom Connected Nations Update 2022)			
2020-21 Baseline (2022)	Annual milestone	2030 target	
32.9%	20%	0%	
Fewer areas of Orkney suffer from higher levels of deprivation as determined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (Source: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation website) (Note: lower scores measure higher deprivation)			
Baseline (2020 figures)	Annual target	2030 target	
1 in the lowest 25-30% 1 in the lowest 30-35% 4 in the lowest 35-40%	Improve	No areas in the lowest 0-35% Fewer areas in the lowest 40%	

A profile of Orkney

Orkney comprises 70 or so islands and skerries, of which up to 19 may be inhabited depending on the time of year. The total land area of approximately 1,000 square kilometres raises some of the best livestock in Scotland, and Orkney enjoys an outstanding natural environment with clean air and water, fine scenery, diverse wildlife, and a unique cultural heritage.

There are approximately 1,500 Orkney-based businesses, and key sectors include agriculture, fishing, tourism and renewable energy generation. Other than a dip during pandemic lockdowns, employment rates in Orkney are consistently high, with only 210 people claiming out-of-work benefits in November 2022. In a typical year, 95% of our young people aged 16-19 will be participating in education, employment or training.

But Orkney is not immune to the difficulties facing other remote and rural communities including an ageing population, under-employment, low wages, a high cost of living, limited affordable housing, fuel poverty and access to essential services. These issues are highlighted in the Scottish Government's [National Islands Plan](#)⁴ which accompanied the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.

Population

National Records of Scotland publishes annual mid-year estimates of population data for each local authority area in Scotland. The most recent statistics⁵ give a snapshot of Orkney's estimated population in 2021.

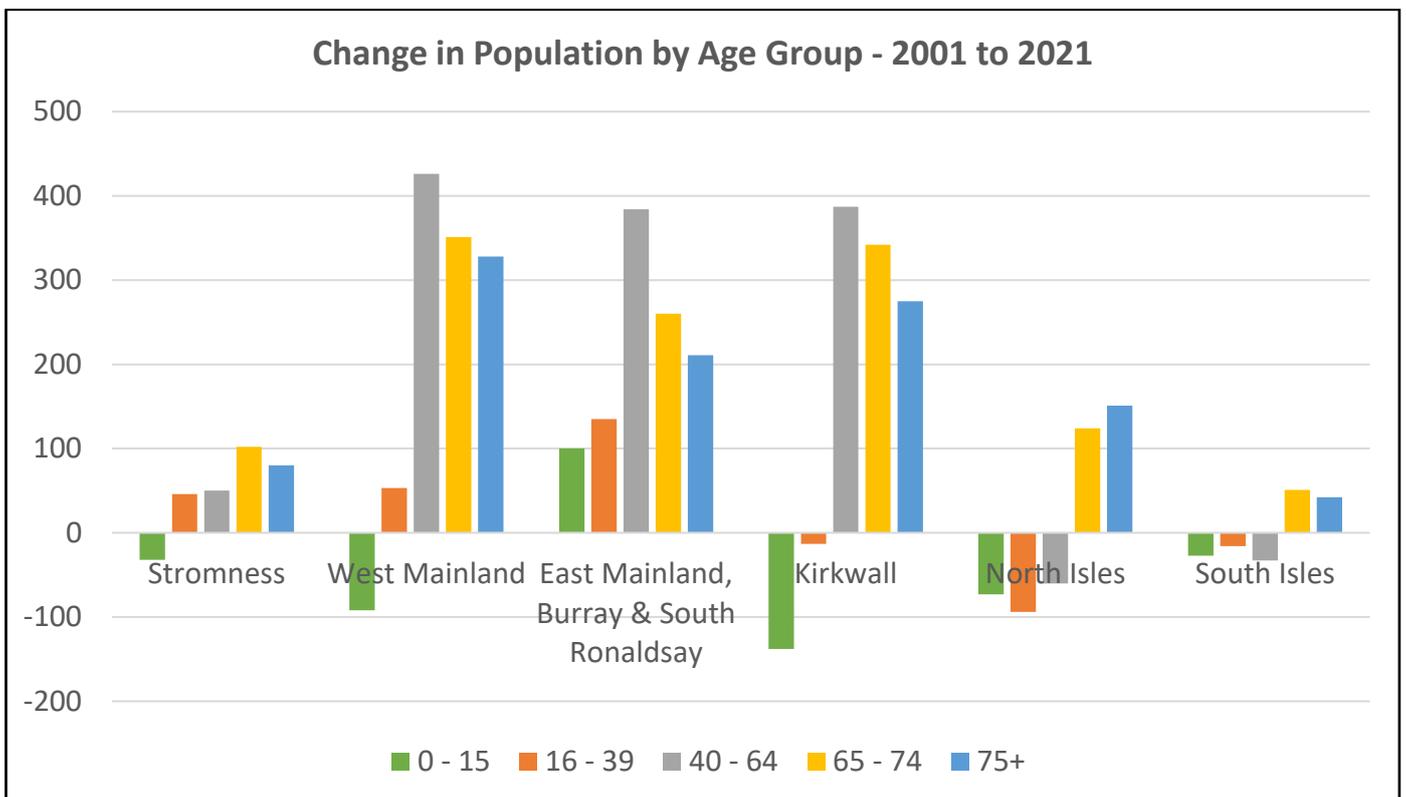
- As at 30 June 2021, the estimated population of Orkney was 22,540, an increase of 0.6% from 22,400 in 2020. Over the same period, the population of Scotland increased by 0.3%.
- Between 2001 and 2021, the population of Orkney increased by 17.3%, the second highest percentage change out of the 32 council areas in Scotland. Over the same period, Scotland's population rose by 8.2%.
- In 2021, there were 171 births registered in Orkney, a decrease of 4.5% from 179 births in 2020. Of these 171 births, 73 (42.7%) were female and 98 (57.3%) were male.
- In 2021, there were 254 deaths in Orkney, the same number as in 2020. Of these 254 deaths, 121 (47.6%) were female and 133 (52.4%) were male.
- Between 2019-21, life expectancy at birth was higher for females (83.8 years) than for males (80.4 years). Over the past 20 years, male life expectancy has increased more rapidly than female. Life expectancy at birth is higher in Orkney than in Scotland overall, for both females and males.

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-plan-scotlands-islands/>

⁵ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/orkney-islands-council-profile.html>

- In the period 2020-21, the level of in-migration to Orkney was 940, a 34.3% increase from 700 in the period 2019-20. The level of out-migration from Orkney was 720, a 35.8% increase from 530 in 2019-20. Net migration into Orkney was higher for females (135) than for males (83).
- In 2021, 115 marriages were registered in Orkney, a 117.0% increase from 53 in the pandemic year 2020.
- In 2021, the number of dwellings in Orkney Islands was 11,475, a 0.7% increase from 11,391 in 2020. Compared with 2001, the number of dwellings in Orkney Islands has increased by 24.2%, the 5th highest percentage change out of the 32 council areas in Scotland.

Demographic balance is an issue of concern across all of Scotland’s islands. Based on National Records of Scotland mid-year estimates, Aspire Orkney Ltd has mapped the changes in different age groups across different areas of Orkney over the past 20 years. The trend for older age groups to increase is forecast to continue as people live longer.

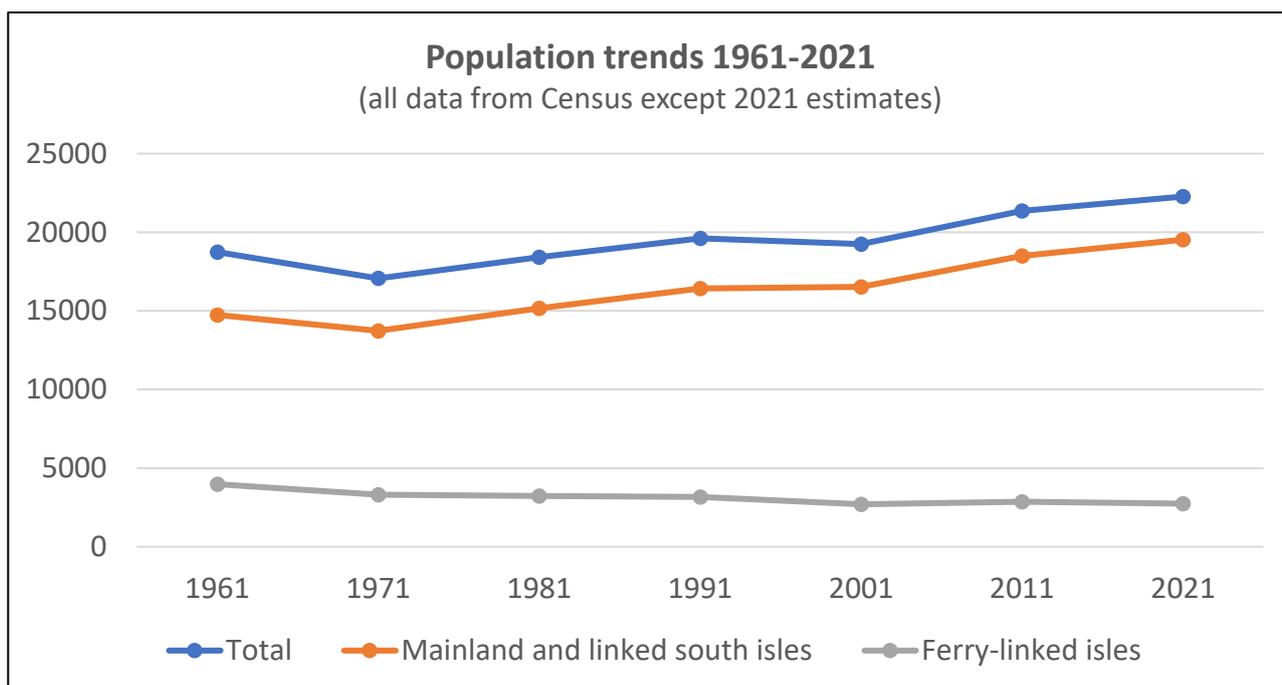


It can be seen that the isles have lost a disproportionate number of younger residents. Peripherality – being on the edge—is a significant equality issue in Orkney. Residents are disadvantaged in accessing national services due to the high travel costs of crossing the water: isles residents doubly so. The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 introduced a requirement for public bodies to conduct Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) on new national and local policy at the developmental stage in order to identify, and mitigate against, any unfair or unintended consequences. The Orkney Partnership routinely “isles-proofs” its own policy and an ICIA is appended to this Community Plan.

The most reliable source of detailed demographic information about Orkney’s individual isles populations is normally Scotland’s Census. The census planned for 2021 was delayed to 2022 due to the pandemic, so new census data is not yet available. Local estimates were put together in January 2021.

Isles populations by age group (estimated at January 2021)			
Age group	Mainland and linked south isles	Ferry-linked isles	Orkney Total
0 - 15	3,189	393	3,582
16 - 59	10,525	1,250	11,775
60 - 74	3,781	700	4,481
75+	2,032	400	2,432
Total	19,527	2,743	22,270

The drift in population from the ferry-linked isles to the mainland has been a concern for many years. Adding the figures above to Census data from 1961-2011 shows that this trend is continuing.



Housing

Orkney has bucked the trend of most rural and island areas with two decades of significant population growth. The increase has been driven by in-migration, largely of working age people and their families, to help meet Orkney’s labour market shortage. While very welcome, this growth has impacted on Orkney’s housing market, which has seen significant increases in house prices above anything elsewhere in Scotland. Demand has far outstripped supply, and housing development will have to increase significantly over the plan period if we are to meet anticipated demand.

In December 2022, Aspire Orkney Ltd published a comprehensive review of the last 20 years of population growth in Orkney and the effects this has had on housing provision and availability. 'Housing in an Economic Context' suggests that between 1,000 and 1,750 new properties may be required over the next 10 years, with a focus on low-cost home ownership and mid-market rent properties that are suitable for young people, families, key workers and students. These are the people we want to attract and retain.

We know that the cost of living crisis, continued interest rate increases and a shortage of housing supply are going to impact on the affordability of housing. Pending legislation is likely to reduce availability in the private rented sector and there will also be a requirement for energy efficiency upgrades to a significant proportion of Orkney's housing stock. Meanwhile, the potential for offshore wind development around Orkney could lead to a significant increase in demand for housing as well as labour.

The Partnership's ambitions will depend on meeting that demand. Responsibility for housing development in Orkney sits with the Council, and housing shortages across different tenures are identified as a major concern in the Council Plan 2023-2028. The Council has committed to work with partners in the private and social rented sectors to identify solutions and increase the provision of housing to meet the needs of current and future residents of Orkney.

Connectivity

Equally critical to Orkney's sustainable development is connectivity, both digital and transport. A strategic priority in our last community plan, connectivity depends on working with both national governments. We have seen progress in the delivery of R100, the scheme committed to reaching 100% coverage of superfast broadband throughout Scotland. In August 2022, the Scottish Government committed additional funds to the scheme which should see a further 1,000 premises in Orkney connected. But many in our most fragile communities are still waiting, and their cause will continue to be pursued through our Local Equality strategic priority.

Orkney's most critical transport priority is the replacement of the ageing Orkney Ferries internal ferry fleet. Island communities depend on regular and reliable ferry services. The current vessels are inaccessible to passengers with mobility issues and their unreliability is impacting on island economies which rely on tourism, not to mention island residents themselves.

Following persistent lobbying from Orkney, Holyrood's Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee is conducting an inquiry to establish how best to secure a ferry service that is future-proofed, compatible with Scotland's net zero goals and will meet the needs of all service users, having regard in particular to the long-term sustainability of island communities. In December 2022, Scottish Government committed to work with the Council on 'a process to address the renewal of the Orkney internal ferry fleet'. The Partnership will support the process in every way it can, and we expect to make tangible progress towards achieving a new 'green' fleet during the lifetime of this plan.