



# Orkney Marine Planning Update

December 2020

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## Introduction

Since our last update in September 2020, Orkney Islands Council has now received the legal delegation of powers to take forward the preparation of a statutory regional marine plan for Orkney. In addition, a key project supporting this process is due to be completed by the end of this year. This update provides a brief summary of the current status of the steps underway to prepare the plan, some staffing updates and how you can find out more about marine planning in Orkney.

## Orkney Marine Planning Partnership

On 27 November 2020, the Ministerial Direction came into force to allow Orkney Islands Council to formally establish the Orkney Marine Planning Partnership. This Direction delegates functions to OIC to prepare a statutory regional marine plan for the Orkney Islands Marine Region, along with a variety of supporting assessments and documents.

Shona Turnbull, OIC Marine Planner, will be the main point of contact taking forward the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan. Two of the earliest tasks will be setting up an Advisory Group and preparing the Statement of Public Participation. Throughout the preparatory work, we have continued to liaise with stakeholders to develop the Advisory Group, which will provide technical guidance to the plan-making process. As the set-up of this group can now proceed, potential members will be formally invited to join the group in early 2021. It will include a diverse range of members, representing community, commercial, environmental and recreational interests.

A Statement of Public Participation (SPP) will be prepared within six months of the delegation of functions to outline how the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan will be prepared and identify opportunities for stakeholders to participate and engage in the plan making process.

## Orkney Marine Environment Project

Following consultation on an early draft of the Orkney Islands Marine Region: State of the Environment Assessment, substantial revisions have been made and additional data included. The updated assessment report has undergone further independent review by the International Centre for Islands Technology at Heriot Watt University. It is now in the final stages of preparation and should be published by the end of the year. Thank you to all the stakeholders for their valuable input to the project. The assessment will inform the preparation of Orkney's upcoming regional marine plan. A series of topic sheets are also being developed to disseminate information on key sectors and pressures regarding Orkney's marine environment. These will be made available to schools and the local community for educational purposes. Both the assessment and topic sheets should be available to download from the OIC website later this month.

## Staffing update

Graduate Marine Planner post: OIC currently have a vacancy for a Graduate Marine Planner to support the preparation, monitoring and review of the Regional Marine Plan. We are looking for a graduate, or early career stage professional, with a relevant degree level qualification and knowledge of marine planning and marine resource management.

The successful applicant will need to demonstrate a sound understanding of the issues affecting sustainable development and the management of the marine environment in the Orkney context. Working knowledge of Geographical Information System (GIS) packages is also required. Details can be found at [www.myjobscotland.gov.uk](http://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk); the closing date is 20 December 2020.

New Policy Staff at Marine Scotland: our key contact for regional marine planning for the last few years has been Ian Black, Marine Planner, within the Marine Planning & Strategy section of Marine Scotland. Ian has recently moved on to new pastures and has been replaced by the appointment of Aisling Duncan, Marine Planning Policy Officer. The primary focus of her role is to facilitate and manage the implementation and operational management of the regional marine planning and local coastal partnerships. She will assist these organisations in delivering regional marine planning initiatives. In addition, Damon Hewlett is now the Marine Planning and Strategy Manager, who will oversee Aisling's work. We will be working closely with Aisling and Damon to ensure a collaborative approach to wider marine planning issues across Scotland.

## Contact us

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