

**Item: 9**

**Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 4 June 2025.**

**Visual Artist and Craft Maker Awards Scheme.**

**Report by Director of Education, Communities and Housing.**

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## **1. Overview**

- 1.1. The devolved Visual Artists and Craft Maker Awards scheme (VACMA) has operated since 2014, supporting visual artists and craft makers, with assistance provided by Creative Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and the Council.
- 1.2. In 2024-25 Creative Scotland's contribution was £6,000 (prior to that it had been £5,000 annually), HIE contributed £1,500 which was an uplift from £1,000 and the Council contributed £1,500 annually.
- 1.3. The scheme is reviewed both locally and nationally, most recently with Creative Scotland and regional partners Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) in January 2025, who concluded that the type and scale of the scheme be continued to support the development of visual artists and craft makers in Orkney.
- 1.4. Creative Scotland has confirmed continuation of the scheme in 2025-2026 at the higher level of £6,000, subject to continued partnership funding from HIE and Orkney Islands Council at current levels thereby lifting the grant available for disbursement in 2025-2026 to £9,000.
- 1.5. Should the Council support the Scheme in principle, subject to budget setting, for a further three years at the current level of £1,500 per year, it is anticipated that HIE will continue to invest in the scheme with an annual contribution of £1,500 for the next three years and Creative Scotland, at the current level of £6,000, subject to budget setting and continuation of the funding partnership.
- 1.6. Creative Scotland changed the scheme in 2024-2025. Funding levels for emergent or new visual artists and craft makers are to remain at £500 and increased from £750 to £1,000 for more experienced visual artists and craft makers.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:

- i. Approve continuation of the Visual Arts and Craft Makers Awards Scheme, with a maximum budget of £9,000 to be disbursed annually, for a period of three years, from 2025/26 to 2027/28, subject to:
  - External funding being secured from Creative Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
  - Adequate service revenue budgets for 2026/27 and 2027/28 being established.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. A Visual Arts and Craft Makers Awards Scheme was funded for many years by Creative Scotland. Until 2013, the Scheme was administered in Orkney on Creative Scotland's behalf by Hi-Arts.
- 3.2. In 2013, Hi-Arts ceased to operate as an organisation, and Orkney's artists and craft makers no longer had access to the Scheme, presenting a significant loss to Orkney's visual artists and craft makers.
- 3.3. In September 2014, the Council agreed to support a devolved pilot scheme to support Orkney's visual artists and craft makers.
- 3.4. In June 2019, the Council agreed to continue to manage the Scheme for a further three years with partners contributing to a budget of £7,500 annually.
- 3.5. In 2020, Creative Scotland opted to change Visual Arts and Craft Makers Award from a grant scheme to a capped bursary scheme, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Capped bursaries made the application less onerous and allowed more artists to benefit from the fund.

## **4. Visual Arts and Craft Makers Awards Scheme**

- 4.1. Orkney Islands Council advertised the award in Autumn 2024, with a deadline in early February 2025, consistent with other regional deadlines. Should the recommendations in this report be approved, awards will be allocated competitively by a panel consisting of all funding partners and representative of independent Orkney based creatives, as required by Creative Scotland. The assessment panel for the awards currently includes:

- Team Manager (Culture).
- The Arts Officer (chairing).
- Member of Creative Scotland Visual Arts Team.
- Head of Strengthening Communities at Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
- Two previous award recipients from the visual arts and/or craft sector.
- Representation from Soulisquoy Printmakers, a Culture Fund client with a remit to support and develop visual artists in Orkney.

4.2. Subject to approval, a total of £9,000 will be disbursed in grants in financial year 2025/26.

**For Further Information please contact:**

Emma Gee, Arts Officer, extension 2406, email: [emma.gee@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:emma.gee@orkney.gov.uk)

**Implications of Report**

- 1. Financial:** There would be a continued cost to the Council of £1,500 to run the Visual Artists and Craft Makers Awards Scheme annually, totalling £4,500 across the next three years. This represents 17% of the potential maximum total budget of £9,000 annually, which would be partnership funded by Creative Scotland (currently £6,000) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (£1,500) annually. The Council contribution is allocated and budgeted from the Arts Development budget annually and is essential to unlock this more significant partnership funding.  
The recommendation of this report refers to the allocation of resources in future years, it should be noted that this would be subject to an appropriate annual budget being made available as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.
- 2. Legal:** In terms of the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982 ("the 1982 Act"), Section 14, the Council shall ensure that there is adequate provision for facilities for the inhabitants of their area for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities. Section 17 of the 1982 Act provides for a discretionary power to make such contributions as will promote music, theatre, opera, ballet and the other arts. The Visual Arts and Craft Makers Awards Scheme would fall under the remit of this Statutory power.
- 3. Corporate Governance:** Not applicable.
- 4. Human Resources:** Not applicable.
- 5. Equalities:** An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 6. Island Communities Impact:** An Island Communities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

- 7. Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
- ☒ Growing our economy.
  - ☒ Strengthening our Communities.
  - ☐ Developing our Infrastructure.
  - ☐ Transforming our Council.
- 8. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
- ☐ Cost of Living.
  - ☐ Sustainable Development.
  - ☒ Local Equality.
  - ☐ Improving Population Health.
- 9. Environmental and Climate Risk:** Not applicable.
- 10. Risk:** Not applicable.
- 11. Procurement:** Not applicable.
- 12. Health and Safety:** Not applicable.
- 13. Property and Assets:** Not applicable.
- 14. Information Technology:** Not applicable.
- 15. Cost of Living:** Not applicable.

#### **List of Background Papers**

None.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 2: Island Communities Impact Assessment.



## Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

<b>1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan</b>	
Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed.	Visual Artists and Craft Makers Awards 2025/26-27/28
Service / service area responsible.	Education, Leisure and Housing – Leisure and Culture
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Emma Gee, Arts Officer 01856873535 ext2406 <a href="mailto:Emma.gee@orkney.gov.uk">Emma.gee@orkney.gov.uk</a>
Date of assessment.	16.1.2025
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	Existing. Continue the service as is.

<b>2. Initial Screening</b>	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	To continue to financially support and run the Visual Artists and Craft Makers Awards (VACMA) in Orkney.
Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?	VACMA provides direct bursaries to visual artists and craft makers in Orkney and focusses on creative development of their practice. Orkney has a rich and divergent creative community which contributes to the Council Priorities: Growing Our Economy Strengthening Our Communities

State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.	Orkney residents, creative individuals and communities and partner agencies (including Creative Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and Orkney Islands Council).
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?	VACMA has run since 2014 and its decision-making panel includes representation from the funding partners Creative Scotland, HIE and Orkney Islands Council. This panel also includes a minimum of two previous successful applicants to represent the creative community in Orkney. Their experience between them covers both fine art experience and crafting practice. Individuals taking these roles are regularly rotated.
Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).	Equality, Opportunity and Inclusion monitoring takes place annually.  VACMA is a Creative Scotland funding offer that is managed at local authority level by local authorities who operate the scheme and annually gathered data feeds into the planning and assessment of both this Award and its contribution to national funding support by Creative Scotland. This has undergone a review in 2024-2025 as part of the assessment of all funding offered by Creative Scotland and VACMA has been agreed to be continued at National level.
Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See <a href="#">The Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance for Public Bodies</a> for further information.	There are significant inequalities within arts and cultural funding and studies show that grant-in-aid has declined by 18% in the UK between 2010-2023 (Arts Professional article <i>Valuing Culture in a Transformational Economy</i> 6.1.25).  Covid and the cost-of-living crisis has hit the cultural sector particularly hard with freelance creatives particularly vulnerable: 'Where the need to prioritise economic returns has never been felt so sharply' (Arts Professional).  There are also geographical inequalities linked to rurality and people living in Orkneys outer isles.
Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?	VACMA aims to support individual creatives to enable them to develop their practice, therefore there should not be any differential impact access groups.

1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.	No
2. Sex: a man or a woman.	No
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No
4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No
6. Age: people of different ages.	No
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No
8. Caring responsibilities.	No
9. Care experienced.	No
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	No
12. Socio-economic disadvantage.	No

### 3. Impact Assessment

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	No
How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes

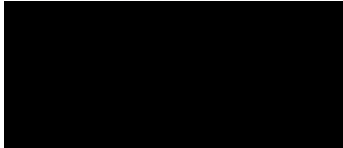
### 4. Conclusions and Planned Action

Is further work required?	Yes
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What action is to be taken?	Ongoing monitoring
Who will undertake it?	Emma Gee, Arts Officer
When will it be done?	Following the annual Panel meeting (held in February)
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	Through the existing monitoring protocols for Creative Scotland funding.

Signature:

Date: 16/01/2025



Name: EMMA GEE

(BLOCK CAPITALS).

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to HR and Performance. A Word version should also be emailed to HR and Performance at [hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk)



## Island Communities Impact Assessment


### Visual Artists and Craft Makers Award (VACMA) Continuation

Preliminary Considerations	Response
Please provide a brief description or summary of the policy, strategy or service under review for the purposes of this assessment.	Visual Artists and Craft Makers Award Continuation
Step 1 – Develop a clear understanding of your objectives	Response
What are the objectives of the policy, strategy or service?	To provide bursaries to support the creative development of both experienced and emerging visual artists and craft makers in Orkney.
Do you need to consult?	No
How are islands identified for the purpose of the policy, strategy or service?	The strategy is for all inhabited islands within Orkney Islands Council's authority.
What are the intended impacts/outcomes and how do these potentially differ in the islands?	Improve levels of and access to creative development of visual artists and craft makers through training, mentorship and practice support.
Is the policy, strategy or service new?	Continuation
Step 2 – Gather your data and identify your stakeholders	Response
What data is available about the current situation in the islands?	<a href="https://www.creativescotland.com/resources-publications/research/archive/2024/visual-artist-and-craft-maker-awards-evaluation-2023">https://www.creativescotland.com/resources-publications/research/archive/2024/visual-artist-and-craft-maker-awards-evaluation-2023</a> Annual funding returns
Do you need to consult?	No
How does any existing data differ between islands?	Access to facilities and services are different between the outer Isles and mainland Orkney.

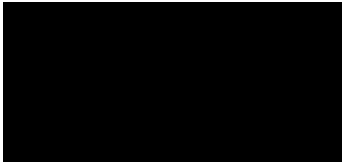
Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place?	Options to increase virtual provision of activities, upskilling of people living on individual islands to access funding
Step 3 – Consultation	Response
Who do you need to consult with?	
How will you carry out your consultation and in what timescales?	
What questions will you ask when considering how to address island realities?	
What information has already been gathered through consultations and what concerns have been raised previously by island communities?	
Is your consultation robust and meaningful and sufficient to comply with the Section 7 duty?	
Step 4 – Assessment	Response
Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities?	No, no barrier to accessing funding
Does your assessment identify any potential barriers or wider impacts?	No
How will you address these?	Options to increase virtual provision of activities, upskilling of people living on individual islands to access funding
<p><b>You must now determine whether in your opinion your policy, strategy or service is likely to have an effect on an island community, which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities).</b></p> <p>If your answer is <b>No</b> to the above question, a full ICIA will NOT be required and <b>you can process to Step 6.</b></p> <p>If the answer is <b>Yes</b>, an ICIA must be prepared and <b>you should proceed to Step 5.</b></p> <p>To form your opinion, the following questions should be considered:</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the evidence show different circumstances or different expectations or needs, or different experiences or outcomes (such as different levels of satisfaction, or different rates of participation)?</li> <li>• Are these different effects likely?</li> <li>• Are these effects significantly different?</li> <li>• Could the effect amount to a disadvantage for an island community compared to the Scottish mainland or between island groups?</li> </ul>	
Step 5 – Preparing your ICIA	Response
In Step 5, you should describe the likely significantly different effect of the policy, strategy or service:	
Assess the extent to which you consider that the policy, strategy or service can be developed or delivered in such a manner as to improve or mitigate, for island communities, the outcomes resulting from it.	
Consider alternative delivery mechanisms and whether further consultation is required.	
Describe how these alternative delivery mechanisms will improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	
Identify resources required to improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	
Stage 6 – Making adjustments to your work	Response
Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different communities?	No
Do you need to consult with island communities in respect of mechanisms or mitigations?	No
Have island circumstances been factored into the evaluation process?	Yes

Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring?	No
How will outcomes be measured on the islands?	By monitoring annual uptake of funding by practitioners in the islands
How has the policy, strategy or service affected island communities?	
How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future policy making and service delivery?	The potential impacts of changes will always be considered and help inform future decision making.
Step 7 – Publishing your ICIA	Response
Have you presented your ICIA in an Easy Read format?	No
Does it need to be presented in Gaelic or any other language?	No
Where will you publish your ICIA and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it?	Orkney Islands Council's Website with relevant Education, Leisure and Housing Committee Report and Minutes.
Who will signoff your final ICIA and why?	Frances Troup, Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing – Head of Service.

ICIA completed by:	Nick Hewitt
Position:	Team Manager, Culture
Signature:	
Date complete:	30.4.25

ICIA approved by:	Frances Troup
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Position:	Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing
Signature:	
Date complete:	30.4.25