

# Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan Equality Impact Assessment



## Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council (OIC) by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. EqIA is undertaken to ensure there is not discrimination against certain groups of people or people with protected characteristics.

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.	Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan (OIRMP)
Service / service area responsible.	Infrastructure and Organisational Development
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Daniel Morris daniel.morris@orkney.gov.uk
Date of assessment.	07/10/2025
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	New; no significant change to service. The production of the Plan is a statutory function of the Council in accordance with The Delegation of Functions (Regional Marine Plan for the Scottish Marine Region for the Orkney Islands) Direction 2020.

<b>2. Initial Screening</b>	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To aid statutory decision-making regarding marine licensing and consenting by the Marine Directorate of the Scottish Government (Marine Directorate), the</li></ul>

	<p>planning authority (Orkney Islands Council, OIC) and other relevant regulators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote sustainable development in the marine environment.</li> <li>• Provide local marine regional data and information to allow greater certainty for developers regarding prospective proposals.</li> <li>• Enable greater local involvement and ownership of marine planning policy to inform decision-making about specific issues within the local area.</li> <li>• Provide a transparent plan-making process and promote good governance.</li> <li>• Ensure marine environment is protected.</li> </ul>
Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?	Yes; it is a statutory regional marine plan guiding decision-making.
State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.	Anyone with an interest in marine planning, marine development or associated activities. For example sectors/groups including:
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• marine activities/businesses</li> <li>• developers of licensed activities in the Plan area</li> <li>• activities in the Plan area that do not require licences or do not require licences with a spatial component</li> <li>• marine nature conservation, coastal defence and marine heritage activities/conservation</li> <li>• coastal communities</li> <li>• the Scottish Government (through Marine Scotland's Planning and Licensing functions)</li> <li>• local planning authorities</li> <li>• Crown Estate Scotland</li> <li>• Regional Marine Planning Partnerships</li> </ul> <p>The Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan ('The Plan') provides a suite of policies to guide marine development and/or activities whilst ensuring environmental protection and stakeholder engagement. The Plan aligns with the Orkney Local Development Plan, the Indicative Orkney Regional Spatial Strategy, National Planning</p>

	<p>Framework 4 and the National Marine Plan. As a statutory plan, all decision-making functions of the Marine Directorate of the Scottish Government, OIC and any other relevant public authorities will have to be made in accordance with the Plan unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.</p>
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?	<p>360+ stakeholder database used to send c. biannual updates on the plan making process. The Orkney Marine Planning Advisory Group (OMPAG) was set up to provide technical expertise and guidance.</p> <p>The Statement of Public Participation was produced within first six months of OIC receiving delegated functions.</p> <p>The OIC Orkney Islands Marine Region: State of the Environment Assessment (SoEA) workshops, non-connected isles presentations for SoEA, independent review panel (Heriot Watt University), one to one sectoral, environmental, academic, educational and social stakeholder meetings informed data gathering for SoEA report, as appropriate.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement events held in Stronsay, Sanday, Hoy, Westray, Stromness, Kirkwall and St Margaret's Hope in 2022.</p> <p>The formal public consultation process in 2024 enabled significant stakeholder input to the plan-making process. During this statutory consultation, a variety of consultation and engagement events were delivered. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The OIC Marine Planning team hosting 10 in-person events in multiple locations throughout the Orkney Islands;</li> <li>• Two online information sessions in order to maximise participation opportunity;</li> <li>• Workshops with schools where OIC Marine Planning staff captured young people's opinion on what is important for them about the sea and how it should be managed; and</li> <li>• Six interviews with businesses.</li> </ul>

<p>Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).</p>	<p>The SoEA provides a baseline assessment of the socio-economic and environmental issues affecting the Orkney Islands marine region. The assessment did not identify any significant equalities issues e.g. regarding the local population or economic activities.</p> <p>Pilot Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan: Consultation Draft: Equality Impact Assessment Record noted that no concerns were raised and no potential impacts identified. Nor were any significant impacts identified in the National Marine Plan. Both plans were subject to extensive stakeholder engagement and public consultation.</p> <p>Shetland Islands' Regional Marine Plan EqIA: identified no positive or negative impact and the policies deemed to not directly or indirectly be discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010. Policies contained in the OIRMP cover very similar topics and issues.</p>
<p>Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See <a href="#">The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance for Public Bodies</a> for further information.</p>	<p>No; it was determined that a light-touch approach to EqIA is required, as current evidence demonstrates that the OIRMP has insignificant potential impacts and minimal relevance to equality.</p>
<p>Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?</p>	<p>(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).</p>
<p>1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.</p>	<p>No impact. The policies included in the plan are intended to safeguard and improve the marine and coastal environment and meet the long term needs of the local communities and the environment. The policies of the regional marine plan are general policy statements and are intended to have low or minimal impact on those with protected characteristics and therefore equality.</p>

2. Sex: a man or a woman.	No impact. The policies included in the plan are intended to safeguard and improve the marine and coastal environment and meet the long term needs of the local communities and the environment. The policies of the regional marine plan are general policy statements and are intended to have low or minimal impact on those with protected characteristics and therefore equality.
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No impact. The policies included in the plan are intended to safeguard and improve the marine and coastal environment and meet the long term needs of the local communities and the environment. The policies of the regional marine plan are general policy statements and are intended to have low or minimal impact on those with protected characteristics and therefore equality.
4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No impact. The policies included in the plan are intended to safeguard and improve the marine and coastal environment and meet the long term needs of the local communities and the environment. The policies of the regional marine plan are general policy statements and are intended to have low or minimal impact on those with protected characteristics and therefore equality.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No impact. The policies included in the plan are intended to safeguard and improve the marine and coastal environment and meet the long term needs of the local communities and the environment. The policies of the regional marine plan are general policy statements and are intended to have low or minimal impact on those with protected characteristics and therefore equality.
6. Age: people of different ages.	No impact. The policies included in the plan are intended to safeguard and improve the marine and coastal environment and meet the long term needs of the local communities and the environment. The policies of the regional marine plan are general policy statements and are intended to have low or minimal impact on those with protected characteristics and therefore equality.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No impact. The policies included in the plan are intended to safeguard and improve the marine and coastal environment and meet the long term

	needs of the local communities and the environment. The policies of the regional marine plan are general policy statements and are intended to have low or minimal impact on those with protected characteristics and therefore equality.
8. Caring responsibilities.	No impact. The policies included in the plan are intended to safeguard and improve the marine and coastal environment and meet the long term needs of the local communities and the environment. The policies of the regional marine plan are general policy statements and are intended to have low or minimal impact on those with protected characteristics and therefore equality.
9. Care experienced.	No impact. The policies included in the plan are intended to safeguard and improve the marine and coastal environment and meet the long term needs of the local communities and the environment. The policies of the regional marine plan are general policy statements and are intended to have low or minimal impact on those with protected characteristics and therefore equality.
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No impact. The policies included in the plan are intended to safeguard and improve the marine and coastal environment and meet the long term needs of the local communities and the environment. The policies of the regional marine plan are general policy statements and are intended to have low or minimal impact on those with protected characteristics and therefore equality.
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	(Includes physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, mental health) No impact. The policies included in the plan are intended to safeguard and improve the marine and coastal environment and meet the long term needs of the local communities and the environment. The policies of the regional marine plan are general policy statements and are intended to have low or minimal impact on those with protected characteristics and therefore equality.
12. Socio-economic disadvantage.	No impact. The policies included in the plan are intended to safeguard and improve the marine and coastal environment and meet the long term

	needs of the local communities and the environment. The policies of the regional marine plan are general policy statements and are intended to have low or minimal impact on those with protected characteristics and therefore equality.
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### 3. Impact Assessment

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	<p>An equality impact assessment ("EqIA") aims to consider how a policy (a policy can cover: activities, functions, strategies, programmes, and services or processes) may impact, either positively or negatively, on different sectors of the population in different ways.</p> <p>This EqIA has been undertaken to consider the impacts on equality of the development of the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan ("the OIRMP").</p> <p>The policies contained in the OIRMP are intended to safeguard and, where possible, improve the Scottish marine area, with the purpose of meeting the long term needs of nature and people. It is anticipated that these policies will be positive for Orkney's communities, however, the policies contained in the OIRMP are general policy statements and have no differential or discriminatory impact(s) on those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The EqIA has confirmed that the OIRMP is neither directly or indirectly discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010. No significant equality issues were raised during the policy development process. This has been reviewed during the public consultation on the consultation draft OIRMP and supporting draft documents/assessments.</p> <p>Thus, there are no identified differential impacts to be addressed.</p>
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How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	No negative impact identified.
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, ongoing implementation of the Plan and monitoring and evaluation. This EqIA will therefore be updated in light of any feedback during implementation and monitoring of the Plan, and the conclusion above i.e. the OIRMP is neither directly or indirectly discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010, will be revised if appropriate. This is part of the statutory planning function of the Council and the delegated functions for preparing the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan.
What action is to be taken?	This document is kept under review and will be amended as required to ensure that it is up to date and accords with the requirements of current relevant legislation and policy.
Who will undertake it?	OIC Development and Marine Planning
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	Through the monitoring and evaluation processes of the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan.

Signature: D. Morris

Date: 07/10/2025

Name: DANIEL MORRIS

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)