

Item: 4

Policy and Resources Committee: 16 June 2026.

Council Plan and Delivery Plan – Mid-Term Review.

Report by Chief Executive.

1. Overview

- 1.1. This report presents the Council Plan 2023-2028 Mid-Term Review (2026) which updates and refreshes the existing Council Plan to reflect progress made since 2023, current challenges, and priorities for the remaining period to 2028, for members' approval.
- 1.2. The current Council Plan 2023-28 was approved by Council in March 2023. It established the strategic context at that time and set out key objectives that continue to be reflected in this updated plan. This followed a period of public consultation held between December 2022 and January 2023.
- 1.3. The refreshed Plan, attached as Appendix 1, sets out the Council's strategic direction, priorities and commitments for Orkney, taking account of changing economic, demographic and financial circumstances, including population change, increasing service demand, and cost pressures associated with delivering services in an island context.
- 1.4. The Plan highlights the Council's progress to date and outlines four priority themes, which continue from the original Council Plan, through which services and investment will be delivered:
 - Growing our economy.
 - Developing our infrastructure.
 - Strengthening our communities.
 - Transforming our Council.
- 1.5. The Plan also reinforces the Council's commitment to maintaining high standards of service delivery, improving outcomes, and delivering projects which benefit communities across Orkney.
- 1.6. The mid-term review also provides an opportunity to highlight the significant achievements delivered to date under the current Council Plan, demonstrating progress across a range of strategic priorities.

- 1.7. The Council Plan Mid-Term Review is supported by an accompanying Council Plan Delivery Plan (Appendix 2), which sets out in detail how the Council's strategic priorities will be implemented in practice. The Delivery Plan identifies the key actions required to deliver outcomes across the four priority themes, alongside the performance measures and reporting arrangements used to track progress. Progress against the Delivery Plan will be reported regularly to the Policy and Resources Committee, ensuring transparency, accountability and effective oversight of delivery.
- 1.8. There have been significant design changes made to the refreshed Council Plan document. These include:
- i. A new look and design to the document, giving it a cleaner, updated look.
 - ii. It has been written in Plain English where possible to improve clarity and ensure it is accessible to a wider audience.
 - iii. An expanded map has been included.
 - iv. A number of statistics and information have been added, again in a clear and accessible way, which support the context of the Plan; a two-page section on the costs associated with service delivery has also been added for this purpose.
 - v. Specific sections have been added to cover Orkney's "Community and heritage", "Innovation and renewables", "Housing and population", and "Infrastructure and connectivity" to outline these important areas within the Council Plan in a clear and accessible way.
 - vi. A "Progress so far" page has been included to highlight the numerous significant achievements of the Council Plan 2023-28 to date.
 - vii. Information on the actions and performance within each strategic objective area has also been refreshed and updated.
 - viii. Additionally, the accompanying Delivery Plan also has a new refreshed look, with actions refreshed and updated.
- 1.9. This refreshed document has been developed following a workshop with Elected Members in the summer of 2025 and following feedback over two seminars held on 30 March 2026 and 25 May 2026.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
- i. Approve the Council Plan 2023-2028 Mid-Term Review (2026) and accompanying Delivery Plan, attached as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively to this report.

3. The role of the Council Plan and Delivery Plan

- 3.1. The Council Plan 2023-2028 is the Council's overarching strategic document, setting out how the Council will deliver services, support communities and achieve outcomes for Orkney residents through to 2028.
- 3.2. The Council Plan sits at the centre of the Council's wider strategic framework, linking national policy, local partnerships and directorate delivery plans, and is intended to guide decision-making, resource allocation and service delivery across the organisation for the remainder of the Plan period.
- 3.3. The Council Delivery Plan is an operational document which translates the strategic priorities of the Council Plan into specific actions, projects and service delivery commitments. It provides a detailed framework for how outcomes will be achieved across each of the four priority themes, setting out what will be delivered, how it will be delivered, and how success will be measured over the period to 2028. The Delivery Plan is supported by Directorate Plans, ensuring coordination between the corporate priorities and day-to-day service activity across the organisation.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Elected Members will be updated on the actions and progress within both the Council Plan and Delivery Plan, as set out within the documents, on a biannual basis at Policy and Resources Committee.
- 4.2 A communications plan will be implemented to promote the Council Plan and Delivery Plan, ensuring the documents are effectively cascaded internally and that public awareness is enhanced, particularly of the Council Plan, its contents and its purpose.

For Further Information please contact:

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Implications of Report

1. **Financial:** There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Continued implementation of the Council Plan should be met from approved budgets or external grant awards.
2. **Legal:** There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
3. **Corporate Governance:** None.

4. **Human Resources:** None.
5. **Equalities:** An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached as Appendix 3 to this report.
6. **Island Communities Impact:** An Island Communities Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached as Appendix 4 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.
9. **Environmental and Climate Risk:** None.
10. **Risk:** None.
11. **Procurement:** None.
12. **Health and Safety:** None.
13. **Property and Assets:** None.
14. **Information Technology:** None.
15. **Cost of Living:** None.

List of Background Papers

Policy and Resources Committee, 21 February 2023: Item 7 – Council Plan and supporting Delivery Plan.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Council Plan.

Appendix 2 – Council Delivery Plan.

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 4 – Island Communities Impact Assessment.

Council Plan 2023-2028

2026 mid-term review



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Foreword

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to read this refreshed Orkney Islands Council Council Plan mid-term review.

Building on the foundations of our 2023-2028 Council Plan, this updated version sets out where we will focus our efforts over the next two years, while keeping sight of the long-term ambitions we share for Orkney.

Since first launching the Plan, we have made significant progress across a wide range of priorities. This has been made possible by the commitment and professionalism of our workforce, whose contribution remains central to everything we achieve.

Over the past year we have refreshed the Council's organisational values. These now provide a clearer sense of who we are, how we work, and the standards our community can expect from us.

They underpin the positive direction of travel we are taking as an organisation and reinforce our focus on delivering high quality services for Orkney.

We have also taken this opportunity to refresh the look, feel and style of the Plan, making it more accessible and engaging to the community we serve.

This updated Plan offers an optimistic and confident vision of Orkney's future. It highlights the progress we have made as a Council - and as a community - while also acknowledging the major opportunities and challenges ahead.

By continuing to work closely with partners, communities and our dedicated staff, we are well placed to deliver on the priorities that matter most and to help shape a strong, sustainable and vibrant future for our islands.



Cllr Graham Bevan
Convener

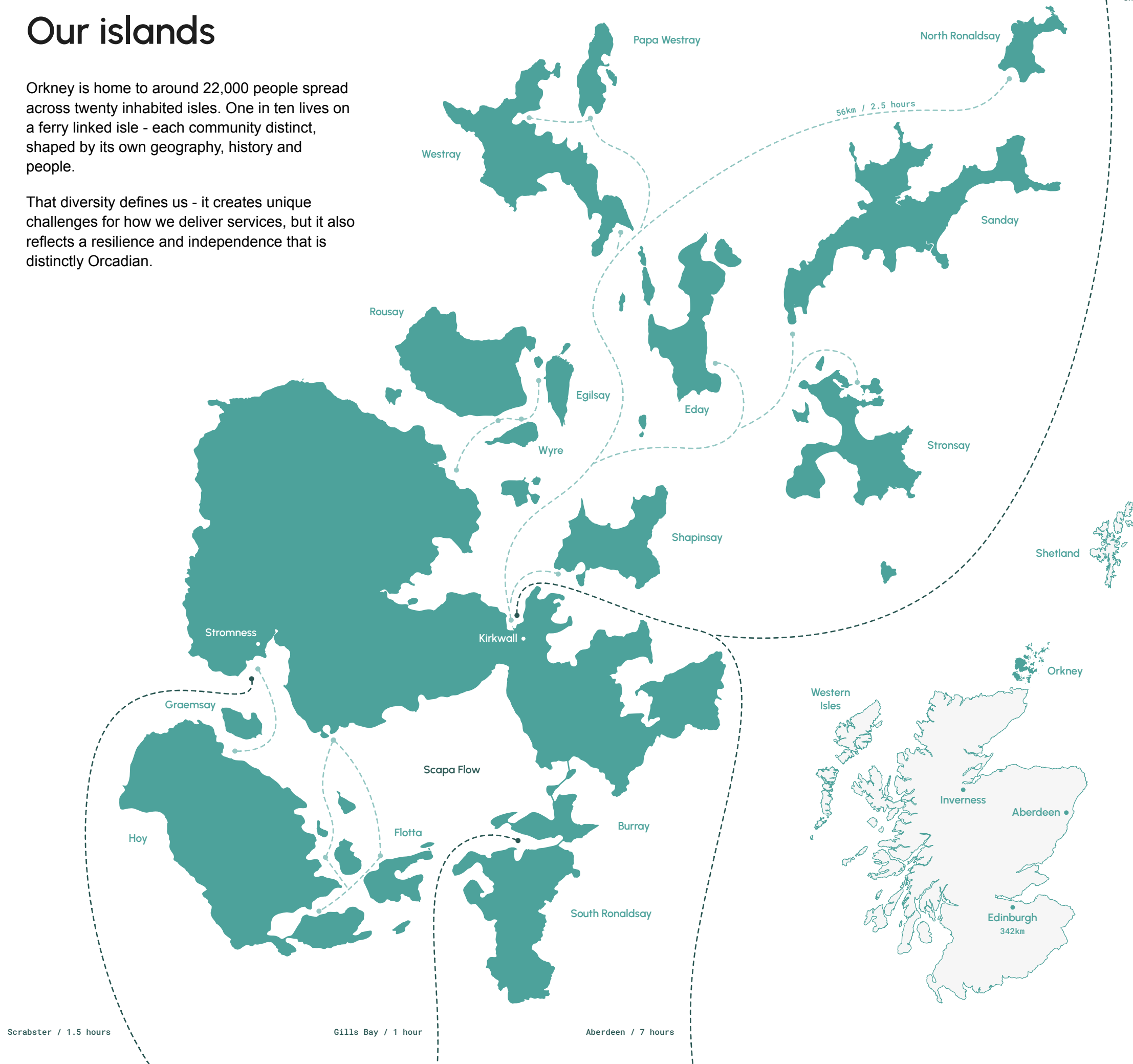


Oliver Reid
Chief Executive

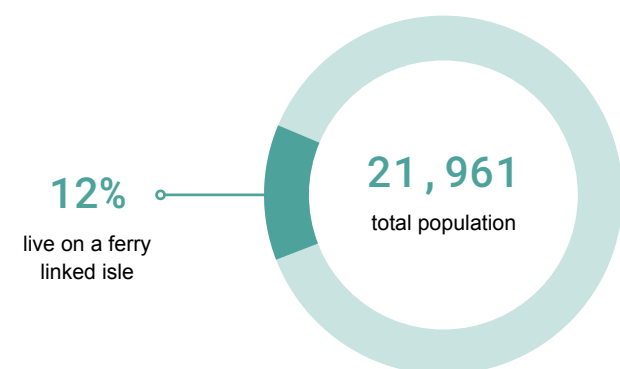
Our islands

Orkney is home to around 22,000 people spread across twenty inhabited isles. One in ten lives on a ferry linked isle - each community distinct, shaped by its own geography, history and people.

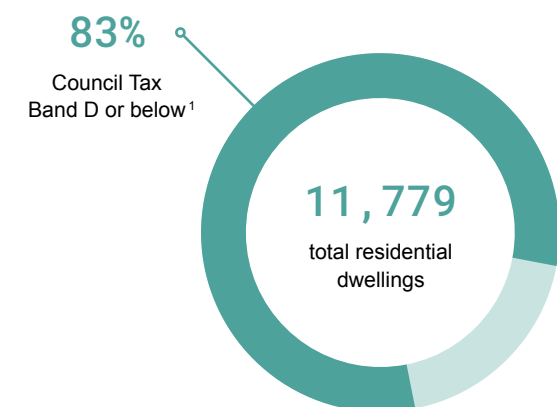
That diversity defines us - it creates unique challenges for how we deliver services, but it also reflects a resilience and independence that is distinctly Orcadian.



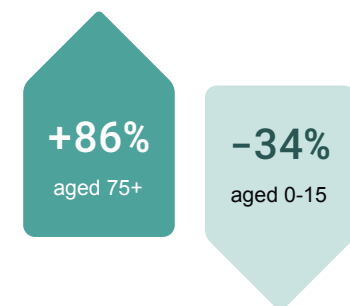
Shetland / 7 hours



km of road per 1,000 residents



Projected population change by 2043²



¹ ~75% Scottish average

² -12.9% (0-15 yrs) / +80% (75+) Scottish average

What makes Orkney unique

While Orkney is Scotland's smallest local authority, with 21 Elected Members, no other Council in Scotland does what we do.

Responsibility for ferries, airfields and harbours as well as schools, social care and waste collection reflects a breadth of responsibility no other authority has to reckon with.

Our islands have been continuously inhabited for well over five thousand years - longer than the pyramids have stood - shaping a culture that is confident, outward-looking and restless with ideas.

Three world-class universities have established a research presence here, leading the way in renewable energy, marine science, agronomy and archaeology at a national and international level.

Orkney is home to the European Marine Energy Centre - the world's only grid-connected open-sea test facility for wave and tidal technologies.

While the rest of the world works towards Net Zero, Orkney is already demonstrating Net Zero innovation in practice.



29 piers and harbours



Scotland's largest local authority owned port network, keeping communities connected with lifeline ferry services carrying over 320,000 passengers a year

Active and involved communities



Orkney has one of Scotland's highest rates of volunteering and active community bodies per head of population, including community Councils, development trusts and community associations.

A world-leading research hub



UHI, Heriot-Watt and RGU all have campuses here - drawn by Orkney's history, unique geography and community skillset

Islands Growth Deal



Part of a £393 million Islands Growth Deal unlocking a decade of investment across Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides

Leading the energy transition



Orkney has led clean energy innovation for over 70 years - from the UK's first grid-connected wind turbine, to tidal, wave and sustainable fuel projects today

6 airfields and 3 aircraft



We operate our own inter-island air service, maintaining vital links between mainland Orkney and the outer north isles year round

The world's second largest natural harbour



Scapa Flow's deep, sheltered waters offer significant wet storage capacity and the potential to become a major hub for Scotland's rapidly growing offshore wind and marine renewables industry

A UNESCO World Heritage Gateway



Orkney's Neolithic sites, including Skara Brae, are older than the pyramids and among the world's most significant prehistoric landscapes

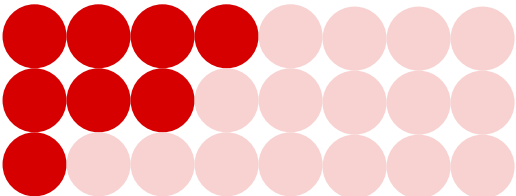
Years lived in good health

Orcadians spend more of their lives in good health than anywhere else in Scotland. A strong sense of community, an active outdoor culture and ready access to green and blue space are all recognised contributors.



Deaths nearly double births

In 2023/24, Orkney recorded 277 deaths against just 146 births. Like many island communities, we face a long-term natural population decline without sustained inward migration.



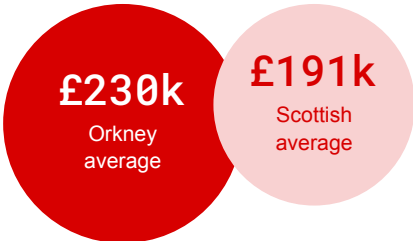
High employment rate

Orkney holds the highest employment rate of any council area in Scotland. A diverse local economy spanning agriculture, tourism and renewables underpins this strong performance.



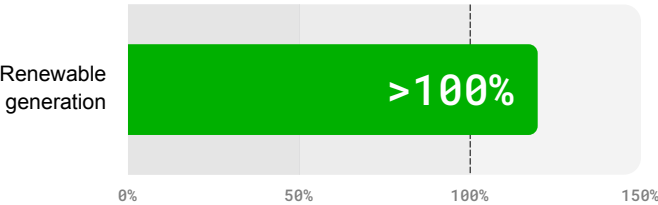
House prices rising

Orkney has seen the steepest house price rise of any local authority in Scotland since 2020, with a 64% increase. This is pricing local residents - particularly young people and key workers - out of the market.



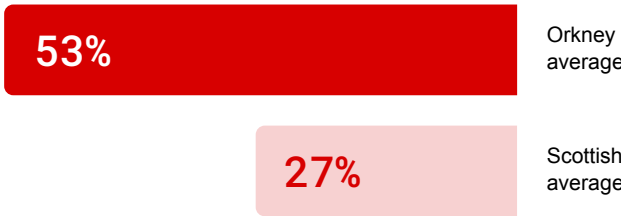
Energy self-sufficient

Orkney generates more renewable electricity than it consumes - a position we have held for over a decade. A new 220MW interconnector, due to be energised around 2028, will significantly increase our ability to export that surplus to the national grid.



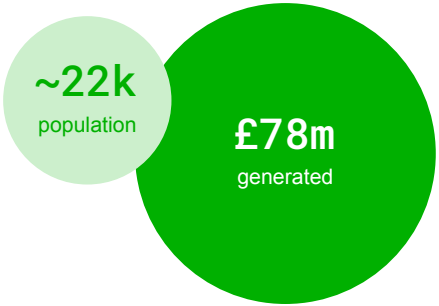
High fuel poverty rate

Orkney's fuel poverty rate is nearly double the Scottish average, driven by older housing stock, off-gas-grid properties and higher energy costs. Despite generating surplus renewable energy, most households cannot access it at a lower cost.



Strong tourism economy

Despite comprising just 0.4% of Scotland's population, Orkney generates around 2% of national visitor spend. Tourism is a critical pillar of the local economy, supporting jobs and supply chains across the islands.



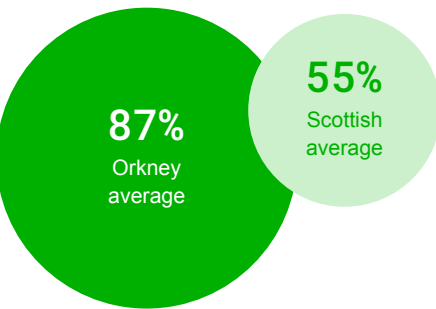
Rising financial hardship

4% of households are not managing well financially, and 23% of children are living in poverty. Cost of living pressures hit island communities particularly hard, where transport and energy costs leave households with less disposable income.



High quality of life

87% of Orkney residents rate their area as a very good place to live, compared to 55% across Scotland, with locals consistently citing safety, community, scenery and pace of life as reasons Orkney stands apart.



Poor digital connectivity

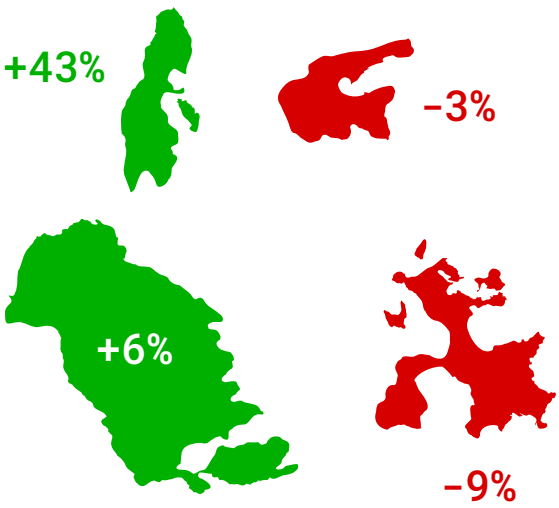
Only 84% of Orkney premises have access to super-fast broadband, compared to 98% coverage across Scotland. Reliable connectivity is essential for island businesses, remote workers and public service delivery.



Diverging island populations

Between 2001 and 2022, Hoy and Stronsay - two of Orkney's larger inhabited islands - saw populations shift by +6.1% and -8.7% respectively. On smaller islands, percentage swings can be more pronounced: Papa Westray grew by 43.4% over the same period, while Flotta fell by 2.5%.

Islands not to scale



The cost of delivery

Like households across Orkney, the Council is managing rising costs with a budget that hasn't kept pace.

In 2026/27, the Scottish Government provided £120 million of our £153 million budget - and this year we will again draw £20 million from reserves to balance the books - the same figure as previous years, but a smaller share of a growing budget.

The two biggest pressures are Orkney Health and Care and education. The Council contributes £28.7 million to the joint health and care partnership each year, serving an ageing population whose needs are growing.

In our schools, the number of pupils requiring additional support has risen from approximately 30% to 40% of all pupils in recent years - each one representing a significant and unavoidable cost that standard funding settlements do not fully account for.

Behind those headline pressures sit costs that are simply harder to bear on an island.

We employ the Full Time Equivalent of 1,911 people, making us the largest employer in Orkney, and recruiting and retaining staff - such as teachers, care workers and marine engineers - carries significant costs in transport, relocation and training.

Our estate is expensive to run and costs thousands of pounds a year in energy and utilities alone. Fuel and supply costs are higher in island communities, and the Council has limited capacity to absorb shocks that larger mainland authorities can spread across a wider base.

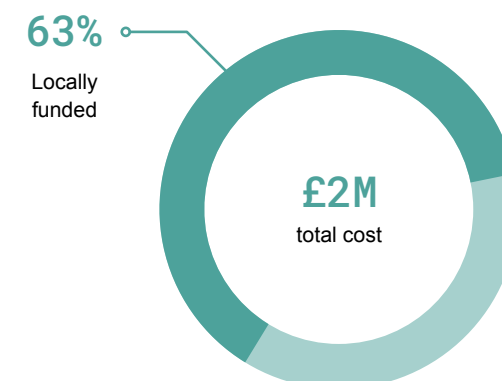
We are not standing still. The Quanterness Wind Farm and other income-generating projects will help close the gap over time.

But the case for fairer funding - funding that reflects what it actually costs to deliver effective public services in Orkney - remains one of the most important arguments this Council needs to make.

Free school meals

We serve 343,634 school meals a year at an average cost of £8.44 per meal - higher due to unique island costs - well above the national funding rate.

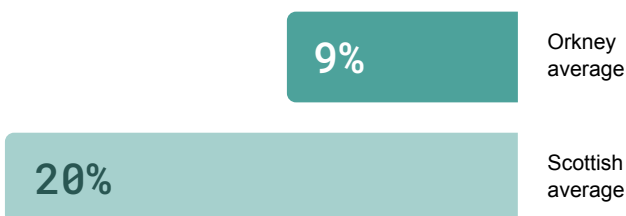
The Scottish Government covers 37% of that cost, leaving the remaining 63% - around **£1.3 million** - met by the Council across 23 school sites. That gap alone is equivalent to 1% of our entire Scottish Government revenue settlement, or a 10% rise in Council Tax.



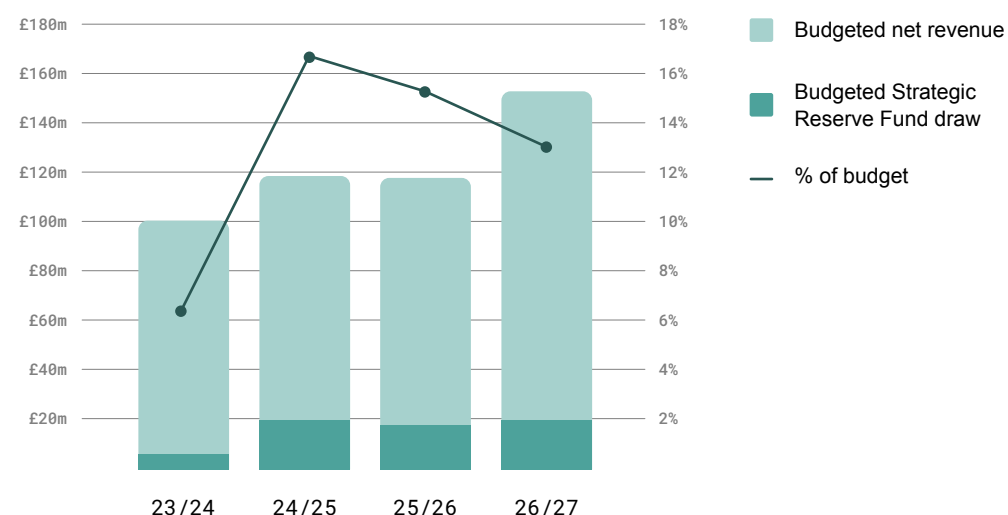
Council Tax

We raise around 9% of our budget - just **£14.3 million** - from Council Tax, under half the Scottish average of 20%.

With 78% of our funding coming from Scottish Government grants, against a national average of 60%, we have limited room to absorb cuts to central funding locally.



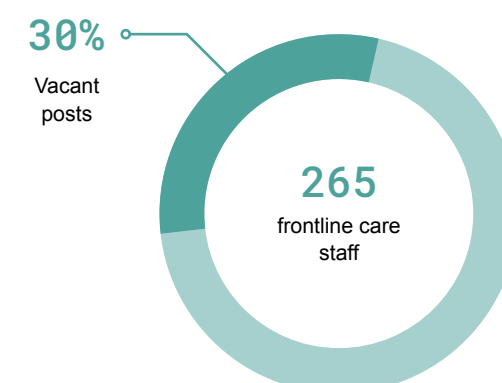
Strategic Reserve Fund as % of Net Budget



Health and care staffing

Nearly a third of our frontline care posts are vacant - 80.5 unfilled FTE roles that we cannot leave empty.

To keep services running safely, we rely on agency staff to fill the gap. In 2024-25, that cost us **£5.8 million** - a bill inflated by the travel and accommodation costs of bringing workers to Orkney that mainland Councils simply don't face.



Community and heritage

Orkney's story stretches back over 5,000 years. From the Neolithic settlement of Skara Brae and the Ring of Brodgar, to St Magnus Cathedral and the Churchill Barriers, our history and heritage is woven into the fabric of everyday island life. Our Nordic past has shaped a culture that is distinctive, resilient and unmistakably Orcadian.

Orkney's fertile soil supports one of Scotland's most productive agricultural sectors, underpinning a food and drink industry – from award-winning cheese and whisky to some of Scotland's finest seafood – with a reputation far beyond our shores.

That same spirit runs through our cultural and community life. The St Magnus International Festival, founded in 1977, has grown into one of Britain's most highly regarded arts events - celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2026.

The Orkney International Science Festival, running since 1991, draws leading thinkers from around the world each September, blending ideas with Orkney's landscape and history in a way that could only happen here.

Each May, Kirkwall proudly hosts one of the few official Norwegian Constitution Day celebrations held outside of Norway, while the Orkney Folk Festival draws musicians and audiences from across the world to Stromness.

Our welcoming spirit showed on a global stage in 2025, when Orkney hosted the International Island Games – the largest event in the islands' modern history, and a demonstration of what Orcadian community and hospitality can achieve.

Innovation and renewables

Orkney has been at the forefront of energy for over seventy years – so is well placed to meet the challenges of transitioning from oil and gas to renewable energy over time.

Indeed, the UK's first grid-connected wind turbine was tested here in 1951 and today we are now generating over 120% of the islands' electricity needs from renewables.

One in ten residents generates their own power, and Orkney leads the country for heat pump installations and electric vehicle ownership per head - a level of community participation in clean energy unmatched anywhere in the UK.

Orkney is home to the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC), the world's only grid-connected open-sea testing facility for wave and tidal technologies, attracting researchers and investment from across the world.

Construction is expected to begin in 2027 on what will be the UK's largest publicly owned wind farm. Scapa Flow's deep, sheltered waters position Orkney as a natural hub for offshore wind construction and maintenance across Scotland and beyond.

The Flotta oil terminal has the infrastructure, workforce and location to become a base for the offshore energy economy of the future, and our Offshore Energy Development Strategy sets out how we intend to make that happen.

A thriving offshore sector means local jobs, a resilient supply chain and long-term economic transformation for our islands - the kind of return that justifies sustained investment in Orkney's infrastructure and connectivity.



“ Orkney Islands Council's sustained leadership in championing the renewables sector - most notably through its pivotal role in progressing the interconnector and enabling projects such as the Quanterness Windfarm - has been central to strengthening Orkney's position as a world-leading hub for clean energy innovation.

EMEC

Housing and population

Housing is fundamental to sustaining Orkney's communities and economy. Rising demand, high prices and a limited rental market have created real pressure - particularly for young people, key workers and those with caring responsibilities, who depend on flexible, affordable housing to remain in the communities they call home.

The Local Housing Strategy 2024-2029 targets 1,030 new homes over ten years, with a 60/40 split between affordable and private housing.

Getting housing right goes far beyond bricks and mortar. It supports long-term population retention, one of our most important investments - especially as Orkney's population grows and ages, with forecasts pointing to more older residents and rising demand for care.

Delivery will prioritise mixed communities, placemaking and energy efficiency, alongside flexible, adaptable homes that meet changing needs, including specialist accommodation within care settings where required.

Good housing enables independent living. Our allocation policies aim to create communities of care, keeping families and support networks together - and with 2,500 additional workers needed in Orkney by 2035, retaining working-age people has never been more important.

We are working with partners including Orkney Housing Association, Places for People Scotland and local development trusts - some pursuing community ownership models that put housing decisions in local hands - to drive housebuilding, alongside measures to bring empty homes back into use and raise housing quality across Orkney.

Infrastructure and connectivity

Infrastructure is the backbone of island life, whether that be roads, ferries or air services.

Maintaining our road network is a significant challenge, particularly as our roads attract no specific national funding or maintenance provision, relying entirely on local investment.

Air and ferry links provide lifeline connections between islands, enabling access to work, education, healthcare and essential goods. Our network includes 29 piers and harbours - including Hatston, which handles freight and cruise traffic - alongside airfields that maintain vital links between Kirkwall and the Outer North Isles.

These connections also support tourism, agriculture and local businesses, making transport infrastructure central to the health and wealth of the wider economy.

Replacing Orkney's ageing ferry fleet is one of the most significant infrastructure commitments in this plan.

Scottish Government funding has been secured for Phase 1 - covering new vessels for the Outer North Isles routes - with Phase 2, covering the remaining fleet and harbour infrastructure, progressing in parallel.

Digital connectivity matters just as much as physical transport. Working with the Scottish Government's Reaching 100% (R100) programme, full fibre broadband is being extended to more than 3,000 homes and businesses across Orkney, with further coverage expected through the upcoming Project Gigabit procurement.



“ The Council securing funding for a new ferry fleet was a major relief - nothing matters more to the isles than reliable connectivity.

The new, more accessible boats will serve families and folk with mobility needs, and they give us a sustainable future.

Adam Baird

Westray Community Council

Our workforce

A stable, skilled workforce is what makes good services possible for Orkney's communities, and investing in our people is central to everything else we want to achieve.

Our workforce mirrors our population, meaning that around a third of our employees - an estimated 600 people - are aged 55 or over, with many expected to retire over the next decade.

At the same time, whilst our workforce is broadly the right size, it is not the right shape. We have critical gaps in key areas, especially in health and social care, where we are relying on agency workers to keep essential services running - at significant cost, and in a way that is not sustainable.

Filling those gaps is only part of the challenge. Attracting workers to a remote island community is difficult without action on housing, childcare and support for those with caring responsibilities, and offering clear development pathways and competitive pay matters just as much.

Through redesign of jobs and creating opportunities for trainees and apprentices and a wide programme of continuing professional development, we are taking action to grow our own - helping people build skills, progress their careers and take on greater responsibility.

We are creating pathways into hard-to-fill areas, developing the next generation of leaders, and ensuring that people who join us have every reason to stay and grow with us.

Being an outstanding employer, developing our people and supporting change are the three themes shaping our new Workforce Strategy. Recognised with Disability Confident accreditation and the Armed Forces Covenant Silver Award, we are committed to being an employer that people choose, and stay with.

Our values have been refreshed to make them easier to remember, understand and put into practice - shaped directly by our people, distilling what matters most into four values that everyone can own. Underpinning all of this, they reflect the culture we are working to build: one where everyone can contribute, develop and do their best work.

Values

Accountable

Reliable

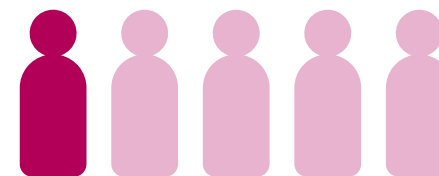
Considerate

Collaborative

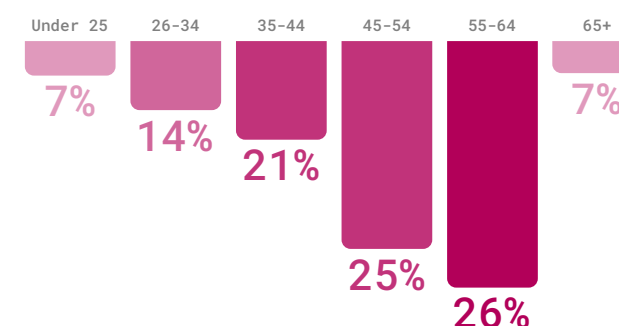


1,911 FTE employees

Around 1 in 5 of Orkney's working population



Workforce age profile



“ I joined the Council as an admin in 2018 - since then I've been supported through a Business Management degree alongside my work, and encouraged into new roles along the way. I'm now the Cruise Operations and Marketing Coordinator, and I got here because of that investment in me.

Hannah Drummond

Cruise Operations and Marketing Co-ordinator

Our plan

Orkney is a remarkable place to live and work. Our job is to make sure it stays that way - and this plan sets out how we will do that through to 2028.

We make three pledges to the people of Orkney:



Maintain our existing high standards of service wherever possible



Improve services and outcomes for the people of Orkney where needed



Develop and deliver projects for the benefit of our communities

We will honour those pledges through everything we do - from the services people rely on every day, like schools, roads and waste collection, to those that are there when life gets harder, like social care. Where services are better delivered by others, whether partners, community groups or third sector organisations, we will work with them to make that happen.

Our priorities are built around four themes:



Growing the economy E

Building a strong local economy that works for all who live and works here



Strengthening communities C

Supporting strong, resilient communities across Orkney's islands and mainland



Developing infrastructure I

Keeping Orkney connected and investing in the infrastructure that underpins island life



Transforming the Council T

Improving how we work so we can serve residents, businesses and communities better

Every decision will be guided by shared principles:

- Equality, fairness and inclusion, particularly for vulnerable and remote communities like the ferry-linked isles
- Sustainable and accessible services for all
- Community wellbeing and mental health
- Community wealth building for future generations
- Delivering best value for money
- Working in partnership with local public bodies and third sector organisations.
- Protecting our environment and combating climate change

For each theme, we have set performance measures drawn from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, reported annually so residents, elected members and partners can see clearly how we are doing. As part of this midterm refresh, we have reviewed those measures - removing some national indicators that have not been updated as frequently as anticipated, and replacing them where needed to ensure every measure has a reliable, regular data source. Each theme includes a set of actions detailed in the delivery plan. Reference icons are used to clearly identify which delivery plan action is being referred to.

Our Council Plan sits at the heart of a two-way relationship - shaped by national priorities and local partnerships, and driving delivery through our directorate delivery plans.



Since 2023, we have made strong progress across all three priority themes - delivering major projects, investing in communities and services, and securing commitments that will shape Orkney's future for decades to come.

Progress so far



Ferry replacement programme

Secured Scottish Government funding for business case following strategic lobbying by Council leadership



New aircraft and freight ferry

Secured funding for third aircraft and additional landing craft ferry, plus electric ferries pilot



Quanterness community wind farm

Final investment decision made on UK's largest community wind farm, generating income for Council and communities



Free ferry travel for under-22s

Successfully lobbied Scottish Government to deliver free internal ferry travel for young people



Public service reform partnership

Secured £300,000 with Scottish Government, NHS Orkney and IJB to drive significant reform in public service delivery.



International Island Games hosted

Successfully supported the delivery of major multi-sport event, showcasing Orkney to international visitors and athletes



Kirkjuvagr House care home

New 40-bed care facility at Soullisquoy, replacing St Rognvald House



New Kirkwall nursery

Invested £3 million in a new purpose-built nursery for children aged 0 to 5



Stromness Community Centre transfer

Supported community takeover of Stromness Community Centre, securing Scottish Land Fund backing for the purchase



Island development trust housing

Supported delivery of affordable homes on the outer isles through development trust partnerships and Islands Housing Fund



New housing supply partnership

Secured partnerships to deliver 1,030 new homes over the next decade, 60% of which will be affordable housing



Attainment gap progress

Exceeded stretch aim targets for reducing the poverty-related attainment gap across Orkney schools

Growing the economy

Orkney's economy is built on strong foundations - agriculture, food and drink, tourism and a growing renewables sector. But economic pressures are real, and the cost of living remains one of the biggest concerns for our communities. Our job is to create the conditions for sustainable growth that keeps young people here, attracts new residents, and generates lasting benefit for future generations.

Our priorities

- 1. We will reduce poverty and disadvantage and minimise the effects of the cost-of-living crisis.
- 2. We will create favourable conditions for sustainable economic growth.
- 3. We will work towards becoming Net Zero.

Our actions

Net Zero and decarbonisation

Progressing towards net-zero and decarbonising our operations

E1

Support for local business

Supporting and investing in businesses across Orkney

E2

Our performance measures

Arrows signify preferred future direction of performance

Performance measure	Baseline 2020/21	Latest data	Target 2027/28	National average	
Claimant rate as a percentage of Working Age Population	3%	1.5%	2.5%	3.1%	↘
Claimant rate as a % of 16-24 population	6%	2.7%	2.5%	3.3%	↘
% of children living in poverty (after housing costs)	18%	19%	15%	21%	↘
Percentage of procurement spent on local enterprises	38%	40%	45%	32%	↗
CO2 emissions area wide per capita	5.73t	5.43t	4.75t	4.59t	↘
CO2 emissions area wide: emissions within scope of local authority per capita	4.53t	4.24t	3.75t	4.04t	↘
Number engaged with Council employability support	39	121	121	-	↗

Strengthening communities

Strong, connected communities are one of Orkney's greatest assets. This theme is about building on that strength - supporting people to live well and independently, raising standards in education and care, and ensuring our services meet the needs of every person across the islands, regardless of where they live or their background.

Our priorities

- 1. We will support communities to develop local solutions and deliver what is important to them.
- 2. We will establish the highest standards of public support and protection.
- 3. We will establish the highest standards of learning, achievement and wellbeing.

Our actions

C1

Social care / community led support

Designing services around prevention, early intervention and independence

C2

Living independently

Helping people live safely at home for longer

C3

Development of learning provision and pathways

Building skills and confidence for people of all ages

C4

Improve Education Standards (Scottish attainment challenge)

Excellence through raising attainment and closing the poverty-related gap

C5

Childcare

Supporting affordable, accessible childcare across Orkney

C6

Embed the vision and outcomes of the Promise

Supporting children and young people who are care experienced

Our performance measures

Arrows signify preferred future direction of performance

Performance measure	Baseline 2020/21	Latest data	Target 2027/28	National average	
% of adults supported at home who agree that they had a say in how their help, care or support was provided	62%	68%	70%	60%	↗
% of adults supported at home who agree that their services and support had an impact in improving or maintaining their quality of life	81%	80%	84%	70%	↗
% of adult protection referrals made by the public	1%	3.8%	3%	-	↗
% of children being looked after in the community	76%	70%	85%	89%	↗
% of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5	73%	73%	80%	53%	↗
% of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence level in literacy	68%	78%	85%	75%	↗
% of P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence level in numeracy	75%	85%	90%	80%	↗
School attendance rate (looked after children)	88%	83%	90%	84%	↗
Proportion of pupils entering positive destinations	98%	94%	98%	96%	↗
Number of adults receiving nationally recognised accreditation through CLDE activity	19	82	82	-	↗
Number of young people receiving nationally recognised accreditation through CLDE activity	29	385	390	-	↗

⚙️ Developing infrastructure

Infrastructure is the backbone of island life - the buildings, roads, transport links and digital networks that hold our communities together. Investing in it is not just about maintenance; it is about creating the conditions for Orkney to grow, attract people and remain connected for generations to come.

Our priorities

- 1. We will ensure and enable investment in quality homes, supporting choice, inclusion and economic growth.
- 2. We will remove barriers to digital connectivity and vital transport.
- 3. We will invest in projects that further our economic ambitions.

Our actions

Delivered

- Free internal ferry travel for under 22's across the islands (I2)
- Review and prioritisation of capital projects across Orkney (I11)

Not proceeding

- Integrated waste facility - investigated and decided not to proceed at this time (I10)

Improve isles transport links

I1

Developing integrated, sustainable and reliable inter-island transport

Work towards integrating our transport networks

I3

Improving operational connectivity and reducing vulnerabilities across our networks

Supporting economic growth through harbours infrastructure

I4

Developing harbours infrastructure to support economic growth and community benefit across Orkney

Digital connectivity

I5

Supporting and enabling digital connectivity across Orkney

Social housing

I6

Investing in social housing to address waiting lists and improve temporary housing

Mid-market rental properties

I7

Developing an affordable programme of mid-market rent properties across Orkney

Islands Growth Deal projects

I9

Driving economic growth and creating sustainable jobs across the islands

Orkney's Community Wind Farm Project

I8

Delivering Orkney's Community Wind Farm, maximising community benefit

Our performance measures

↗ Arrows signify preferred future direction of performance

Performance measure	Baseline 2020/21	Latest data	Target 2027/28	National average	
Percentage of Council dwellings that met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	2021/22 - 82%	94%	90%	83%	↗
Percentage of Council dwellings that are energy efficient	88%	97%	90%	88%	↗
Houses built in Orkney (all sectors)	82	60	2027 - 103	-	↗
Super-fast and Fibre Coverage	66%	86%	89%	98%*	↗
Percentage of Islands Deal Programme delivered	0%	20%	50%	-	↗
Percentage of young people with free travel entitlement of their YoungScot card	0%**	79%	82%	82%	↗

*Average for Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Shetland Islands and Orkney Islands is 85.4%
**Scheme started in 2022

💡 Transforming the Council

Delivering this plan requires a Council that is fit for the future - with the right people, the right culture and the right tools to serve Orkney's communities well. This theme is about building that foundation: investing in our staff, reducing bureaucracy and making our services easier to access for everyone.

Our priorities

- 1. We will develop ways of working that put people at the heart of what we do.
- 2. We will establish a culture that motivates staff to do the right things at the right time.
- 3. We will develop business approaches that are fit for purpose and give people direct access to services wherever possible.

Our actions

T1

Staff recognition and retention

Improving recognition, engagement and wellbeing for our people

T2

Reduce bureaucracy

Reducing bureaucracy and driving forward public sector reform

T3

Invest in staff development opportunities

Creating equal access to learning and growth for all employees

T4

Recruitment including trainee programme

Developing recruitment pathways and learning and development programmes

T5

Staff working locations, operational property and estates

Transforming our estate so they are fit for purpose and diversifying working locations across Orkney

T6

Improving our processes through the development of our systems

Improving service delivery through better digital systems

Our performance measures

↘ Arrows signify preferred future direction of performance

Performance measure	Baseline 2020/21	Latest data	Target 2027/28	National average	
Level of customer satisfaction experienced by the public with queries handled by customer service staff	2022/23 - 87%	93%	95%	-	↗
Percentage of operational buildings that are suitable for their current use	88%	90%	90%	86%	↗
Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure	103%	99%	100%	100%	↘
Staff turnover	5.1%	2.1%	4%	-	↘
Cost of agency workers as a percentage of our staff budget	3.7%	6.6%	2%	-	↘
Sickness absence days per teacher	4.2	10.8	6	7.8	↘
Sickness absence days per employee (non-teacher)	10.3	14.3	9	14.5	↘

Delivery Plan

2023-2028

2026 mid-term review

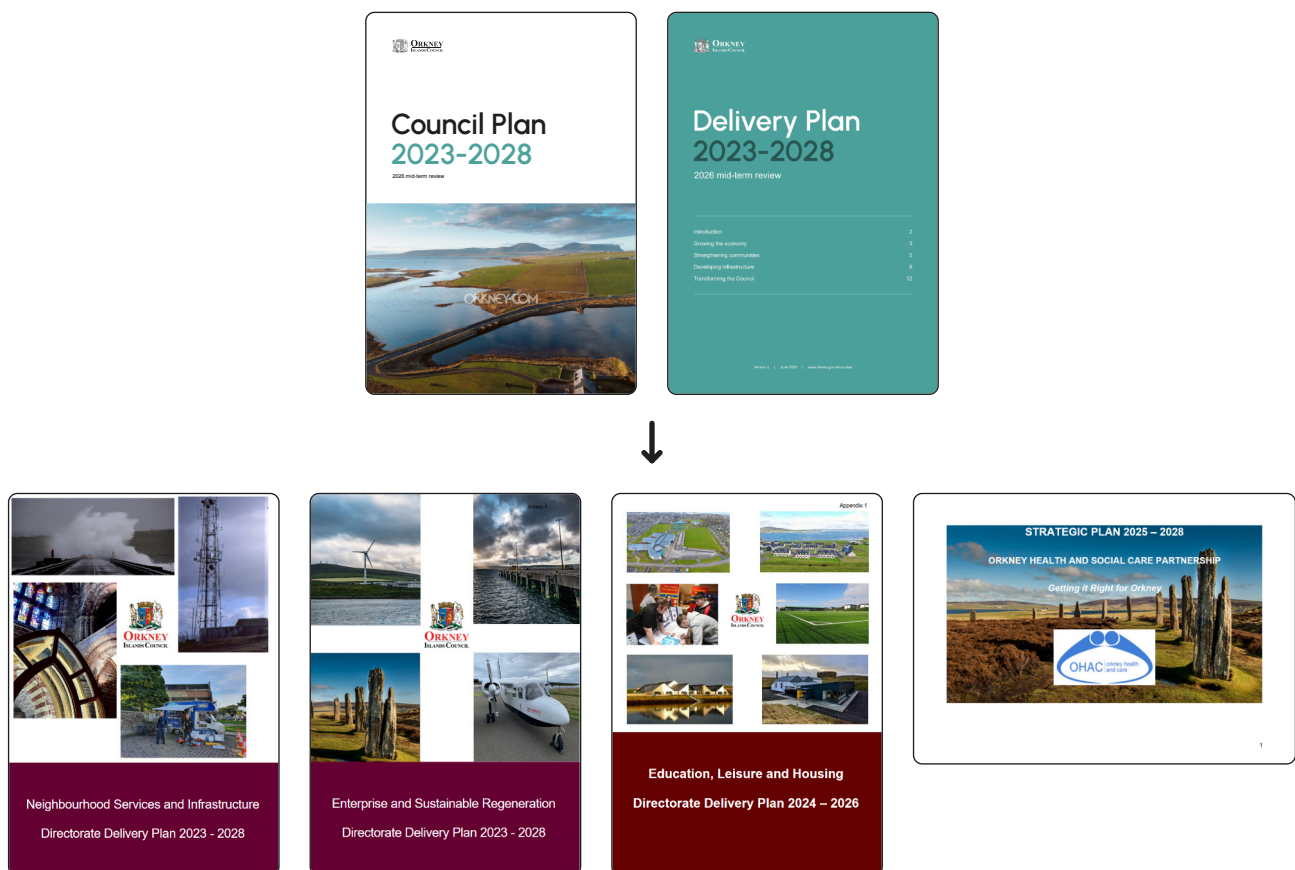
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Introduction

The Council Delivery Plan explains how Orkney Islands Council will deliver its priorities over the next two years. It sets out the main work, services and projects that will turn these priorities into real results for people in Orkney. The Plan focuses on four key areas: **Growing Our Economy, Strengthening Our Communities, Developing Our Infrastructure**, and **Transforming Our Council**.

For each priority, the Plan explains what we want to achieve and the main actions that we will be focusing on up to 2028. It sets out how progress will be tracked, including the measures we will use, while recognising the impact of funding pressures and other external factors.

The Delivery Plan is supported by Directorate and Service Plans, which set out how different services across the Council contribute within their agreed budgets and timescales (as shown in the diagram below).



Progress on this delivery plan is reported every six months to the Policy and Resources Committee, with updates in June and November. The June report includes the latest performance data. Service Committees review progress as part of wider performance arrangements of relevant directorate plans.

Key challenges

- Rising costs continue to strain households, local businesses and the Council itself.
- Attracting and retaining young people and skilled workers is becoming harder.
- Moving to a Net Zero economy while protecting traditional industries needs careful, long-term planning.

E1 Net Zero and decarbonisation

Working toward our goal of becoming a Net Zero organisation by 2045, reducing and decarbonising our operations where practical and affordable.

Actions

- Working with partners in the renewable research and innovation community.
- Finalising and implementing actions from the Orkney Sustainable Energy Strategy and Action Plan.
- Helping homes and businesses adopt renewable, smart and energy-efficient solutions.
- Delivering against the plan to meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2 by 2032, in line with Scottish Government priorities and available funding.
- Developing our Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan.
- Decarbonising our vehicle fleet.
- Decarbonising our buildings and ICT infrastructure.
- Decarbonising public transport, marine vessels and shoreside operations.
- Working with the Scottish Government and partners to extend the benefits of the Carbon Neutral Islands project across all Orkney islands.

E2 Support for local business

Supporting and investing in Orkney businesses, working closely with our key industry sectors.

Actions

- Addressing challenges facing primary producers, including farming and fishing.
- Encouraging SME business start-up and development.
- Supporting internationalisation and marketing for our key sectors.
- Growing the blue and green economies and maximising support for innovation.
- Helping businesses adopt renewable, smart and energy-efficient solutions.
- Helping Orkney capitalise on renewable energy opportunities, particularly offshore wind, by developing the local supply chain, research and innovation capacity.
- Maintaining regular engagement with the offshore wind supply chain.
- Supporting an effective transition from oil and gas to Net Zero industries.
- Supporting the sustainable development of tourism, hospitality and destination management.
- Promoting and lobbying for tourism levies that reflect island circumstances, including point of entry levies.
- Developing a strategic tourism infrastructure plan.
- Reviewing the Orkney marketing programme.
- Reviewing our actions in the 2020-2030 Tourism Action Plan.
- Reviewing sector group support.
- This includes supporting circular economy and community wealth building principles.

Strengthening communities

Key challenges

- Demand for health and social care keeps increasing as the population ages and the number of people with complex needs grows.
- Closing attainment gaps and supporting learners with additional needs.
- Ensuring consistent access to childcare, services and opportunities across all islands.

C1 Social care and community led support

Designing services that prioritise prevention, early support and greater independence.

Actions

- Working with communities and partners to design services that focus on prevention, early intervention and enabling people to live as independently as possible - strengthening integrated health and social care, improving mental health and wellbeing support, and developing community-led care.
- Establishing a social prescribing programme for Orkney, where GPs can refer people to non-clinical activities - such as exercise - that benefit health and wellbeing.
- Establishing a joined-up approach to health and wellbeing support with NHS Orkney, Active Schools, Community Learning and Development, and Arts, Culture and Libraries.
- Maintaining and developing the Active Schools and Community Sports Hub programmes.
- Supporting people with caring responsibilities, both in our workforce and across our communities.

C2 Living independently

Supporting people to live safely and independently at home for longer.

Actions

- Redesigning services to help people stay in their own homes safely for longer, with better support for those living with dementia.
- Delivering joined-up services in genuine partnership with people and partner organisations.
- Ensuring new social housing is accessible and flexible enough to meet residents' changing needs.
- Ensuring housing allocation policies support the development of communities where people can care for and support one another.
- Making greater use of digital and AI tools to support people to live independently.
- Developing better respite arrangements and enhanced support for unpaid carers.

C3 Development of learning provision and pathways

Supporting people of all ages to build their skills and confidence.

Actions

- Developing and promoting sustainable learning provision and pathways based on local needs and skills gaps, offering tailored support for people of all ages to build their confidence, skills and knowledge and progress into work, further education or training - with Orkney College playing a central role.
- Expanding adult numeracy learning opportunities.
- Developing an Orkney-wide Adult Learning Strategy.

C4 Improve education standards (Scottish attainment challenge)

Driving excellence through higher attainment and closing the poverty-related gap.

Actions

- Raising attainment and improving outcomes so that every child and young person reaches the highest standards in literacy and numeracy and develops the skills and knowledge to shape their future.
- Ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed, regardless of their background or personal characteristics, with a focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- Ensuring the Pupil Equity Fund is used effectively across all schools.
- Improving attainment and outcomes for care-experienced young people.
- Establishing a joined-up approach to pupil and staff health and wellbeing with NHS Orkney, Active Schools, Community Learning and Development, and Arts, Culture and Libraries.

C5 Childcare

Providing affordable childcare in convenient locations.

Actions

- Continuing to develop a new 50-place nursery for children aged 0-5 in Kirkwall.
- Encouraging people to become childminders, supporting existing childminders to develop their practice and meet the National Standard, and recruiting childminders to work in partnership with us to deliver statutory childcare.
- Introducing grants and subsidies for childminders in locations where low demand makes the service difficult to sustain commercially.
- Establishing viable, year-round childcare that allows families to work and meet other caring responsibilities.

C6 Embed the vision and outcomes of The Promise

Improving support for care-experienced children and young people by delivering on [The Promise \(www.thepromise.scot/keeping-the-promise\)](http://www.thepromise.scot/keeping-the-promise) - Scotland's commitment that all children and young people will grow up loved, safe and respected .

Actions

- Developing workforce capacity and support.
- Strengthening family support.
- Developing a trauma-informed workforce.
- Improving attainment for looked after children.
- Ensuring care-experienced children and young people have a meaningful voice in decisions that affect them, evidenced by high satisfaction rates.
- Stabilising placement and accommodation for care-experienced young people.

Developing infrastructure

Key challenges

- Ageing ferries, piers and air services need major investment to stay reliable.
- Digital connectivity remains uneven, limiting opportunities for businesses and residents.
- Affordable, energy-efficient housing is not being built fast enough to meet demand.

C1 Improve Isles transport links

Developing integrated, effective and sustainable inter-island transport by improving and maintaining the infrastructure and links our communities rely on, with all modernisation shaped by our Net Zero ambitions, where practical and affordable

Actions

- Reviewing levels of service and options, including fixed links and the Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE).
- Progressing Isles Transport Solutions - including progressing tender and procurement for ferry replacement and alternative options.
- Developing community-supported plans for investment and fleet renewal for the Outer North Isles.
- Continuing to work with the Scottish Government to secure funding for all isles transport and ferry requirements.
- Piloting zero emission vessel infrastructure (ZEVl) for smaller and mid-sized island vessels.
- Ensuring adequate freight resilience across the islands.
- Delivering piers and harbours improvements across Orkney as outlined in the Harbours Master Plan phase 2.
- Procuring a third aircraft to enhance the inter-island air service and improve resilience for outer isles communities.
- Taking active steps to sustain island populations and prevent further community decline.

I3 Work towards integrating our transport networks

Improving how our transport networks connect and operate, while reducing vulnerabilities across the system

Actions

- Integrating our transport networks to improve operational connectivity and reduce vulnerabilities, including roads.
- Expanding the Community Transport Grant to serve more of the community.
- Trialling flexible, door-to-door community transport in areas not currently served by public transport, subject to securing external funding.
- Seeking external funding to enhance public bus services.

I4 Supporting economic growth through harbours infrastructure

Planning and developing major harbour infrastructure to drive economic growth and community benefit across Orkney, with a focus on the Harbours Master Plan projects and maximising Scapa Flow's potential to support offshore energy and its supply chain.

Actions

- **Scapa Deep Water Quay:** developing a new multi-user deep water pier and quayside facility with laydown area, subject to confirmation, costing and consultation to inform a final investment decision.
- **Hatston Pier:** developing new pier and quayside infrastructure, a ship lift, fuel facility and land for harbour operations.
- **Kirkwall:** delivering new quayside infrastructure, marina expansion and a waterfront development area.
- **Stromness:** expanding the marina and developing a dedicated cruise tender pontoon.
- **Scapa Flow floating storage:** developing a dedicated facility to support offshore energy operations and supply chain logistics.
- **Lyness:** developing pier and harbour facilities to support maritime operations and the growing offshore energy sector.

I5 Digital connectivity

Supporting and enabling the rollout of improved digital connectivity across Orkney.

Actions

- Implementing relevant actions from our Digital Strategy (2022-2026) and contributing to the Strategy Delivery Plan.
- Facilitating commercial telecoms infrastructure investment and stimulating market demand.
- Raising awareness of available schemes and providing advice and support to individuals, community groups and telecoms providers to help develop gigabit-capable networks across Orkney.
- Making the case to the Scottish and UK Governments for investment in high-speed digital connectivity for Orkney's communities, households and businesses.

I6 Social housing

Investing in social housing to help reduce waiting lists and improve the availability of temporary accommodation.

Actions

- Building social housing across Orkney in line with local need and demand.
- Ensuring all new housing is energy-efficient in line with Scottish Government requirements.
- Delivering social housing in partnership with housing providers through the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.
- Ensuring new social housing is accessible and flexible enough to meet residents' changing needs.
- Ensuring housing allocation policies support the development of communities where people can care for and support one another.
- Developing better respite arrangements for unpaid carers.

I7 Mid-market rental properties

Exploring the potential to develop an affordable mid-market rent programme across Orkney.

Actions

- Ensuring mid-market rental properties are available across Orkney.
- Providing accommodation to support people relocating to Orkney for work, as well as those already in the workforce.
- Ensuring housing is available for people employed in Orkney, including essential workers.
- Building homes outside Kirkwall in line with local need and demand.
- Using our Local Housing Strategy to help vulnerable and island communities access the Scottish Government's Rural and Island Housing Fund to meet local demand for private sector accommodation.

18 Orkney's community wind farm project

Taking forward Orkney's Community Wind Farm to ensure it brings the greatest possible benefit to our communities.

Actions

- Delivering the Quanterness wind farm.
- Making a final investment decision on the Faray and Hoy wind farms.

19 Islands Growth Deal projects

Promoting economic growth and helping create sustainable employment opportunities across the islands.

Action

- Delivering a ten-year package of investment across Shetland, Orkney and the Outer Hebrides, including the Pier Arts Centre, World Heritage Gateway and World Heritage refresh, with a focus on job creation, leveraging investment and achieving net zero.

Key challenges

- Recruiting and retaining staff is increasingly difficult across many services.
- Financial pressures continue to restrict flexibility and long-term planning.
- Updating digital systems and reducing bureaucracy is essential but takes time, planning and innovative solutions.

T1 Staff recognition and retention

Improving how we recognise, engage with and support the wellbeing of our staff.

Actions

- Improving staff recognition and engagement so people feel valued, creating a culture where concerns can be raised openly, and offering flexible working options and terms and conditions that meet the needs of the organisation and our people.
- Embedding our organisational values across the workforce.
- Establishing the Council as an employer of choice.

T2 Reduce bureaucracy

Reducing bureaucracy and helping to drive wider public service reform.

Actions

- Reducing bureaucracy within and between agencies to improve how we work with partners, as part of a broader programme of public service reform.
- Improving ways of working through better corporate administration and delivery of the business support improvement programme.
- Exploring a corporate approach to fleet management.
- Expanding our online channels - including My Orkney - and our website to make it easier for people to self-serve.

T3 Invest in staff development opportunities

Ensuring all employees have equal access to learning and development opportunities.

Actions

- Creating a programme that gives all employees equal access to learning and development, aligned with our organisational goals and workforce planning priorities, with a focus on closing skills gaps.
- Exploring how our partnership with UHI Orkney can support this.

T4 Recruitment including trainee programme

Building clearer recruitment pathways and enhancing learning and development opportunities.

Actions

- Reviewing our recruitment approaches to attract candidates to Council posts, and developing clear pathways for trainees - including induction, skills and leadership programmes - that support effective integration and reflect our organisational values.
- Updating our structures to support career planning, succession and employee development.

T5 Staff working locations, operational property and estates assets review and development

Transforming our estate so it is fit for purpose, while expanding and diversifying working locations across Orkney.

Actions

- Reviewing our estate, disposing of assets we no longer need and transforming those we do - including School Place and the Hatston depot and garage - and diversifying our working locations across rural Orkney and the isles.
- Completing the Strategic Asset Review of Council property.
- Exploring a corporate approach to asset management and our landlord responsibilities.

T6 Improving our processes through development of our systems

Strengthening how we deliver services by using digital systems more effectively.

Actions

- Improving service delivery through better digital systems and processes, including the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI).
- Developing and implementing our next digital and data strategy.
- Completing the upgrade of core corporate systems.
- Developing road maps for core corporate systems.



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 proposal or changes by anticipating the consequences and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

Should you have any questions or wish for your draft EqIA to be reviewed by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, please contact OD@orkney.gov.uk.

1. Identification of the Proposal or Change

Name of proposal or change being assessed.	Council Plan, Mid-Term Review (2026-28)
Responsible Service and Directorate.	Policy & Communications (Corporate Governance)
Date of assessment.	28 May 2026
Is the proposal or change existing? (Please indicate if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	The Council Plan Mid-Term Review (2026-28) is a refreshed and updated version of the Council Plan 2023-28 which already exists. There is no specific reduction in service outlined in this plan.

2. Primary Information

What are the intended outcomes of the proposal or change?	This is not a new Plan, it is a refreshed and updated version of the Council Plan 2023-28. The Council Plan 2023-28 is a document which set out the Council's strategic priorities for the period 2023-2028. The priorities do not represent everything that the Council does and are over and above the day to day activity undertaken by services. The intended outcomes of the Council Plan 2023-28, and maintained within the Mid-Term Review, include: Growing our economy: • We will reduce poverty and disadvantage and minimise the effect of the cost-of-living crisis. • We will create favourable conditions for sustainable economic growth. • We will work towards becoming net zero, where practical and affordable.
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	Strengthening our communities: • We will support communities to develop local solutions and deliver what is important to them. • We will establish the highest standards of public support and protection. • We will widen access to opportunities for better learning, achievement and wellbeing. Developing our infrastructure: • We will invest in homes, supporting choice, inclusion and economic growth. • We will remove barriers to digital connectivity and vital transport. • We will invest in projects that further our economic ambitions. Transforming our council: • We will develop ways of working that put people at the heart of what we do. • We will establish a culture that motivates staff to do the right things at the right time. • We will develop business approaches that are fit for purpose and give people direct access to services wherever possible. The overarching principles which underpin all priorities within the Council Plan are: • Protecting our environment and combating climate change. • Equality, fairness and inclusion: in particular for vulnerable and remote communities like the ferry linked isles. • Sustainable and accessible services for all. • Community wellbeing and mental health. • Community wealth building for future generations.
Is the proposal or change strategically important?	Strategic plans include major investment plans, new strategic frameworks or plans such as annual budgets, locality plans or corporate plans. Where a proposal is identified as strategic, evidence relating to socio-economic impacts and inequalities will be required in the relevant section Yes.
State who is or may be affected by this proposal or change, and how?	Whole communities, groups or individuals residing in Orkney. Visitors to Orkney.

	Employees of Orkney Islands Council.
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this proposal or change?	In the lead up to the original Council Plan 2023-28, an extensive consultation exercise was run by the Council, Voluntary Action Orkney and the LEADER Local action group took place between October 2021 and March 2022. This consultation, Orkney Matters, used a variety of methods to encourage and engage members of the community including those lesser-heard voices, residents of ferry-linked isles and young people. Evidence was also drawn from the National Islands Plan Survey conducted in October 2020 in relation to issues including employment, transport, housing, fuel poverty, health and social care, climate change and education. Public consultation on the draft plan further evidenced the need to address the increasing cost of living and impact of socio-economic disadvantage. In addition, feedback highlighted the need to prioritise wellbeing and accessible transport, and these are identified as underpinning core principles of the Council Plan which will guide future decision making across all the aims. The Council Plan, and carried forward into the Mid-Term Plan, focusses on key strategic priorities rather than the full range of services delivered by the Council. Feedback from the public consultation was also to be used to help inform plans and projects developed to deliver the identified outcomes through specific Equality Impact Assessments of their own. The impact on islands communities is addressed in a specific Islands Communities Impact Assessment.
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.	There is a growing body of research on equalities issues on islands, much of which is concerned with socio-economic inequality, and unequal access to services, in addition to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. The Orkney Partnership has long considered peripherality to be an equality issue and this is reflected in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, last issued in 2020.

	Orkney's most deprived datazones overall are heavily skewed towards the ferry-linked isles and certain areas of Kirkwall. Looking at individual domains within the SIMD, 14 of Orkney's 29 datazones are among the most deprived 10% in Scotland for 'Access' (to services) with a score of 698 or less, with Hoy, Walls and Flotta scoring only 12. The ferry-linked isles were selected as the area covered by Orkney's first Locality Plan 2018-21 and a Place Standard consultation was conducted to inform this plan, the results of which can be found here. The Scottish Government's Islands Team commissioned a survey in 2020 from the James Hutton Institute to inform the implementation of the National Islands Plan. This survey covered all six local authorities with islands in Scotland and, in response to requests from the island LAs, divides respondents into "mainland" and "isles" so for Orkney, they are reported as Orkney Mainland (including the linked south isles) and Orkney Outer Isles. Fieldwork took place in October 2020 and it is planned to repeat the survey every two years, providing a resource for longitudinal analysis. The first National Islands Plan Survey report was published in July 2021 and the base data can be interrogated in detail in a data explorer. A key equality issue over the three years prior to the Council Plan 2023-28 being published was the impact of Covid-19 and the Scottish Government research on this is available here. Many inequalities were deepened by the pandemic and these impacts were going at the time the Council Plan 2023-28 was published.
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 The Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.	As set out within the previous Equality Impact Assessment for the Council Plan 2023-28, it was stated that the Council's Strategic Planning Framework ensured that our priorities and activities align to achieve positive outcomes for our communities. The Council Plan 2023-28 is a high-level strategic plan and its strategic priorities aim to address persistent inequality of opportunity and socio-economic disadvantage – which is maintained within this new Mid-Term Review 2026-28. A wide range of evidence was considered in helping to inform the Council Plan 2023-28 with the main sources being:

	• Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation • National Islands Plan Survey report • Scottish Government Child Poverty Dashboard • Scottish Household Survey • Scottish House Condition Survey (includes data on fuel poverty and home energy efficiency)
Could the proposal or change have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?	Equality, fairness and inclusion are overarching principles for the delivery of the Council Plan – and this is to be maintained within the Mid-Term Review - and each project will have an individual Equality Impact Assessment as part of the usual governance process demonstrating due regard to the aims of the Equality Act (2010).
1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.	No differential impact currently identified.
2. Sex: a man or a woman.	No differential impact currently identified.
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No differential impact currently identified.
4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No differential impact currently identified.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No differential impact currently identified.
6. Age: people of different ages.	Likely positive impact for all age groups. A significant area of focus in the Council Plan 2023-28 has been increasing opportunities for young people, and families with children to remain in or move to Orkney to improve the demographic imbalance in Orkney. An example of an outcome already achieved in this area is free ferry travel for U22s. Outcomes also seek to improve experiences for older people in terms of increased choice over support and services.

7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No differential impact currently identified.
8. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	Likely positive impact. The Council Plan, and maintained within this Mid-Term Review, seeks to focus on the most vulnerable in the community and accessibility is identified as an overarching principle for the delivery of the plan. Outcomes relating to living independently with increased choice, access to opportunities being fairer and more equitable and flexible pathways in employment support improved experiences for those with disabilities. Outcomes also seek to promote the wellbeing of our communities including improved mental health.
9. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No differential impact currently identified.
10. Caring responsibilities	Likely positive impact. Outcomes seek to improve experiences for people in terms of increased choice over support and services.
11. Socio-economic disadvantage.	Likely positive impact. Many people experienced hardship during the pandemic, which exacerbated underlying long term disadvantage. Others have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage for the first time. Outcomes address hardship with a key focus on the reduction of poverty and disadvantage.
12. Care experienced	Likely positive impact. Outcomes relating to access to opportunities being fairer and more equitable and flexible pathways in employment support improved experiences for those who are care experienced.

3. Impact Assessment

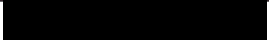
Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	Yes
Does the analysis above identify any potential negative impacts?	No
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes

4. Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Please complete the following action plan where you have identified any differential impacts or potential negative impacts in Section 3 of the Equality Impact Assessment.

Impact Identified	Action to be taken	Owner	How will it be monitored	Date Action to be completed

5. Sign and Date

Signature:	
Name:	Ross Cunningham
Date:	28 May 2026

Island Communities Impact Assessment

Council Plan, Mid-Term Review, 2026-28 and accompanying Delivery Plan

Preliminary Considerations	Response
Please provide a brief description or summary of the policy, strategy or service under review for the purposes of this assessment.	The Council Plan 2023-2028 is the Council's primary strategic plan. It sets out the strategic priorities which will drive Council policy during the plan period and the main outcomes which the Council is aiming to achieve. This new Mid-Term review document is a refreshed and updated version of that Plan covering the remaining years of the original Plan between 2026-28.
Step 1 – Develop a clear understanding of your objectives	Response
What are the objectives of the policy, strategy or service?	The purpose of the Mid-Term review, as with the Council Plan 2023-28, is to chart the direction of the Council through to 2028 and beyond. The plan period includes the first year of the incoming Council in 2027 while they develop their own plan. The Mid-Term review reaffirms the four strategic priorities which will drive future Council policy making. These are: • Growing our economy • Strengthening our communities • Developing our infrastructure • Transforming our Council
Do you need to consult?	Consultation has been conducted as described below, and no further consultation is required at this stage.
How are islands identified for the purpose of the policy, strategy or service?	Orkney Islands Council is an islands authority and is one of the statutory consultees listed in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 for other public authorities conducting their own ICIA. When considering the impact of national policy on the Council Plan, comparison may be

	made with the UK or Scottish mainland where national policy has a differential impact on islands in general, or Orkney in particular. When conducting our own ICIA, in accordance with statutory requirements special consideration is given to individual islands, and to the ferry-linked isles as a group, where their circumstances and/or the effects of the Council Plan may be different from those of Orkney as a whole.
What are the intended impacts/outcomes and how do these potentially differ in the islands?	The strategic priorities and aims in the Council Plan are: Growing our economy: • We will reduce poverty and disadvantage and minimise the effect of the cost-of living crisis. • We will create favourable conditions for sustainable economic growth. • We will work towards becoming net zero where practical and affordable. Strengthening our communities: • We will support communities to develop local solutions and deliver what is important to them. • We will establish the highest standards of public support and protection. • We will widen access to opportunities for better learning, achievement and wellbeing. Developing our infrastructure: • We will invest in homes, supporting choice, inclusion and economic growth. • We will remove barriers to digital connectivity and vital transport. • We will invest in projects that further our economic ambitions.

	Transforming our council: • We will develop ways of working that put people at the heart of what we do. • We will establish a culture that motivates staff to do the right things at the right time. • We will develop business approaches that are fit for purpose and give people direct access to services wherever possible. Differential effects on the ferry-linked isles (as described in the previous ICIA on the Council Plan 2023-28): Access to services is significantly worse on most of the outer isles due in large part to sub standard transport infrastructure and constraints on transport service provision, and sub standard or non-existent broadband / mobile infrastructure. This inequality is contributing to the continuing depopulation of the ferry-linked isles. Many of the ferry-linked isles have a relatively older population than the Mainland, putting their sustainability at risk. The isles also proved particularly vulnerable to income and food insecurity early in the first lockdown. Incomes tend to be lower in the isles and prices in the isles shops are necessarily higher due to the added cost of freight. None of the measures in the draft Council Plan are expected to exacerbate the situation on the isles. Many of our proposals are intended to contribute directly or indirectly to improving outcomes in the isles and reducing the existing disparity.
Is the policy, strategy or service new?	This Mid-Term Review is a refreshed and updated version of the Council Plan 2023-28. The Council has maintained a strategic plan since 2002. This Council Plan 2023-28 replaced the previous Council Strategic Plan 2018-23.

Step 2 – Gather your data and identify your stakeholders	Response
What data is available about the current situation in the islands?	As set out in the previous ICIA on the Council Plan 2023-28, most published data sources cover Orkney as a whole, which does not enable comparison between the Orkney Mainland / linked south isles and the ferry-linked isles. There are three main national sources of data which differentiate between the two: the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 2020), which is reported at datazone level, Scotland's Census data, some of which is available at individual island level, and the National Islands Plan Survey report. At the time of the ICIA on the Council Plan 2023-28, the 2020 National Islands Plan survey was the most useful national data available at isles level. Survey responses were split between Orkney Mainland (630) and Orkney Outer Isles (160), and all of the survey data can be interrogated online via the data explorer. Questions covered a wide range of topics including employment and business opportunities, transport, housing, fuel poverty, digital connectivity, health, social care, the environment, climate change, culture and education. Locally, the best source of survey data at the time the Council Plan 2023-28 was published was the Orkney Matters consultation conducted by Orkney Islands Council between October 2021 and March 2022. This included information gathered via virtual meetings for representatives from small groups of islands so that their particular experiences could be captured.
Do you need to consult?	Consultation was done in two stages. Pre-drafting, the main input was from Orkney Matters. Elected Members have also contributed feedback from their conversations with constituents during campaigning for the local election of 5 May 2022. A further stage of public consultation was carried out once the new Council Plan had been approved as a work in progress by the Policy

	and Resources Committee in November 2022. This was intended to ascertain whether the Orkney public was content with the strategic priorities identified by Elected Members and with the main measures proposed to address them. This consultation informed the final version of the Council Plan 2023-28 to be submitted to Members for approval and adoption in February 2023.
How does any existing data differ between islands?	All data sources which differentiate between the isles and the Orkney mainland show differences between the two. SIMD 2020 shows a higher degree of socio-economic deprivation in datazones covering the ferry-linked isles, due to difficulty in accessing services and lower incomes. National Islands Plan survey results show poorer results for many services on the ferry-linked isles. Some sample data are given below. National Islands Plan Survey. (selected questions). It is easy for young people (under 40) who want to live and work here to do so (% agree or strongly agree). Orkney Mainland (including linked south isles) 53.4% Orkney Outer Isles 21.3% Parents have access to childcare services that suit their working hours (% agree or strongly agree). Orkney Mainland (including linked south isles) 29.2% Orkney Outer Isles 8.5% When I make journeys to or from my home, it is easy connecting between different forms of transport (% agree or strongly agree). Orkney Mainland (including linked south isles) 45.9%

	Orkney Outer Isles 29.1% In the past year my home sometimes felt uncomfortably cold in the winter (% agree or strongly agree). Orkney Mainland (including linked south isles) 31.5% Orkney Outer Isles 38.0% My internet connection at home is fast enough to do what I want online (% agree or strongly agree). Orkney Mainland (including linked south isles) 69.1% Orkney Outer Isles 45.0% Population data estimated locally at January 2021 showed that the long-term trend towards depopulation of the ferry-linked isles had continued since the last Census of 2011. While Orkney's population had risen steadily overall, there had been a drift away from the isles into Kirkwall and the age profile on the isles had risen.
Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place?	The Council has long recognised the need to improve the resilience of Orkney's most disadvantaged communities, notably the ferry-linked isles. Even prior to the introduction of ICIA, new policy was screened for its impact on isles communities and amended as necessary to mitigate against any unintended disadvantage or consequences. The Council is therefore well accustomed to viewing all policy through an "isles lens". Council officers routinely conduct ICIA on new and revised policy, plans and services. In addition to the ferry-linked isles as a group, officers consider the differential effect of policy on individual islands, as required by the ICIA process.

	In our capacity as a statutory consultation authority, the Council is routinely consulted on the effect of proposed national policy on islands in general and Orkney in particular. The Council Plan notes that the Council is happy to support national policy where it will be of benefit to Orkney, but is always ready to challenge new or existing national policy which will disadvantage Orkney. ICIA offers a channel through which to do this. In the Council Plan 2023-28, the priority theme “Strengthening our communities” addresses the disparity of outcomes on the isles, mainly through the aim: • We will support communities to develop local solutions and deliver what is important to them, As well as the associated target outcomes: • Engagement with communities is effective and clearly influences decisions and drives improvement. • Communities feel in control of their priorities and the decisions that affect them. Most of the isles have their own community-led local development plans and it was made clear by local representatives consulted during Orkney Matters that they wish to remain in control of development on their islands and did not want additional plans created by third parties. Consequently, the Council Plan commits to support local plans rather than duplicate them, and to help each island to achieve the outcomes of most importance to their own community.
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	Many of the remaining priorities and aims which also aimed to contribute to improved equality of outcomes on the isles, included: • We will reduce poverty and disadvantage and minimise the effect of the cost-of-living crisis. • We will remove barriers to digital connectivity and vital transport. • We will develop business approaches that are fit for purpose and give people direct access to services wherever possible.
Step 3 – Consultation	Response
Who do you need to consult with?	Residents of all Orkney's island communities, community planning partner agencies and any other interested stakeholders.
How will you carry out your consultation and in what timescales?	A public consultation on the draft Council Plan was conducted between 23 December 2022 and 20 January 2023. The draft Council Plan was previously considered and approved for consultation by the Policy and Resources Committee at their meeting of 22 November 2022. The Council Plan consultation was conducted in parallel with the public consultation on the new draft Community Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan) 2023-30. The two consultations were co-ordinated and conducted as a single exercise both to avoid duplication and to emphasise the relationship and interaction between the two plans. The consultation offered a range of options for public response, with the primary channel being an online survey but with paper copies posted out and written responses accepted where this was the channel preferred by respondents. Respondents were asked which island they lived on, in order to differentiate between the answers received from those on the Orkney Mainland/south linked isles, or on the ferry linked isles. To avoid

	breach of confidentiality for those on smaller islands, we included an option to say simply which of those groups they are in. A range of options was offered for public response, with the primary channel being an online survey but with paper copies posted out and written responses accepted where that was the channel preferred by respondents. 84 responses were received via Smart Survey online and a further 5 were submitted on paper, most of which were in the form of free commentary rather than responding to the survey questions. The consultation analysis took all responses into account. One question asked respondents where they lived with three options: • Orkney mainland and south linked isles • Orkney ferry-linked isles • Somewhere other than Orkney This enabled answers to be mapped to location and also to correlate with answers to the National Islands Plan survey. 9 respondents said they were on the ferry linked isles, which is proportionate to the total survey respondents. Respondents were not asked which island they were on to avoid identifying individuals who preferred to remain anonymous. Given the changing political and financial landscapes, the Delivery Plan was intended to be a working document to track planned projects. As a working document it is more agile and flexible than the main strategic plan and will be reviewed, consulted on and updated in response to feedback on an ongoing basis. Individual projects were also to be consulted on separately, and subject to Island Community Impact Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment at the appropriate stage in their development.
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What questions will you ask when considering how to address island realities?	The consultation asked questions about: • Whether respondents were in agreement with the priorities, aims and outcomes selected in the Council Plan 2023-2028. • What they would change (if anything) about those priorities or outcomes. • Whether anything in either plan might impact differently on their own island compared with any other island (positively or negatively) or with the Orkney Mainland/linked south isles. • Whether there are any unfair or unintended impacts on their own island which they felt required mitigation. • How that mitigation might be achieved.
What information has already been gathered through consultations and what concerns have been raised previously by island communities?	The results of the National Islands Plan survey and Orkney Matters are noted above. The National Islands Plan survey revealed significant disadvantages in access to services, facilities and employment opportunities for isles residents compared with Orkney Mainland residents. Concerns raised at Orkney Matters meetings by island representatives included: • Lifeline ferry services – sustainability, critical need for new fleet, timetabling to enable access to services and social events. • Limited capacity of inter-island air travel. • Community-led planning with a single plan for each island or community • The need for housing to attract new residents • Gaps in digital connectivity • The potential for community hubs for local/visiting workers • Mental health and access to healthy living/gym facilities

	Initial analysis of the January 2023 consultation output showed that 64% of respondents answered yes to the question “Do you think these are the right priorities for the Council to be working on?”. This fell to 55% of those on the ferry-linked isles. There was less consensus on the proposed aims and outcomes, with 45% feeling they were about right (33% on the ferry-linked isles), 22% saying no (11% on the ferry-linked isles) and 33% unsure (33% on the ferry linked isles). Re. the ICIA question, 19% felt the plan could have unfair or unintended consequences for where they lived, 30% disagreed and 51% didn’t know. Figures for those on the ferry linked isles were very similar.
Is your consultation robust and meaningful and sufficient to comply with the Section 7 duty?	We believe the two consultations taken together – Orkney Matters and the public consultation on the draft plan – to be compliant with the Section 7 duty with regard to the Council Plan 2023-2028. This Mid-Term Review is a refreshed and updated version of this original document.
Step 4 – Assessment	Response
Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities?	With regard to island communities within Orkney, depopulation is unique to the ferry-linked isles. Demographic balance is a concern everywhere, hence its prioritisation in the National Islands Plan, and is exacerbated on the ferry-linked isles. Other impacts, e.g. limited transport availability and substandard digital connectivity, are also exacerbated on the isles but are not unique to any particular island and affect some parts of the Orkney Mainland too. The assessment did not identify any unique impacts of the Council Plan itself on individual island communities, other than those which are designed purposely to improve services, including transport and digital connectivity.
Does your assessment identify any potential barriers or wider impacts?	As set out in the ICIA for the Council Plan 2023-28, there are significant cost barriers to the improvement of connectivity

	infrastructure. These are contributing to the depopulation problem on the isles.
How will you address these?	Measures to address these issues were included in the Council Plan 2023-28, which has been maintained within the refreshed and updated Mid-Term Review.
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). If your answer is No to the above question, a full ICIA will NOT be required and you can proceed to Step 6. If the answer is Yes, an ICIA must be prepared and you should proceed to Step 5. To form your opinion, the following questions should be considered: • 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)? • Are these different effects likely? • Are these effects significantly different? • Could the effect amount to a disadvantage for an island community compared to the Scottish mainland or between island groups? Yes. Orkney's different island communities all have different circumstances, expectations and needs. These are longstanding and predate the Council Plan 2023-28 and this Mid-Term Review. The plan is intended to have a differential effect on different communities where this will improve the circumstances of those in most need. It is not anticipated that this effect will amount to a disadvantage for any particular island community.	
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.	We believe that the Council Plan 2023-28 and the Mid-Term Review contains measures to address all of the key disparities in outcomes which isles residents currently experience, and that these documents do not contain anything which would further disadvantage these communities. Further ICIA will be conducted on individual projects at the appropriate stage which will help to identify any further mitigation which should be put in place.
Consider alternative delivery mechanisms and whether further consultation is required.	Not so much an alternative but a supporting delivery mechanism is the Community Plan (which incorporates Orkney's statutory Local Outcomes Improvement Plan or LOIP). A Community Plan for 2023-30 was in development in parallel with the Council Plan. The Community Plan addresses strategic priorities which require concerted partnership action, and in the new plan these are expected to be: • Cost of Living • Sustainable Development • Local Equality This group was to take forward the work begun in the previous Locality Plan 2018-21 and address socio-economic inequality in Orkney's most disadvantaged areas, including the ferry-linked isles. It was to add value to what the Council is able to do on its own in its particular areas of responsibility, as well as addressing issues which are the responsibility of other lead agencies. Further consultation is required to ensure that in the Council Plan and the Mid-Term Review have not overlooked any unfair, unforeseen or unintended consequences which would be apparent to isles residents. We would also welcome their feedback on any additional mitigation measures required.

Describe how these alternative delivery mechanisms will improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	Partnership attention can make a significant difference. For example, as included within the previous ICIA on the Council Plan 2023-28, a Partnership short life working group was working to address the issue of inequality in First Responder provision, and the terms and conditions for First Responders on different islands, both within Orkney and in comparison with other island authorities. The aim of this group was to achieve the levelling up of First Responder provision on every island to the best model currently in operation. While the statutory responsibility for emergency response sits with other agencies, the Council led the group in order to support those agencies to find a resolution. Ultimately, as set out in the previous ICIA, the long-term success of the Council Plan 2023-28, which has been refreshed and updated with the Mid-Term Review, will be measured in a reversal of the depopulation trend on the ferry-linked isles and a more sustainable demographic balance across all of Orkney's communities. There is no shortage of people wanting to live in Orkney, our task is to put the infrastructure and services in place to support them.
Identify resources required to improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	As outlined in the previous ICIA, the resources required to improve outcomes permanently for isles residents are substantial. Replacement of the existing inter-island ferry fleet will cost many millions. Extending superfast broadband provision to all island premises is both a financial and logistical challenge. These issues will take years to resolve but it is important to keep them on the agenda so that when an opportunity arises to make progress, we can move fast. The decision of the Scottish Government to create a task force to resolve the ferry funding issue attests to that. Other issues may require less resource but more imagination and flexibility. For example, Covid-related lockdown led to many more services being provided remotely, which was of huge benefit to isles residents. Our priority of "Transforming our Council" will look at ways to mainstream

	remote provision where it will help to contribute to the sustainability of island communities.
Stage 6 – Making adjustments to your work	Response
Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different communities?	Yes, where necessary to achieve equality of outcomes.
Do you need to consult with island communities in respect of mechanisms or mitigations?	No further consultation is required in addition to the work which was conducted ahead of the Council Plan 2023-2028 prior to publication. The Mid-Term Review is a refreshed and updated version of the current Council Plan. Further consultation will take place as and when required with regard to the Delivery Plan and specific projects. In addition, a full consultation process will be undertaken when the current Council Plan 2023-28 and the Mid-Term Review is fully replaced with a new Council Plan covering the next five years following 2028.
Have island circumstances been factored into the evaluation process?	Yes.
Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring?	Yes.
How will outcomes be measured on the islands?	The Council Plan includes a selection of indicators to measure differential impacts on islands. Baselines are based on the most recent published data, and targets are for 2027-28, the final year of the plan. For preference we have picked indicators which are collected and published nationally. This enables comparison to be made with other councils as well as longitudinal comparisons over time. Comparisons with other island authorities have been added where appropriate for further context. Where necessary we collect bespoke data although we avoid this where an alternative source is available, due to the resource implications. The National Islands Plan

	repeat surveys are particularly useful as they are conducted by Scottish Government and split out the ferry-linked isles.
How has the policy, strategy or service affected island communities?	Previous iterations of the Council Plan have helped to support isles communities and thereby slowed depopulation but have not succeeded in resolving the longstanding inequalities in service provision with regard to digital connectivity, transport and access to services. Not all of these are within the control of the Council but we have lobbied vigorously on behalf of island communities and continue to do so in the expectation of achieving better outcomes during the lifetime of this plan. We will monitor, evaluate and publicly report outcomes periodically throughout the remainder of this 2023-28 Council Plan period.
How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future policy making and service delivery?	The Council has always taken into consideration the impact of policy and plans on the ferry-linked isles, so that aspect of ICIA is not new. The requirement to produce and publish an ICIA encourages more detailed consideration of the circumstances of individual islands and gives those islands a stronger voice in influencing policy making and service delivery. The process leads to more transparency in decision making and should ultimately result in more equitable policy.
Step 7 – Publishing your ICIA	Response
Have you presented your ICIA in an Easy Read format?	Not specifically. We try to use plain language and avoid jargon at all times.
Does it need to be presented in Gaelic or any other language?	No. Gaelic is not indigenous to Orkney. Like all Council documentation it can and will be made available in other languages or formats on request.
Where will you publish your ICIA and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it?	The ICIA will be published on the Council website and will be readily accessible. As with all our publications, hard copies and other languages / formats will be made available on request.

Who will signoff your final ICIA and why?	The Council Plan Mid Term Review and Delivery Plan documents and ICIA will come before Policy and Resources Committee on 16 June 2026 for consideration and to seek approval.
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ICIA completed by:	Ross Cunningham
Position:	Service Manager, Policy & Communications
Signature:	
Date complete:	28 May 2026

ICIA approved by:	Gavin Mitchell
Position:	Head of Corporate Governance
Signature:	
Date complete:	01 June 2026