

Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan
**Island Communities Impact
Assessment**



Blank Page

Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan
Islands Communities Impact Assessment

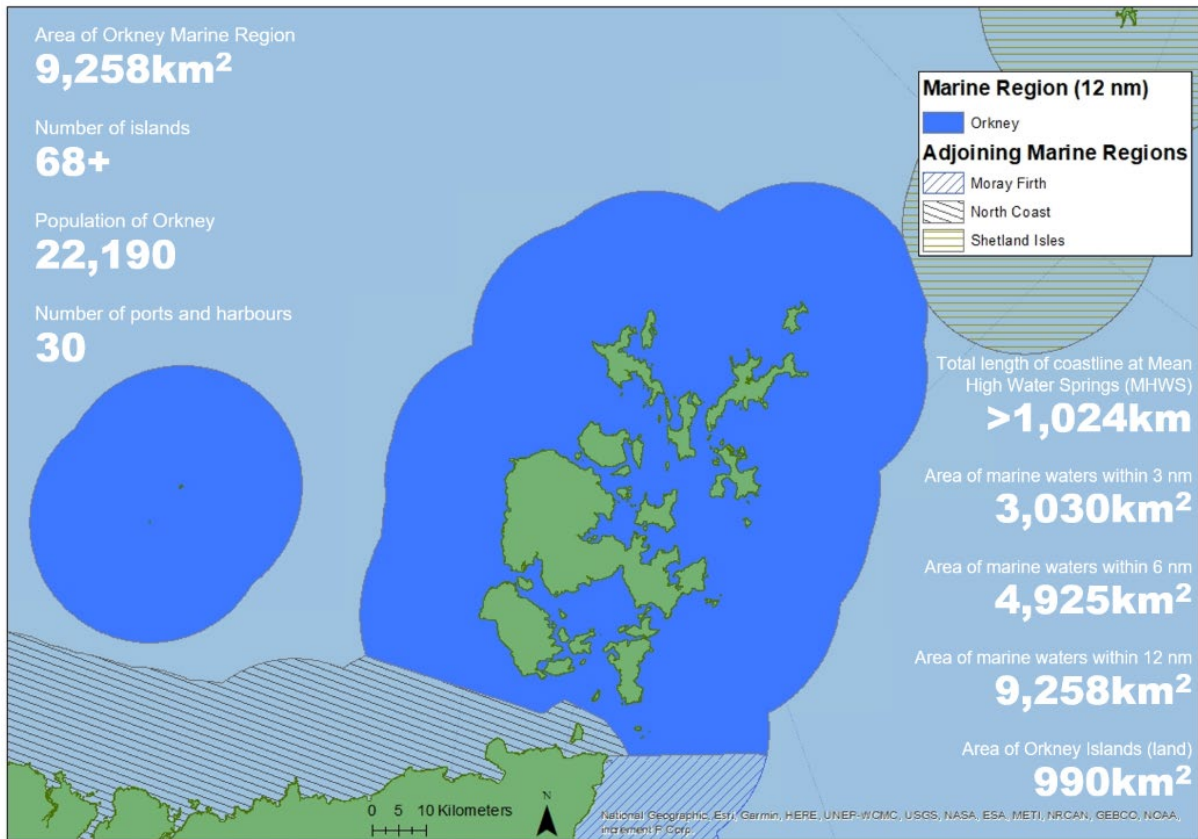


Figure 1: Overview of Orkney Islands Marine Region

Contents

Topic	Page
Contents	<i>ii</i>
Acronyms	<i>iii</i>
Background	1
Step 1: Define the Issue	2
Step 2: Understand the situation	5
Step 3: Consultation	16
Step 4: Assessment ICIA required?	16
Step 5: Preparing the ICIA	17
Step 6: Making adjustments	17
Appendix 1 Orkney Islands Council Islands Communities Impact Assessment	19
Appendix 2: Orkney Marine Planning Advisory Group members	24
Appendix 3: Organisations contacted for input	25
Appendix 4: Orkney Islands Marine Region: State of the Environment Summary	26
Appendix 5: Feedback from early engagement island visits (Spring 2022)	31

List of Figures

Figure 1: Overview of Orkney Islands Marine Region	i
Figure 2: Map highlighting permanent populated isles of Orkney based on census data	6
Figure 3: Population change across Scotland	11
Figure 4: Map highlighting some the recently previously populated isles according to census data from 1961 – 2011	13
Figure 5: Map of designated nature conservation sites within the Orkney marine region.	15

List of Tables

Table 1: Draft objectives of the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan	4
Table 2: Population of Orkney Islands	7
Table 3: Previously recently inhabited islands in Orkney	14

Acronyms

ICIA	Island Communities Impact Assessment
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
OIC	Orkney Islands Council
OIRMP	Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan
OLDP	Orkney Local Development Plan
SoEA	State of the Environment Assessment
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

Island Communities Impact Assessment: Orkney Islands marine region

Background

This report provides an assessment of impacts on island communities in relation to the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan (OIRMP). The OIRMP guides sustainable development, activities and use in the Orkney Islands marine region, whilst ensuring environmental protection. The statutory policies and spatial information guides decision making on marine licensing and consenting.

The production of the Plan is a statutory function of the Council in accordance with The Delegation of Functions (Regional Marine Plan for the Scottish Marine Region for the Orkney Islands) Direction 2020¹. The Orkney Islands marine region includes the marine waters around Sule Stack and Sule Skerry, as shown in Figure 1 above. This area covers 9,258 km² from Mean High Water Springs to 12 nautical miles (nm).

The Island Communities Impact Assessments (Publication and Review of Decisions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 were laid on 3 November and came into force on 23 December 2020. This means that the duty to carry out an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) became a legal requirement for relevant authorities (listed in the Act) from 23 December 2020 and requires Scottish Government and relevant authorities to take island issues into account when developing or reviewing policies, strategies or services². This report has been prepared with regard to the steps outlined in the '*Island Communities Impact Assessments: Guidance and Toolkit*'³ and is in accordance with Sections 7 and 12 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018⁴.

As the OIRMP only applies to the Orkney Island marine region, any potential differential impacts in relation to mainland Scotland are not applicable, as per the guidance provided in the '*Island Communities Impact Assessments: Guidance and Toolkit*' document⁵. However, this report examines if there are likely to be any significant differences in application of the OIRMP policies between the different Orkney Island communities.

Appendix 1 sets out key information in relation to the ICIA under the Orkney Islands Council ICIA format.

¹ [Delegation of Regional Marine Planning Functions in the Orkney Islands 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/delegation-of-regional-marine-planning-functions-in-the-orkney-islands-2020/pages/1-1.aspx)

² [National Islands Plan Annual Report 2020 \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-islands-plan-annual-report-2020/pages/1-1.aspx)

³ [Carrying out your Island Communities Impact Assessment - Island communities impact assessments: guidance and toolkit - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/carrying-out-your-island-communities-impact-assessment-island-communities-impact-assessments-guidance-and-toolkit/pages/1-1.aspx)

⁴ [Islands \(Scotland\) Act 2018 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/section/7)

⁵ [Carrying out your Island Communities Impact Assessment - Island communities impact assessments: guidance and toolkit - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/carrying-out-your-island-communities-impact-assessment-island-communities-impact-assessments-guidance-and-toolkit/pages/1-1.aspx)

Step 1: Define the issue

The OIRMP enables sustainable development and activities in the Orkney marine region by providing a strategic planned approach that supports:

- sustainable licensing, consenting and management decisions in relation to development and activities in the Orkney Islands marine region;
- marine developers in early identification of localities of most and least constraint;
- environmental protection, and where appropriate, enhancement measures, to satisfy statutory requirements and policy commitments; and
- provision of identifiable socio-economic benefits for local communities and wider stakeholders.

The Vision of the Plan is:

‘The Orkney Islands marine region is clean, healthy, safe and productive; Orkney’s marine and coastal environment is rich in biodiversity and managed sustainably to support thriving and resilient local communities’.

The draft objectives of Plan are in Table 1 below; they relate to environmental, economic and climate change factors.

The intended outcomes of the Plan are to:

- Aid statutory decision-making regarding marine licensing and consenting by the Marine Directorate of the Scottish Government, Local Authorities and other regulators;
- Enable sustainable development in the marine environment;
- Provide local marine regional data and information to allow greater certainty for developers regarding prospective proposals;
- Allow more local involvement, ownership and input into decision-making about specific issues within the local area;
- Provide a transparent plan-making process and promote good governance; and
- Ensure marine environment is protected.

The Plan therefore also contributes to a number of the strategic objectives of the National Islands Plan⁶ e.g. Strategic Objective 2: *Sustainable Economic Development*; Strategic Objective 8: *Environmental Wellbeing and Biosecurity*; Strategic Objective 9: *Climate Change and Energy*; Strategic Objective 10: *Empowered Island Communities and Strong Local Partnership*; Strategic Objective 13: *Implementation*.

National Planning Framework (NPF4)⁷ guides the development and use of land to 2045. It forms part of the development plan and therefore influences the day-to-day

⁶ [The National Plan for Scotland's Islands - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-islands-plan-2022/pages/10/)

⁷ National Planning Framework 4 - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/>

decisions on local planning matters. It focuses on:

- Sustainable places
- Liveable places
- Productive places

In terms of policy, NPF4 is linked to the outcomes of the National Performance Framework. It aims to rebalance the planning system so that climate change and nature recovery are the primary guiding principles for all our plans and all our decisions.

The Government's aim is to also help stimulate the green economy by facilitating innovation, greener design and place-based solutions.

NPF4 is required by law to contribute to six high level outcomes:

- Meeting the housing needs of people living in Scotland including, in particular, the housing needs for older people and disabled people,
- Improving the health and wellbeing of people living in Scotland,
- Increasing the population of rural areas of Scotland,
- Improving equality and eliminating discrimination,
- Meeting any targets relating to the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases, and
- Securing positive effects for biodiversity.

It also includes land use planning policies supporting key issues for island communities such as engagement, transport, local living, housing, spaces and places, rural and coastal policies, aquaculture, health and wellbeing and connectivity.

The OIRMP, its policies, along with all the supporting assessments, are applicable to all of the islands' regional marine waters and communities in Orkney equally. The Plan, including all aims, objectives and policies, along with all the supporting assessments, has been modified in light of public and stakeholder consultation in order to pay due regard to the National Marine Plan and NPF4.

Table 1: Objectives of the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan

Number	Objective
1	A clear strategic direction is provided for development, activities and use in the Orkney Islands marine region and there is greater certainty for prospective developers, investors and local communities.
2	Development, activities and use are managed within an ecosystem approach, to protect and, where appropriate, enhance the biological, chemical and physical functioning of the marine and coastal environment, including the management of cumulative impacts.
3	A rapid and just transition to a low-carbon economy is supported to achieve net-zero commitments.
4	Mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change is supported.
5	Socio-economic benefits and prosperity are delivered for local communities and the wider economy.
6	The well-being of local communities and the amenity of marine and coastal places are protected and enhanced.
7	Reliable information is provided on existing and proposed coastal and marine development, activities, use and assets.
8	Spatial planning and data are provided, enabling sustainable coexistence and synergies between existing and new marine development, activities and use, and the environment.
9	Plan users are assisted in navigating the relevant legislative and policy frameworks more easily and effectively.
10	Local communities are effectively engaged in decisions affecting the Orkney Islands marine region.

Step 2: Understand the situation

Introduction

The Orkney archipelago consists of 68+ islands over an area of 990km². Sixteen of the islands are populated according to census data, some uninhabited islands are still used for farming, whilst others are relatively small rocky outcrops (see Figure 2). In addition, although the 2022 census does not show any population for Papa Stronsay, there are currently nine monks living on the island (per comm).

In Orkney, no one lives further than five miles from the coast⁸; the vast majority live much closer. Thus, all Orkney communities are classed as ‘coastal’. The capital is Kirkwall; it, along with Stromness, are the two towns in Orkney, whilst the rest of the population live in villages, rural settlements and scattered housing across the Mainland Orkney parishes and Islands.

Orkney Mainland is connected to Lamb Holm and Glimps Holm, both unpopulated islands, and to the Islands of Burray and South Ronaldsay, via the Churchill Barriers. The rest of the populated islands are ferry and/or air connected; the Orkney Local Development Plan (OLDP)⁹ Strategy establishes the ‘Isles Approach’ which applies to this latter category:

- Eday
- Egilsay
- Flotta
- Graemsay
- Hoy
- North Ronaldsay
- Papa Westray
- Rousay
- Sanday
- Shapinsay
- Stronsay
- Westray
- Wyre

The Isles Approach is stated in the OLDP as “*Development within the islands, which support permanent resident populations and are served by public transport services, will be supported where it accords with relevant Plan policies and where it shall not place any unacceptable burden on existing infrastructure and services.*”

⁸ [Orkney Islands Marine Region: State of the Environment Assessment](#)

⁹ [Orkney Local Development Plan](#)

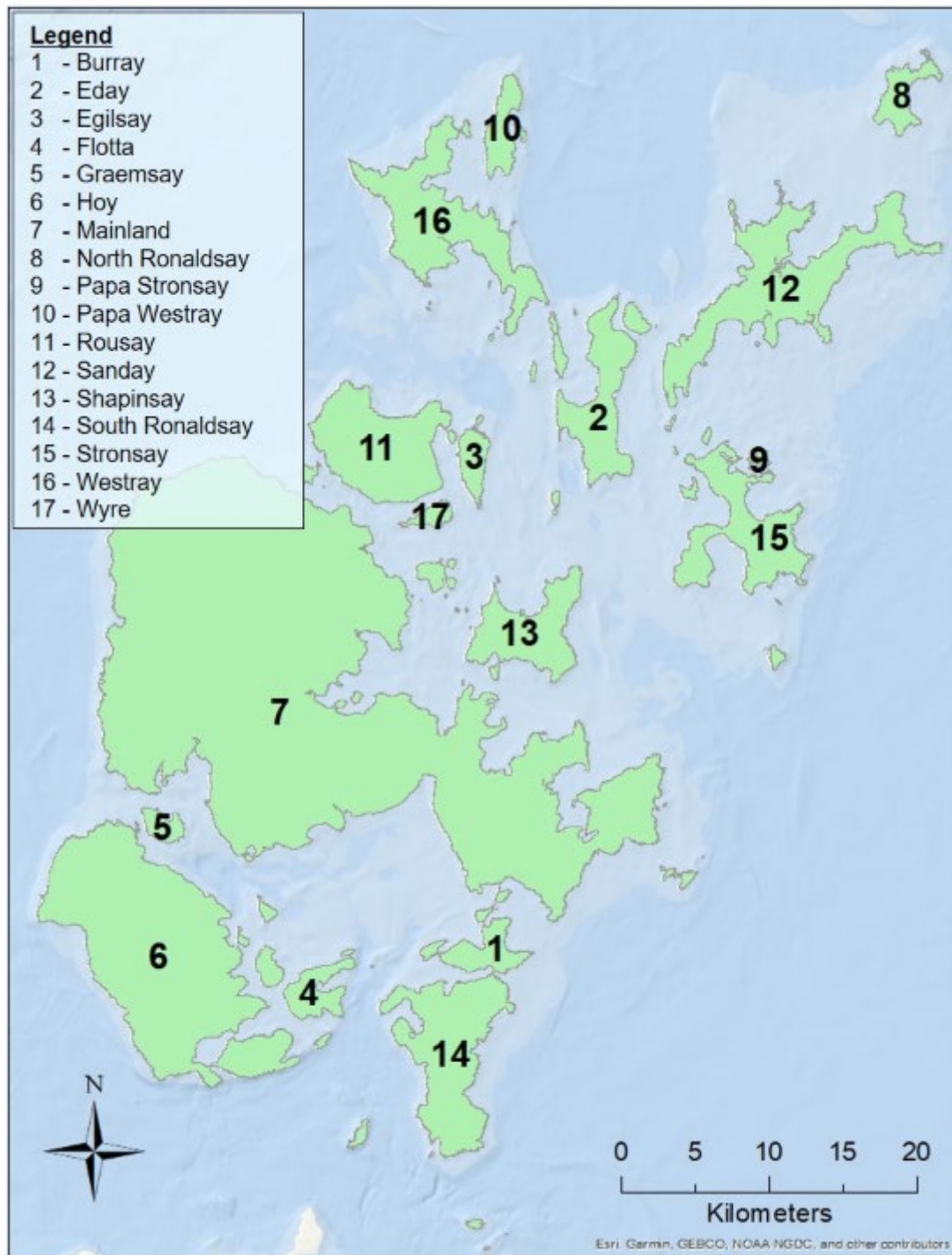


Figure 2: Map highlighting permanent populated isles of Orkney based on census data (Papa Stronsay excluded in Table 2 as not included in census data).

Orkney's Island Communities

Fragile areas

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) identified fragile areas across Scotland. Fragile areas are characterised by declining population; under-representation of young people within the population; lack of economic opportunities; below average income levels; problems with transport, and other issues reflecting their geographic location¹⁰.

Although somewhat dated, these HIE data are reflected in the population information below.

In Orkney, there were 5 data zones (2014 data zones) classed as fragile:

- S01004968: Rousay, Egilsay, Shapinsay and Wyre
- S01004969: North Ronaldsay, Sanday and Stronsay
- S01004970: Eday, Westray and Papay
- S01004971: Hoy, Flotta, South Walls and South Ronaldsay
- S01004972: Burray and St. Margaret Hope

These five data zones cover 14 of the 16 populated islands; South Walls is attached to Hoy by a causeway and Burray and South Ronaldsay are connected by the Churchill Barriers. The main area not classed as fragile is Mainland. Graemsay was classified as fragile but was included in the Stromness data zone (pers comm), therefore not covered in the list above.

Population

The Orkney population from the 2022 census is 21,961 and is estimated to be 22,000 for 2023, across 16 islands (see Tables 2). A small number of other islands e.g. Aukerry, Copinsay and Hunda have seasonal populations (see below).

Table 2: Population of Orkney Islands

Island	Population	Comment*
Burray	455	Burray lies between Mainland and South Ronaldsay, connected by the Churchill Barriers.
Eday	105	Situated centrally among the North Isles of Orkney, 14 miles north-east of Kirkwall, Eday, the isthmus isle, eight miles long and pinched at the waist, offers a unique blend of heather-clad hilly moorland with panoramic views over sea and islands, sheer cliffs, sweeping beaches and sand dunes and rich in archaeology. Most of the crofts and farms are located on the fertile coastal strip.
Flotta	79	Flotta has one of the most spectacular 360 degree panoramas in the UK: the sweep of the Hills of Hoy, the great expanse of Scapa Flow and the hills of Mainland Orkney beyond, to the east Burray and South Ronaldsay, completing the circle by looking out across the Pentland Firth to the Scottish mainland. Flotta was a strategic military base in both World Wars therefore contains much military history. Since the mid 1970s, Flotta has

¹⁰ [Highlands and Islands Enterprise | HIE](#)

Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan
Islands Communities Impact Assessment

Island	Population	Comment*
		been the location for an oil terminal that makes a significant contribution to Orkney's economy.
Graemsay	28 (2011 census)	<p>Graemsay is located in the Western approaches to Scapa Flow lying between Stromness on Orkney mainland and North Hoy, separated from the Mainland by Clestrain Sound. The island is 409 ha (1.58 sq mi) in area and is around two miles by a mile and half.</p> <p>Large parts of the island have been left largely undeveloped and are a haven for many wild plants. It is mainly crofted and has a predominantly ageing population.</p>
Hoy	416	<p>Hoy is the second largest island in Orkney, at 57 square miles. From the summit of Ward Hill, the highest point in the county at 1570 feet, every island in Orkney can be seen with the exception of Rysa Little, which is the nearest.</p> <p>Hoy has significant military history. During World War II, thousands of navy personnel were based at Lyness and the now deserted naval base has been converted to a visitor centre with many exhibits from both world wars and the scuttled German fleet. This, along with the Old Man of Hoy stack and the spectacular hills and wildlife, are key tourist attractions.</p> <p>Lyness is a key port facility.</p>
Papa Westray	101	Known locally as 'Papay' it is four miles long and a mile across at its widest point. With a history stretching back thousands of years, Papay's more recent past has seen plenty of positive projects bring a sense of vibrancy to the island. There's an annual arts festival, a fantastic community shop, one of Orkney's best hostels and a refurbished craft and heritage space, housed on the shore in the island's former kelp store.
Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre	268	<p>Rousay is known as the 'Egypt of the north' thanks to its collection of more than 150 ancient sites. A mile-long stretch on the south west coastline showcases some incredible locations, including the Iron Age Midhowe Broch, the 5000-year-old Midhowe Chambered Cairn, housed in an imposing hangar, and the excavations at Swandro.</p> <p>Three miles long by a mile and half wide, off the east coast of Rousay, Egilsay is a haven for birds, especially the rare Corncrake.</p> <p>Although only two miles long and a mile wide, Wyre has a history stretching back thousands of years. The island's main attraction is the substantial Cubbie Roo's Castle, the remains of an imposing structure built for 12th century Norse chieftain, Kolbein Hruga.</p>
Sanday and North	549	The largest of Orkney's north isles, Sanday has a land and seascape more akin to the Outer Hebrides, with beautiful beaches, sand dunes and machair, all set at the fringes of some of Orkney's most fertile farmland.

Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan
Islands Communities Impact Assessment

Island	Population	Comment*
Ronaldsay ¹¹		North Ronaldsay is the most northerly of the Orkney Islands and is three miles long and two miles wide, the island is famous for its rare breed of seaweed-eating sheep, which are contained on the seaward side of the island by a drystone dyke that encompasses the shoreline.
Shapinsay	302	A green, fertile, low-lying island, full of wildlife and boasting a vibrant community 25 minutes away by ferry from Kirkwall. The village of Balfour, an early example of a planned village, was built in the late 1700s. It still retains much of its original character, with the single street overlooked by stone cottages that originally housed workers on the sprawling Balfour estate, home of the grand Balfour Castle.
South Ronaldsay	988	Orkney's fourth largest island and home to St Margaret's Hope, known locally as 'the Hope'; possibly the most picturesque village in the archipelago.
Stronsay	327	Covering an area of 12½ square miles, it is the seventh largest island, known as the 'island of bays', due to the three large bays separated by two isthmuses: St Catherine's Bay to the west, the Bay of Holland to the south and Mill Bay to the east. The main village is Whitehall, home to a heritage centre.
Westray	576	At 18.2 square miles, it is the sixth largest island. The main village is Pierowall, with a heritage centre, the 15th-century Lady Kirk church and pedestrian ferry service to nearby Papa Westray island. Westray has a number of archaeological sites dating from 3500 BC, and remains of several Norse-Viking settlements. The spectacular sea cliffs around Noup Head are home to thousands of seabirds.
Mainland	17,805	Mainland Island covers an area of approximately 202 square miles; key areas are East and West Mainland respectively. It accounts for three-quarters of the population of Orkney and links the northern isles to the southern isles via air, ferry and Churchill Barriers. The main settlements are Kirkwall, Stromness, Dounby, Finstown and St Margaret's Hope. East Mainland contains fertile farmland, craggy coastlines and beautiful beaches, whilst West Mainland contains world-class archaeology and incredible coastlines.
Total	21,961	

* Data sources include www.orkney.com ; www.graemsay.org.uk ; [briefing-population-growth-and-decline-in-orkney-updated-6-january-2025.pdf](#) and [Sandside, Graemsay Website & blog ; The Orkney Islands of Scotland - WorldAtlas](#)

National Records of Scotland data shows that the population for Orkney decreased between 2022-2023 (see Figure 3).¹²

¹¹ The 2022 figure is based on the new zone of Island Groups 2022, which is compatible for Orkney, except that North Ronaldsay is now combined with Sanday and Egilsay and Wyre are now combined with Rousay.

¹² <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/mid-2023-population-estimates/?form=MG0AV3>

Percentage population change mid-2022 to mid-2023

- Population decrease
- Population increase of less than 0.8%
- Population increase of 0.8% or more

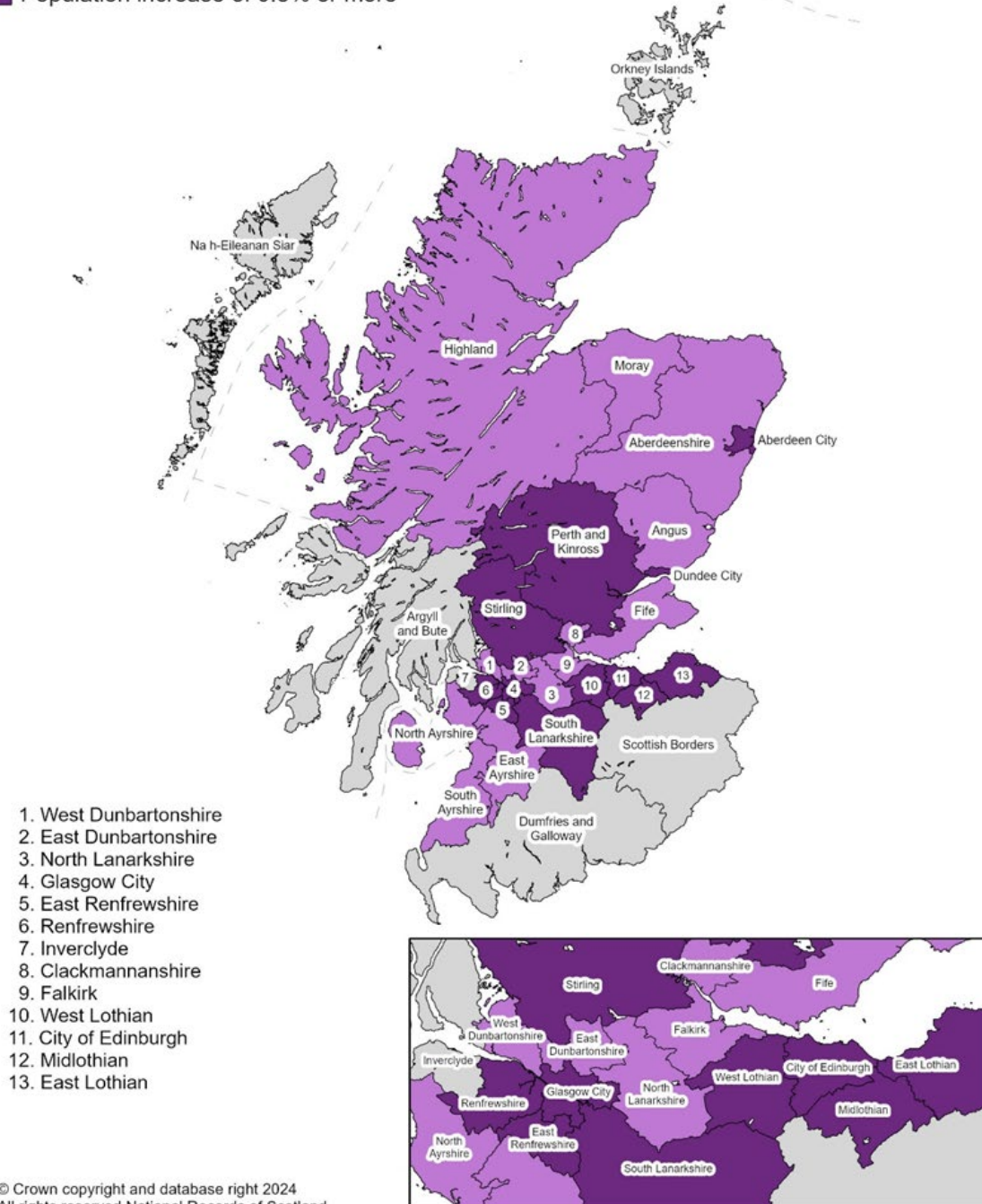


Figure 3: Population change across Scotland (Source: [Mid-2023 population estimates - National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#) (accessed 24/3/2025))

Now unpopulated islands

A number of islands around Orkney used to be inhabited in the relatively recent past (see Figure 4). Census data between 1961 – 2011 shows the islands that were formally populated during this time, as outlined in Table 3. Populations ranged from one person on Auskerry and Sule Skerry respectively, up to ten people on Papa Stronsay in 2010. Although the 2011 census does not show any population for Papa Stronsay, there are currently nine monks living on the island (per comm).

Some of the islands may be occupied (e.g. Gairsay) or are habitable on a temporary basis, but are not included in the population figures in Table 2 above.

Smaller islands

The rest of the islands are relatively small low-lying islands, skerries or rock stacks. Some are used for farming e.g. sheep grazing or are being considered for potential wind energy generation. Several are designated nature conservation sites for a range of qualifying features such as seals and seabirds.

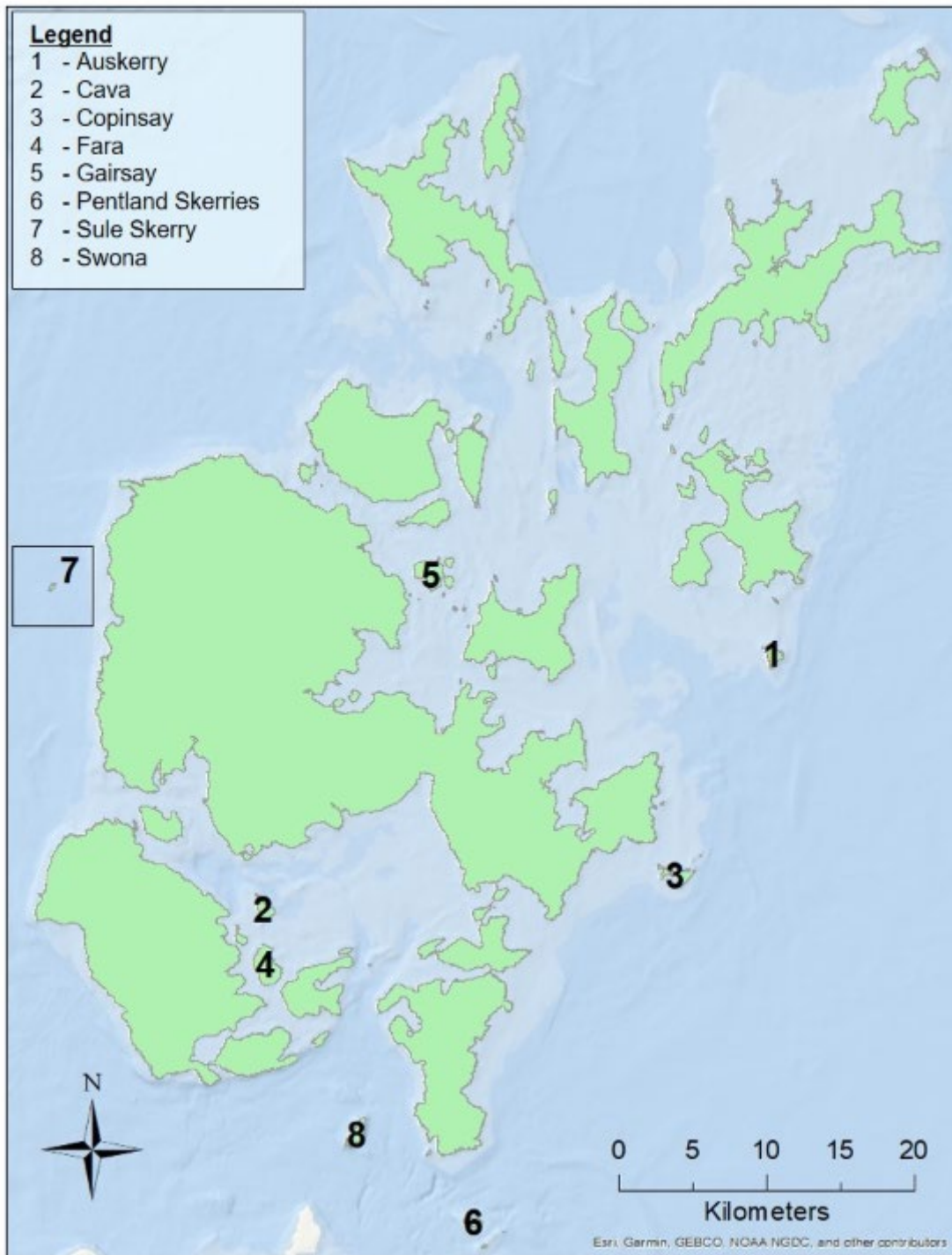


Figure 4: Map highlighting recent previously populated isles according to census data from 1961 – 2011 (see text for details).

Table 3: Recent previously inhabited islands in Orkney (see text for details).

Island	Comment
Auskerry	Two people live on Auskerry for at least part of the year.
Copinsay	The lighthouse is automated, but a planning application was approved in 2010 for construction of a small wind turbine on Copinsay.
Papa Stronsay	Whilst no separate census data are available for this island, it is home to nine Transalpine monks as of April 2021.
Gairsay	One family lives on and farms part of Gairsay.
Cava	About one third of the island area is semi-improved grassland, all formerly cultivated. Now home to national important habitats and species such as blanket bog, Arctic tern and curlew.
Fara	Most of the island is peat-covered. Now home to nationally important habitats and species such as maritime cliff and slope, red-throated diver and otter.
Sule Skerry	A low-lying island located 60 kilometres west of Brough Head, off the north-west of the Orkney Mainland. A SSSI for breeding seabirds colonies, including puffin, shag and storm petrel.
Swona	The island is home to wild cows from a herd left behind in the 1970s.
Pentland Skerries	Unpopulated since the lighthouse became automated.

The marine environment

The Orkney Islands marine region, which is the subject area for the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan (OIRMP) being assessed in this ICIA, covers 9,258 km² from Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) to 12 nautical miles (nm). It is bound by 1,024 km² of coastline around the 68+ islands; the latter covers 990 km². Thus, the marine regional area is virtually ten times the land area.

The Orkney Islands Marine Region: State of the Environment Assessment 2020 (SoEA)¹³ provides a baseline assessment of the environment of Orkney. It presents a summary of the environmental pressures and impacts of human activities affecting the Orkney Islands marine region. It includes geographical, ecological, social and economic factors and associated trends, where known. It provides a snapshot in time of the current issues facing Orkney's marine environment, as of November 2020, and the current status of the key economic sectors. This assessment therefore highlights the importance of e.g. lifeline ferries, fishing, aquaculture, energy and tourism for the island communities. Appendix 4 of the SoEA outlines the summary of the sectors and the status of the pressures and trends, along with the data confidence measures. Appendix 4 of the SoEA also provides a summary of the climate change pressures and interactions with the various ecological and commercial sectors.

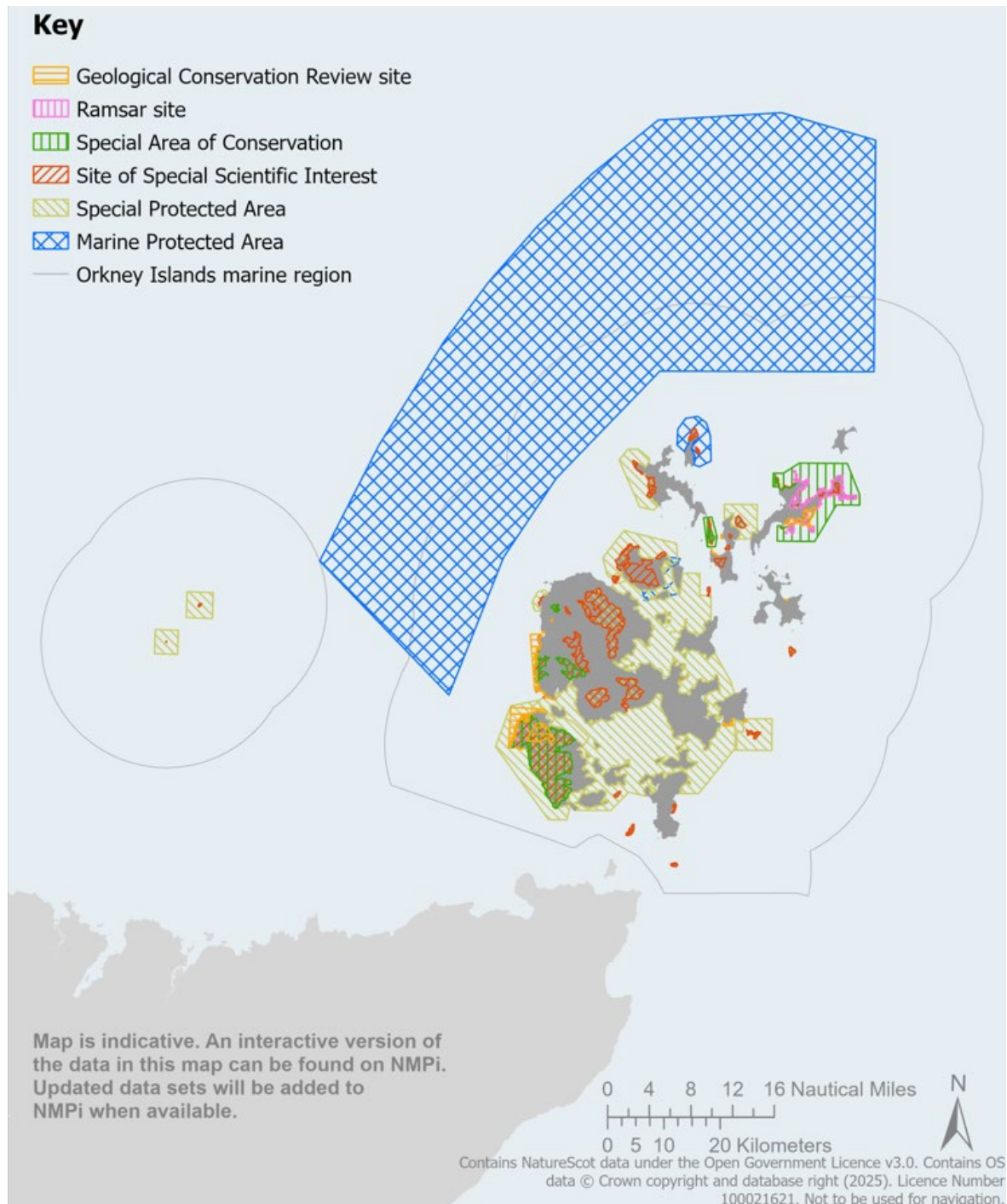
Designated nature conservation sites

Most of the designated sites around Orkney have coastal and marine elements (see

¹³ [Orkney Islands Marine Region: State of the Environment Assessment](#)

Figure 5). A full list of sites and background information can be found in Appendix 2 of the SoEA¹⁴.

Figure 5: Map of nature conservation designated sites within the Orkney marine region.



Step 3: Consultation

During the early stages of preparation of this ICIA report, input and guidance was

¹⁴ [Orkney Islands Marine Region: State of the Environment Assessment](#)

sought from OIC officers across several departments, the Orkney Marine Planning Advisory Group (OMPAG), see Appendix 2, Scottish Government and local stakeholders. Further details of the stakeholders contacted directly can be found in Appendix 3. OMPAG work closely with OIC, (the latter as sole delegate), to ensure expertise on a range of topics is considered throughout the plan-making phase. In addition, the Statement of Public Participation¹⁵ sets out the indicative timescales and methodology for engaging and consulting a wide range of stakeholders on the consultation draft OIRMP and associated supporting documents.

Appendix 5 contains some feedback received during early engagement visits from the OIC Marine Planning team outlining the purpose and scope of the regional marine plan to local communities and school pupils, and seeking early feedback. This extra stage of engagement, not outlined in the SPP, was seen to be important as otherwise local communities would likely not fully understand what they were being consulted on if presented with the draft Plan, without this earlier level of engagement to explain both what the plan was, and equally important, what it was not i.e. not a strategy/action plan type document. Visits were made to Sanday, Hoy, Stronsay, and Westray, as well as St. Margaret's Hope, Stromness and Kirkwall in Spring/Summer 2022 and included school sessions with a range of different class groups.

The OIRMP: Consultation Draft and supporting assessments including the partial ICIA were deposited for public consultation from 1 August to 25 October 2024. The aim of the consultation, and wider engagement process, was to engage a diverse audience as effectively as possible. This included targeting and designing engagement activities to each island community and capturing a diverse range of views and interests. This consultation and engagement process provided valuable information and local knowledge that has informed the preparation of the final Plan and the ICIA process.

Step 4: Assessment: Is a full ICIA required?

All the policies within the OIRMP will be applied equally to all islands within the Orkney Islands marine region area. In addition, as the adjacent island communities of Shetland have a draft regional marine plan and also have to abide by the National Marine Plan and related guidance, it will not have a significantly different effect on either the local Orkney or the Shetland island communities.

¹⁵ Orkney Islands Council 2020. State of the Environment Assessment <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/planning-and-building/development-and-marine-planning-policy/marine-planning/state-of-the-environment-assessment/>

As outlined in Step 1, the intended outcomes of the Plan are to:

- Aid statutory decision-making regarding marine licensing and consenting by the Marine Directorate of the Scottish Government, Local Authorities and other regulators;
- Enable sustainable development in the marine environment;
- Provide local marine regional data and information to allow greater certainty for developers regarding prospective proposals;
- Allow more local involvement, ownership and input into decision-making about specific issues within the local area;
- Provide a transparent plan-making process and promote good governance; and
- Ensure marine environment is protected.

Thus, as the demonstrated intended outcomes of the Plan are to provide a clear framework for sustainable marine development whilst safeguarding the marine environment, and this framework will apply equally to all of the marine waters and island communities within the plan's jurisdiction, and has been prepared in accordance with the National Marine Plan, with due regard to NPF4, the policy, strategy or service (i.e. the OIRMP) is not likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities).

Following the public consultation on the draft OIRMP and its associated assessments, this ICIA has been reviewed and updated to include up to date data. No feedback was received that a full ICIA should be carried out, therefore, the above information is considered sufficient to demonstrate that a full ICIA is not required for the OIRMP.

Step 5: Preparing the ICIA

As a full ICIA is not required, Step 5 of the process in accordance with '*Island Communities Impact Assessments: Guidance and Toolkit*' is not applicable.

Step 6: Making adjustments

The published Plan will be subject to ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review, which will include an assessment of ICIA status.

Blank page

Appendix 1: Orkney Islands Council Islands Communities Impact Assessment

Preliminary Considerations	Responses
Please provide a brief description or summary of the policy, strategy or service under review for the purposes of this assessment.	<p>Determine if an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) is required for the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan (OIRMP).</p> <p>The OIRMP will guide sustainable development, activities and use in the Orkney Islands marine region, whilst ensuring environmental protection. The statutory policies and supporting spatial information will guide decision making on marine licensing and other relevant consenting decisions.</p> <p>See above for further detail.</p>
STEP 1 - Develop a clear understanding of your objectives	Responses
What are the objectives of the policy, strategy or service?	<p>To enable sustainable development in the Orkney Islands marine region.</p> <p>See OIRMP ICIA for further detail.</p>
Do you need to consult?	Yes
How are islands identified for the purpose of the policy, strategy or service?	The plan applies to all islands within Orkney equally and there are no differential impacts to any individual island or community.
What are the intended impacts/outcomes and how do these potentially differ in the islands?	See above.
Is the policy, strategy or service new?	Yes
STEP 2 - Gather your data and identify your stakeholders	Responses
What data is available about the current situation in the islands?	See above.
Do you need to consult?	Yes

Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan
Islands Communities Impact Assessment

How does any existing data differ between islands?	See above.
Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place?	See above.
STEP 3 - Consultation	Responses
Who do you need to consult with?	See above.
How will you carry out your consultation and in what timescales?	See above.
What questions will you ask when considering how to address island realities?	See above.
What information has already been gathered through consultations and what concerns have been raised previously by island communities?	See above.
Is your consultation robust and meaningful and sufficient to comply with the Section 7 duty?	Yes: see above.
STEP 4 - Assessment	Responses
Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities?	No: see above. The plan applies to all islands within Orkney equally and there are no differential impacts to any individual island or community.
Does your assessment identify any potential barriers or wider impacts?	No: see above.
How will you address these?	See above.

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**

SIX. If the answer is **YES**, an ICIA must be prepared and **you should proceed to Step FIVE**.

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?


STEP 5 – Preparing your ICIA	Responses
In Step Five, you should describe the likely significantly different effect of the policy, strategy or service:	N/A The plan applies to all islands within Orkney equally and there are no differential impacts to any individual island or community.
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.	N/A
Consider alternative delivery mechanisms and whether further consultation is required.	N/A
Describe how these alternative delivery mechanisms will improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	N/A

Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan
Islands Communities Impact Assessment

Identify resources required to improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.	N/A
STEP 6 - Making adjustments to your work	Responses
Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different communities?	No. The plan applies to all islands within Orkney equally and there are no differential impacts to any individual island or community.
Do you need to consult with island communities in respect of mechanisms or mitigations?	Yes: see above.
Have island circumstances been factored into the evaluation process?	Yes: see above.
Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring?	Yes: see above.
How will outcomes be measured on the islands?	See above.
How has the policy, strategy or service affected island communities?	See above.
How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future policy making and service delivery?	See above.
STEP 7 - Publishing your ICIA	Responses
Have you presented your ICIA in an Easy Read format?	Yes: see above.
Does it need to be presented in Gaelic or any other language?	No
Where will you publish your ICIA and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it?	OIC website; file sizes are minimized to ensure they are downloadable. As part of the wider public consultation process; where to access the documents has been widely publicised.
Who will sign-off your final ICIA and why?	Scottish Ministers, as they have the relevant authority to do so.

Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan
Islands Communities Impact Assessment

ICIA completed by:	Daniel Morris
Position:	Marine Planner
Signature:	D.Morris
Date complete:	07/10/2025

ICIA approved by:	Gavin Barr
Position:	Head of Planning and Regulatory Services
Signature:	
Date complete:	21/10/25

Appendix 2: Orkney Marine Planning Advisory Group members

Organisation	Category
NatureScot	Environment
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	Environment
International Centre for Island Technology	Academic
Orkney Regional Inshore Fisheries Group	Commercial
Historic Environment Scotland	Environment
Orkney Harbour Authority	Commercial
Visit Scotland	Commercial
Crown Estate Scotland	Commercial
Salmon Scotland	Commercial
Flotta Oil Terminal operator	Commercial
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland	Environment
Orkney Renewable Energy Forum	Commercial
Orkney Marinas	Recreational
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks	Commercial
Orkney Marine Services Association	Commercial
Orkney Sub-Aqua Club	Recreational

Appendix 3: Orkney Islands Council officers and organisations contacted during early plan-making process.

Organisation
OIC solicitor (former seconded Scottish Government Islands team member)
OIC Environment Officer, Development and Marine Planning (D&MP)
OIC Climate Change Officer, D&MP
OIC Biodiversity Technician, D&MP
OIC North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme officers
OIC Team Leader (Policy and Planning), Education, Leisure and Housing Services
OMPAG – see Appendix 2
Sandy Development Trust
Stronsay Development Trust
Hoy and North Walls Community Association
Westray Community Association
Sanday School
Stronsay School
Westray School
Oceans of Value Project, Scottish Wildlife Trust
Marine Directorate of the Scottish Government
Orkney marine planning stakeholders*

* These c. 360 stakeholders receive updates on the plan-making process via a newsletter circulated c.2-3 times per annum (see [Marine Planning \(orkney.gov.uk\)](http://Marine Planning (orkney.gov.uk)) 'Related Sites' section).

Appendix 4: Summary of the sectors and the status of the pressures and trends, along with the data confidence measures for the Orkney Islands marine region and climate change summary (source: SoEA (2020)).

3a) State of the Environment Assessment (SoEA) Summary

Category	Topic	Pressure	Assessment	Trend	Data confidence
Physical	Geological and coastal	Erosion; Disturbance.	Some concerns	Deteriorating	High
	Landscape and Seascape	Erosion of special qualities of landscape and seascape; Coastal erosion, sea-level rise, flooding and change to vegetation types due to climate change.	Some concerns	Deteriorating	Medium
	Coastal Water Quality	Pollution	Some concerns	Static	High
	Air Quality	Pollution	Few concerns	Unknown	Low
	Marine litter	Entanglement; Ingestion; Amenity	Some concerns	Unknown	Medium
	Underwater noise	Disturbance; Injury;	Some concerns	Deteriorating	Low
Historic Coastal and Marine Environment	Historic Coastal and Marine Environment	Climate change; Erosion; Corrosion; Removal of artifacts.	Many concerns	Deteriorating	High
Climate Change	Climate Change	Multiple pressures: see Table 13	Many concerns	Deteriorating	Medium

Table 3a) cont

Category	Topic	Pressure	Assessment	Trend	Data confidence
Biodiversity	Designated Nature Conservation Sites	Climate change; Barrier to species movement; Collision; Disturbance; Overfishing; Pollution.	As there are many designated sites with varying site condition status, an overview assessment of the sites would be of limited value. Refer to Appendix 2 for individual site condition assessments.		
	Birds	Climate change; Collision; Disturbance; Marine litter	Many concerns	Deteriorating	Medium
	Grey Seals	Climate change; Disturbance; Pollution	Few concerns	Static	Medium
	Harbour Seals	Climate change; Competition; Disturbance; Pollution	Many concerns	Deteriorating	Medium
	Cetaceans	Climate change; Barrier to species movement; Collision; Disturbance: visual and displacement; Entanglement; Marine litter; Noise; Pollution	Some concerns	Unknown	Low
	Commercial Fish and Shellfish	Climate change; Disturbance; Removal of target species.	Unknown	Unknown	Not applicable
	Wider Fish Community	Climate change; Disturbance; Removal of non-target species.	Unknown	Unknown	Not applicable
	Invasive Non-native Species	Alter food webs; Outcompete native species.	Some concerns	Static	High

3b) SoEA Productive sector assessment summary adapted from the SoEA¹⁶

Category	Topic	Economic contribution	Employment	Production	Data confidence
Productive coasts and seas	Commercial Fisheries	Increasing	Stable	Decreasing	High
	Aquaculture	Increasing	Increasing	Increasing	High
	Harbours, Port, Shipping and Marine Transport	Increasing	Stable	Stable	High
	Offshore Wind Energy	Unknown	Unknown	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Wave and Tidal Energy	Stable	Stable	Stable	Medium
	Oil and Gas	Stable	Stable	Decreasing	High
	Marine Supply Chain, Research and Services	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Not applicable
	Tourism, Recreation, Sport and Leisure	Increasing	Increasing	Increasing	High

¹⁶ Orkney Islands Council 2020. State of the Environment Assessment <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/planning-and-building/development-and-marine-planning-policy/marine-planning/state-of-the-environment-assessment/>

3c) Climate Change pressures: adapted from SoEA¹⁷

Topic	Climate Change pressures and interactions
Physical	<p>Sea level rise and erosion, along with changes in temperature, salinity and weather patterns, will alter the physical characteristics and dynamics of marine and coastal areas and have landscape impacts. Coastal flooding can arise from a combination of factors including high tides, wind and wave exposure and storm surge. Such events are predicted to be further exasperated by increases in sea level and storm conditions attributed to climate change.</p> <p>Physical features containing marine inorganic carbon can be disturbed by processes of erosion and impacts from development and activities.</p>
Historic coastal and marine environment	<p>Sea level rise, along with the potential for changing weather patterns and coastal processes due to climate change, pose a significant risk to coastal and marine historic assets in Orkney. Storms, and the combine erosive effects of wave and tidal action, particularly in recent years, have caused substantial damage to historic coastal sites and monuments.</p> <p>Climate-change causing rising sea-levels has been identified as the single greatest threat to Orkney's coastal built heritage.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>Multiple species may be affected by changes in temperature, salinity and changing weather patterns as food webs are disrupted or altered. The pressures on seabirds, around Orkney and beyond, include the effects of climate change on their food supply, due in part to risks from increased storminess, which can impact bird colonies by both physical disturbance and ability to catch prey.</p> <p>Increasing sea temperatures have been seen to affect the timing of reproduction in different ways from species to species, leading to trophic mismatch between predators and the availability of their prey species (e.g. key prey species may bloom before predators have produced young that would normally feed on the prey).</p> <p>Changing acidity of sea water can have an effect on biogeochemical and ecosystem processes including planktonic calcification, carbon and nutrient assimilation, primary production and physiology.</p> <p>Changes due to climate change may impact a variety of ecological processes e.g. specialist species are at risk from increased salinity.</p> <p>Climate related pressures can affect species distribution and invasive non-native species could become established.</p> <p>Coastal lagoons, such as the internationally significant habitats within</p>

¹⁷ Orkney Islands Council 2020. State of the Environment Assessment <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/planning-and-building/development-and-marine-planning-policy/marine-planning/state-of-the-environment-assessment/>

Topic	Climate Change pressures and interactions
	<p>the Loch of Stenness Special Area of Conservation (SAC), are particularly sensitive to relative sea level rise changes related to climate change.</p> <p>Overall, the impacts on marine ecosystems, particularly changes in acidity and on ecosystem services provision are poorly understood for Orkney waters.</p>
Productive coasts and seas	<p>Climate change impacts can affect the distribution of commercial fish species.</p> <p>Increased potential for harmful effects from invasive non-native species (INNS).</p> <p>Increased potential of algal blooms affecting fisheries and aquaculture.</p> <p>Increased risk of storm damage to fishing gear and finfish aquaculture sites.</p> <p>Increased adverse operational impacts on ports, harbours ferries and shipping, along with marine renewable energy activity due to sea level rise and potential increases in storminess.</p>
Social	<p>The climate change related pressures on Orkney's physical environment, historic assets and biodiversity will significantly affect Orkney communities. Climate change pressures including sea level rise, coastal erosion and potential increases in storminess are likely to increase impacts on coastal infrastructure, property and services.</p>

Appendix 5: Feedback from early engagement island visits (Spring 2022)

The following comments have been paraphrased from notes of face-to-face discussions at community engagement events to outline the purpose and scope of the regional marine plan:

When discussing commercial fishing representation: *“I’m pleased to hear that the Orkney Fisheries Association and Orkney Sustainable Fisheries are being included in the plan making process, as fishermen from smaller islands are increasingly getting squeezed out [from development plans]”* Westray

“I’m concerned about the level of litter washing up that doesn’t originate from here. It washes up from elsewhere and we are stuck with it”. Sanday

“Development plans often overlook the people who live in the remote areas. Plans can sometimes see remote islands as areas for commercial development and nature conservation. There should be emphasis on the people that live here and their wellbeing” Hoy

“The biggest worry for people living here [Stronsay] is the ferries” Stronsay

“I’m concerned about big decisions being made elsewhere, such as the Scottish Government and Marine Scotland, as they don’t understand what life is like for fishermen on small islands” Westray

This publication is available at www.orkney.gov.uk

Published by Orkney Islands Council 2026.

