

Item: 5

The Orkney Fund Board – 26 September 2025

Funding Strategy Workshop Outcomes

1. Overview

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present the outcomes from the Orkney Fund Board workshop held on 29 August 2025. The workshop was designed to progress work on strategic outcomes, funding priorities, the project assessment process, and potential grant schemes, all of which will inform the development of the 4-year regeneration plan.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Orkney Fund Board:
- i. Note the outcomes of the workshop as set out in this report.
 - ii. Approve the next steps for officers in taking forward the agreed work.

3. Workshop outcomes

- 3.1. The following is a summary of the main conclusions agreed at the workshop:

3.2. Strategic Outcomes

- i. Strategic outcomes as summarised in Appendix 1 were clarified informing discussion on potential categories of projects and schemes considered as eligible for funding.
- ii. Board members reviewed a list of local and national strategies, along with potential match-funding opportunities, and agreed that The Orkney Fund will align the regeneration plan with the following list of strategies as reference to decision-making:
 - Orkney Community Plan 2025-30
 - Council Plan 2023-28
 - Orkney Arts Strategy Action Plan 2023-27
 - Orkney Local Policing Plan – 2023-26

- Orkney Tourism Strategy 2020-30
- Orkney Community Wealth Building Action Plan
- Orkney Local Transport Strategy Delivery Plan 2024-44
- Orkney Play Area Strategy
- Orkney Travel Matters

3.3. 4-Year Funding Priorities

The workshop identified the following priorities and recommended:

- Setting a minimum level of £0.5M spend committed across all themes to avoid funds-being over concentrated in only one or two themes.
- Revenue projects without a capital component may be considered, provided they include an exit strategy and demonstrate sustainability after funding ends. The annual revenue budget was noted as being higher than might be required for specifically capital projects, creating the potential opportunity for robust revenue projects considered worthy of funding.
- To explore further with the applicant the only project that was submitted as an Expression of Interest linked to safety and security.
- To explore in more detail projects identified as potential ‘early wins’, which could be funded in Year 1.
- Cycle path and heritage projects (such as listed building restorations) require further discussion with Planning.
- Flagship project applicants may be invited to present directly to the Board.

3.4. Assessment Process

- The application process should be simplified, with documents proportionate to project size and type.
- A two-stage process was proposed to allow applicants to receive feedback on draft submissions before final applications.
- A sub-group was formed to review the capacity funding applications, utilising the 0-3 scoring system with standard assessment criteria.
- It was proposed that the assessment process, including additional criteria, be explored in time for reviewing capital projects.

3.5. Project review and funding gaps

- i. Grant scheme options for the first four years were discussed, including:
 - Play Park fund: focusing on upgrading and repairing play parks across Orkney to improve accessibility, safety, and community use.
 - Public realm improvement scheme: aiming to enhance shared spaces by improving the useability, accessibility, and visual quality of public areas.
 - Heritage and regeneration scheme: supporting restoration and conservation of heritage assets while also boosting local regeneration, tourism, and community pride.
- ii. There was also consideration of a Participatory Budgeting approach for the allocation of funding to reflect the Board's aspiration that the benefit of the programme should positively impact across all of Orkney.
- iii. Members were presented with the current list of Expressions of Interest to highlight funding gaps and identify categories not eligible for support, such as housing.
- iv. A range of specific projects including examples included in item 8 of this agenda will be explored further with applicants, and applicants with proposals considered to be flagship projects may be invited to present directly to the Board.

3.6. Other

- i. Updates on regeneration plan progress should be provided at each Board meeting.
- ii. Options for outsourcing communications will be explored.

4. Next Steps

4.1. Officers will now:

- Develop a project monitoring process for approval and inclusion in the regeneration plan.
- Incorporate Board feedback into points above.

For Further Information please contact:

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Appendix 1

Priorities	Projects/Project Outputs	Strategic Outcomes
Community and Cultural Wellbeing	Improving access to sports, recreational, community and arts facilities	...to foster inclusivity, strengthen community ties, and support overall health and wellbeing.
Safe, Accessible, and Vibrant Spaces	Investing in active travel infrastructure and safety initiatives	...that meet accessibility needs, welcoming spaces, and build a stronger sense of security and belonging.
Heritage, Conservation, and Regeneration	Revitalising historic buildings and promoting local heritage	...to bring underused areas back into use and strengthen Orkney's sense of place and identity
Local Enterprise and Creative Support	Promoting vibrant retail spaces and community-driven creative projects	...to stimulate the local economy, boost employability, and celebrate Orkney's distinct cultural identity