



## Item: 7

### Orkney Towns Board 7 February 2025

### 2025-26 Activity Programme and Timeline

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## 1. Overview

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to note the proposed programme for the next steps of work for the Orkney Towns Board.
- 1.2. The UK Government published Guidance during 2024 which was intended to provide support to the work of Towns Boards across the UK. The Guidance includes specific direction to Boards to ensure that the Government's intended outcomes are achieved. The original Guidance is currently under review, with a revised edition expected from the UK Government during the first quarter of 2025. This will be essential information to direct the next phases of work for the Board and will include clarification on the eligibility of project outcomes, and process arrangements. The information from UK Government officials to date suggests that this is not likely to vary significantly from previous Guidance. However, it is important that the drafting of the Strategic Vision and Delivery Plan can be informed by this new Guidance.
- 1.3. An outline programme of steps for moving forward the work of the Board has been prepared and is attached at Appendix 1. This outline programme seeks to build on the engagement work which was completed during 2024 in order to establish a robust but accessible methodology for the Board to manage future project development and engagement activities. There is provision for this work to respond to the new UK Government Guidance when this is published.
- 1.4. Appendix 1 includes the following activities:
  - i. **Development of a Strategic Vision and Delivery Plan.** This will require to be submitted to both Orkney Islands Council and the UK Government for endorsement.
  - ii. **Stress testing project ideas.** Over 800 ideas were generated through the engagement during 2024. Further work is required to test the viability and deliverability of ideas in terms of tangible project proposals.
  - iii. **Maintaining an open dialogue.** Maintaining accessibility to the public and other Orkney agencies including Community Planning Partners for example exploring further project ideas generation and delivery opportunities.

- iv. **Managing feasibility development work.** Establishing a process for formally awarding project development funding and monitoring the development phases of projects.
- 1.5. Delivery of this programme of work is dependent on the availability of staff resources to support the work of the Board. Recruitment for a dedicated Towns Board Economic Development Officer is currently underway, and if successful should be in place before 1 April 2025.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. It is recommended that Orkney Towns Board:
- i. Note the proposed programme for the next steps of work for Orkney Towns Board, detailed in Appendix 1.

## **3. Appendix**

Appendix 1 – Programme for next steps of work of Orkney Towns Board.

## Appendix 1

