

Orkney Fund Board



Minute

Venue: **Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.**

Date: **Friday, 26 September 2025.**

Time: **14:00.**

Present:

- Stephen Hagan, Chair.
- Davie Campbell.
- Cheryl Chapman.
- Liam McArthur MSP (via Microsoft Teams).
- Michael Morrison (via Microsoft Teams).
- Chief Inspector Scott Robertson (via Microsoft Teams).
- Rachel Scarth.
- Councillor Gwenda Shearer (via Microsoft Teams)
- Craig Spence.

Orkney Islands Council Officers:

- Stuart Allison, Service Manager (Enterprise).
- Hazel Flett, Service Manager (Governance).
- Susan Shearer, Service Manager (Development and Marine Planning) (for Items 1 to 6).
- Kirsty Groundwater, Communications Team Leader.
- Harvey Crew, Economic Development Officer.
- Hudson Johnson, Communications Officer.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Stephen Hagan, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies had been intimated on behalf of Morven Brooks and Councillor Kristopher Leask. No response had been received from Alistair Carmichael MP.

2. Draft Minute of Meeting held on 21 July 2025

There had been previously circulated the draft Minute of the Meeting held on 21 July 2025, which was approved as a true record.

3. Memorandum of Understanding

There had been previously circulated a further updated Memorandum of Understanding, incorporating amendments suggested at the previous meeting, as well as updated terminology, for consideration.

The Board **resolved** that the revised Memorandum of Understanding be approved for signature.

Action: HC to arrange for MoU to be signed by both parties.

Liam McArthur MSP joined the meeting during discussion of this item.

4. Budget Statement

There had been previously circulated a report setting out a budget statement for the UK Government's Plan for Neighbourhoods' funding received up to 31 August 2025, along with a summary of costs incurred and committed.

The Board noted the contents of the report.

Action: SA to share budget/cost centre statements with Chair on a more regular basis.

5. Workshop Outcomes

There had been previously circulated a report presenting the outcomes of the workshop held on 29 August 2025, which considered strategic outcomes, funding priorities, the project assessment process and potential grant schemes, all of which would inform development of the four-year regeneration plan.

The Board **agreed** the outcomes from the workshop, as well as Local Place Plans being included in the list of national and local strategies to be referenced in the regeneration plan.

Action – HC to develop project monitoring process for inclusion in the regeneration plan.

6. Planning Discussions

Susan Shearer gave a PowerPoint presentation on place planning, active travel and cultural heritage and how that related to the themes of the Orkney Fund, including links with other projects and funding streams.

She concluded by referring to the financial assistance offered by the Board to various groups to assist with the production of local place plans, which was extremely helpful in the drafting of the new Local Development Plan.

Discussion followed on various topics raised throughout the presentation, including active travel and the potential for other funding sources and legacy projects from the current SSSEN development, although a cycle path from Stromness to Kirkwall was unlikely given complications with gradients and the route of the cabling. A path or cycleway could not be installed on top of the cable, given that access to the cable would be required at all times, however, alternatives could be looked at. One area where impact could be made was cultural heritage, but that may require additional staffing resource, although the Board might be able to assist with revenue funding available.

7. Exclusion of Public

On the motion of the Chair, seconded by Davie Campbell, the Board resolved that the public be excluded for Items 8 to 10, as the business to be considered involved the disclosure of exempt information of the classes described in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended.

8. Communications Strategy

Under section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public had been excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

There had been previously circulated a report outlining a proposal for developing a communications strategy, together with an action plan, for consideration and approval.

The Board **resolved** to continue to work with Council colleagues in the communications team, with a newly appointed communications officer taking lead responsibility for the Orkney Fund communications strategy, public relations releases, and website development.

Actions:

- Work with Communications Officer to finalise and implement communications strategy.
- Review communications provision no later than March 2027.

The above constitutes the summary of the Minute in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 section 50C(2) as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

9. Capacity Funding Applications

Davie Campbell declared an interest in this item, in that he was directly involved with a number the applicants listed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Under section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public had been excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

There had been previously circulated a report outlining projects recommended for approval for capacity funding, following assessment by a sub-group, the details of which were summarised in Appendix 1.

After discussion, the Board **resolved** that applications be approved and awarded capacity funding.

Actions:

- HJ – press release to refer to overall total of awards to 12 groups.
- HC – confirm final decisions on grant awards to applicants as detailed above.
- HF – check whether Orkney Fund Board subject to FOISA legislation.
- HJ – quotes from named organisations for future press releases.

The above constitutes the summary of the Minute in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 section 50C(2) as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

10. Regeneration Plan Content

Under section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public had been excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 4 and 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

There had been previously circulated a report outlining potential projects that may be considered for inclusion in the 4-year regeneration plan.

Harvey Crew advised that the Board was required to submit both a 4-year regeneration plan and a 10-year vision to the UK Government by 28 November 2025. The strategic document was required to set out the interventions that the Board intended to support and was required to align with the core goals of the UK Government's Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme, namely:

- Thriving places.
- Stronger communities.
- Taking back control.

Actions:

- HC to arrange call for Expressions of Interest (EoIs) for potential capital projects.
- HC to arrange workshop by end of October to consider EoIs and potential schemes.
- HC to progress regeneration plan.
- HC to arrange for a representative of a specific project to give a presentation to the Board.
- Chair and available Board members to meet with Elected Members to share regeneration plan, ahead of submission to Policy and Resources Committee on 25 November 2025.

The above constitutes the summary of the Minute in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 section 50C(2) as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

Liam McArthur MSP left the meeting during discussion of this item.

11. Any Other Competent Business

No other competent business was raised.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting would be confirmed in due course.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting concluded at 15:45.