



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.	Orkney Islands Council Visitor Management Plan 2027-2037
Responsible Service and Directorate.	Sustainable Tourism (Enterprise and Resources)
Date of assessment.	24 th August 2026
Is the proposal or change existing? (Please indicate if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	The Visitor Management Plan is a new strategic plan, setting out the Council's approach to operational visitor management. The Plan does not propose the deletion of, or significant reduction of, an existing Council plan or service.

2. Primary Information

What are the intended outcomes of the proposal or change?	The Plan sets out the Council's approach to managing tourism pressures where these interact with Council services, infrastructure, community life and public spaces. It provides a coordinated framework for responding to identified community needs and tourism pressures, while supporting the resilience of Council services and infrastructure.
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	This approach recognises community wellbeing and access to shared services as priorities, alongside the effective management of the visitor experience. The Plan will: • strengthen the Council's ability to identify and respond to tourism pressures experienced by communities; • support community access to shared and essential services, infrastructure and public spaces; • support more effective management of pressures associated with congestion, parking, transport capacity, public facilities and high tourism volumes at sensitive locations; • improve coordination across Council services where tourism pressures require a collective response; and • strengthen the evidence available to understand how the nature and intensity of tourism pressures vary between places and communities.
Is the proposal or change strategically important?	The Visitor Management Plan is a new strategic framework which establishes the Council's approach to operational visitor management and provides a multi-year programme of coordinated activity across Council services.
State who is or may be affected by this proposal or change, and how?	The groups who may experience impacts are identified as residents and local communities, residents of ferry-linked islands, people who experience barriers to accessing services and facilities, visitors, tourism businesses and operators. • Residents and communities across Orkney, particularly those experiencing concentrated tourism pressures. These may include increased demand on shared services and infrastructure, congestion, parking and access pressures, pressure on public facilities, and high visitor volumes at sensitive locations. The

	nature and intensity of these pressures varies between places and communities and at different times of year. • Residents of ferry-linked islands where tourism demand can place additional pressure on the capacity of lifeline transport services, with implications for residents who depend on these connections for essential journeys and have limited alternative travel options. • People who experience existing barriers to accessing services, facilities and public spaces. Tourism pressures may have greater consequences for people who are more reliant on accessible transport, facilities and services, or who have fewer practical or financial alternatives available to them. This includes potential differential impacts associated with age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, caring responsibilities and socio-economic disadvantage. • Visitors through measures relating to transport, parking, access, public facilities, visitor information and responsible tourism. • Tourism businesses and operators through changes to visitor management arrangements and expectations associated with the management of tourism pressures.
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this proposal or change?	Stakeholders have been involved throughout the development of the Plan through consultation, research and engagement, using both online and in-person methods to provide different opportunities for participation. The Our Orkney, Our Story research project gathered community and stakeholder views on tourism through an online storytelling platform, stakeholder interviews and facilitated workshops. Participants included residents, visitors, community organisations, businesses, and tourism industry representatives. Further engagement was undertaken with communities and businesses on tourism-related income generation opportunities, and with selected Scottish local authorities to understand approaches being taken elsewhere. Relevant Orkney Islands Council services were also engaged through an Internal Operational Review, which gathered

	evidence on the pressures experienced by services supporting tourism and identified areas for improvement and future action.
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.	The Plan evidence base includes the Orkney Islands Visitor Survey 2024, Our Orkney, Our Story, Local Place Plans, Orkney Matters Two, and the Internal Operational Review of Council services. These provided evidence on visitor and community experiences and issues relevant to equality, including access to transport, services, public facilities, infrastructure, and information.
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.	The Plan evidence base identifies areas where tourism intersects with existing inequalities, including pressure on public and lifeline transport, reduced residential housing availability and affordability, and seasonal pressure on services and infrastructure shared by residents and visitors. These issues may have a disproportionate effect on people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, particularly where their ability to access alternative solutions is limited. Relevant local evidence includes Scotland's Census 2022 which provides information on Orkney's demographic profile, protected characteristics and wider equality issues. Relevant national evidence includes the Scottish Islands Survey (2023), Scottish Household Survey and research including the Consultation on the Islands Connectivity Plan and Transport Poverty in Scotland, providing wider evidence on accessibility, transport, access to services and the circumstances of rural and island communities.
Could the proposal or change have a differential impact on any of the following equality areas?	Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons:

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.	Potential positive impact Pregnancy and travelling with young children can increase reliance on accessible public facilities and public transport. Tourism pressures which contribute to congestion, increased demand for facilities, or difficulties moving through busy locations may create additional barriers. Actions which improve the management of busy locations, maintain access to public facilities, or address pedestrian and transport pressures have the potential to reduce these barriers.
6. Age: people of different ages.	Potential positive and negative impacts Tourism pressures may have different implications across age groups. Older people may be more reliant on public transport, accessible public facilities, and other local services particularly where private transport or alternative provision is unavailable. Additional demand on shared and lifeline transport, congestion and pressure on facilities may therefore have greater consequences for some older residents. Measures within the Plan that aim to improve community access have the potential to reduce these pressures. Greater use of digital information and cashless payments may create difficulties for some older people or others who are less confident accessing digital services such as

	via QR codes. Alternative methods of accessing information and making payments should be maintained where appropriate to ensure equitable access.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No differential impact currently identified.
8. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	Potential positive impact. Improvements to pedestrian movement, transport, public toilets, and parking could remove existing barriers and make services and places easier to use for disabled residents and visitors.
9. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No differential impact currently identified.
10. Caring responsibilities	Potential positive impact. People with caring responsibilities may have greater reliance on reliable transport, accessible facilities, and the need for predictable access to services when travelling with, or on behalf of, another person. Measures to protect community access to transport and other shared services during periods of high visitor demand may benefit people with caring responsibilities and those they support. Clearer transport and service information may also assist carers in planning journeys and accessing essential services.
11. Socio-economic disadvantage.	Potential positive impact. Tourism pressures may compound existing inequalities where residents have limited financial or practical capacity to use alternative transport, services or facilities. Pressure on public transport and lifeline routes, and other shared services may have greater consequences for lower-income households where alternative provision involves additional costs, or is otherwise inaccessible.

3. Impact Assessment

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	Potential differential impacts have been identified in relation to pregnancy and maternity, age, disability, caring responsibilities and socio-economic disadvantage. Negative
Does the analysis above identify any potential negative impacts?	Potential negative impacts may arise where visitor management measures unintentionally create new barriers or reinforce existing inequalities. These include increased reliance on digital information or cashless payments, changes to physical access or parking arrangements, and measures which introduce additional costs. These impacts are not considered significant at strategic plan level, and may be addressed through the design and implementation of individual actions.
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	There is sufficient evidence to assess the likely equality impacts of the VMP at a strategic level. The assessment has identified areas where tourism pressures may interact with existing inequalities, and where particular consideration will be required during implementation.

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
Accessibility needs may differ across users, particularly in relation to age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, and caring responsibilities.	Accessibility and differing user needs will be considered during the detailed development of relevant VMP actions, including those affecting physical access, transport, public facilities, wayfinding and information provision.		Through development and monitoring of individual VMP actions and the wider VMP review process.	Ongoing throughout VMP delivery
Increased use of digital information or payment options may create barriers for people who are unable or less confident using digital services	Where relevant, consideration will be given to appropriate alternative means of accessing information or making payment		As part of the development and implementation of relevant actions.	Prior to implementation of relevant action

5. Sign and Date

Signature:	
Name:	Catherine Kriisa
Date:	24/08/2026